

## **Office of Communications and Marketing** ***Writing and Content Guidelines***

### **Content Guidelines**

The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Office of Communications and Marketing oversees a number of print and web publications, in addition to maintaining and/or providing guidance and oversight to many social media pages. Content that appears in any of these mediums is selected by the Office of Communications and Marketing based on relevance to the particular medium, relative impact and/or pertinence to current events.

The following criteria are merely a guideline to understanding what type of content is acceptable for publication in TTUHSC communications, and the Office of Communications and Marketing retains full authority to either publish or not publish any content at its discretion. At times, content meeting the criteria mentioned below may be excluded on account of space/word limitations, redundancy, social or public sensitivity or any other reason deemed appropriate by the Office of Communications and Marketing.

Questions related to web content for TTUHSC publications should be directed to Kelli Love, web communications specialist, at (806) 743-7611 or [Kelli.Love@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:Kelli.Love@ttuhsc.edu). Questions related to content in print or other publications should be directed to Jessica Bagwell, senior editor, at (806) 743-7610 or [Jessica.Bagwell@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:Jessica.Bagwell@ttuhsc.edu).

### **Eligible Content**

*Grants:* The Office of Communications and Marketing makes every effort to fairly disseminate information pertaining to the grants awarded to TTUHSC faculty, staff and students. However, due to the overwhelming number of grants bestowed to TTUHSC, the Office of Communications and Marketing has historically generally limited the mention of grants in TTUHSC publications to grants that meet or exceed the amount of \$1 million. Exceptions to this are made when the award, while less than \$1 million, is accompanied by a story that is considered newsworthy regardless of the grant amount or if the grant is related to an entity within TTUHSC that has its own publication and an appropriate place in which to mention grants of lesser amounts. For instance, grants and awards less than \$1 million from national organizations, organizations that carry particular appeal with the public or organizations that have not previously funded TTUHSC endeavors may appropriately receive mention in TTUHSC publications. Additionally, current events and social climate often necessarily compel the decision of the Office of Communications and Marketing to include or exclude content. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to discuss all grants and similar awards with the Office of Communications and Marketing in an effort to identify if a grant meets the criteria for publication.

*Awards, fellowships, etc.:* The Office of Communications and Marketing regularly disburses information celebrating accomplishments of TTUHSC faculty, staff and students. This includes mentioning relevant awards, fellowships, publications and other key acknowledgment of the talented current TTUHSC family. Mention of awards should be made after the organization (whether external or an entity within TTUHSC) that is presenting the award has made all formal and appropriate announcements. Additionally, the Office of Communications and Marketing is not responsible for, although is readily available to assist in, attaining appropriate approvals from organizations bestowing awards to TTUHSC faculty, staff and students.

As the primary internal news source for TTUHSC, the Office of Communications and Marketing will mention awards given internally by TTUHSC entities to faculty, staff and students provided the information is sent to the Office of Communications and Marketing in a timely and accurate manner. These internal awards will typically appear in one of TTUHSC's internal publications. External awards that are of particular interest to the Office of Communications and Marketing for publication include those from national or international organizations, those related to health care, those conferring a governing interest in a key organization (i.e., board member) and those that generally elevate the status of TTUHSC in the local, state, national and international health care realm. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to discuss all awards with the Office of Communications and Marketing in an effort to identify they meet the criteria for publication.

*Events:* Depending on the type and impact of a particular event, the Office of Communications and Marketing will often provide a combination of media outreach, photography, social media coverage and publication in various TTUHSC publications for events. The Office of Communications and Marketing provides this coverage at the discretion of the Communications and Marketing team member who oversees the requested component (i.e., multimedia manager to decide if requested photography appropriate, creative director to decide on requested designs). The Office of Communications and Marketing will not provide services for personal events or events that do not directly serve the mission of promoting TTUHSC. Additionally, annually and regularly occurring events may not receive the same degree of coverage from the office each time.

## **Style Guidelines**

To present Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) as a quality institution, publications and written material also must be of the highest quality. Adherence to a consistent editorial style is essential to maintaining the university's stature.

Printed materials speak with one voice, present messages clearly and communicate our message and image precisely. Editors should exercise great care to proofread copy and to check spelling.

Download a copy of the guidelines [here](#).

## **Style Guide**

TTUHSC uses “The Associated Press Stylebook” as its basic style guide. In certain instances, however, journalistic style is not appropriate to distinguish between “media style,” which follows the Associated Press, and “publications style,” which follows a more formal academic style.

If AP Style is not sufficient to clearly and accurately convey particular, the editor may elect to deviate from the general style guidelines for clarity. If an alternative style is used, the chosen option should be followed consistently throughout the document or publication. These deviations from AP Style are made at the sole discretion of the Office of Communications and Marketing.

## **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Positioning Statement**

The following paragraph presents positioning for TTUHSC.

*"The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center provides creative solutions to the health care challenges of today and tomorrow. It educates a diverse group of health care professionals for successful careers; it investigates and treats complex health issues, especially those affecting historically underserved populations; and it advances knowledge through research and other innovations that touch the health of people in Texas and beyond."*

This positioning can be supported in marketing and communications to different audiences by making use of the details in the proof point tables.

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## **Proper Names in the Texas Tech University System**

The Texas Tech University System comprises Texas Tech University, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and Angelo State University. Publications should be careful to use the legal names of these components:

- Texas Tech University System
- Texas Tech University
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
- Angelo State University

## **First Reference**

When referring to the comprehensive organization that includes Texas Tech University, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Angelo State University, and all components of the system, use “Texas Tech University System” on the first reference.

When referring to institutions individually, writers should use the full legal name on first reference and can define the abbreviation in parentheses if applicable.

i.e. “Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC)”

### **Subsequent References**

Because three universities make up the Texas Tech University System, it is preferable to avoid using the word “university” alone whenever possible.

**For Texas Tech University:** After the first reference in print, “Texas Tech” may be used to refer to the academic campus. If the word “university” is used, it must be clear that it refers only to the academic campus. If “university” is used in this manner, use lower case letters. “Texas Tech” is acceptable on all references for Web content.

**For Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center:** Never use “Texas Tech” on second reference to mean the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Never use “Texas Tech Health Sciences Center” on any reference. The proper name, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, must be used on first reference. On second reference, TTUHSC may be used. TTUHSC is acceptable on all references for Web content.

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center has campuses in Amarillo, Dallas/Fort Worth, the Permian Basin and Lubbock. To reference one of these campuses on the first reference of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, spell out the entire name of the university and follow it with the name of the city and then “campus.” For example, to reference the Amarillo campus, say “Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Amarillo campus.” It is acceptable to use the abbreviation TTUHSC on second reference and in parentheses following the first reference when naming a specific campus.

**For both universities:** Avoid all uses of “Tech” alone as this implies a technical institution.

### **Abbreviations**

Abbreviations such as TTU or TTUHSC are permissible. Do not abbreviate the names of colleges or schools.

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### **Titles for Individuals**

#### **Academic Degrees**

Holders of honorary degrees do not receive the title.

Use initials after a person’s full name to designate the appropriate degree, such as M.D., Ph.D., R.N., MSN, Pharm.D., MOT, Ed.D., etc. Credential abbreviations with two or fewer periods should include periods within the abbreviation (i.e., M.D., Ph.D.) and credentials with more than two periods should not include periods (i.e., MSN, MOT). Certification titles like FAAN should not use periods in

abbreviations. The person's title should follow on the first reference. Using the last name alone is preferable after the first reference. For example:

- Sam Jones, M.D., chair of the Department of Neuropsychiatry at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, said the appointment reflects the excellence of the faculty.
- The Texas Nurses Association has named Sue Smith, R.N., Ph.D., dean and professor in the School of Nursing at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, as its 2005 Nurse of the Year.

### **Certifications**

Certifications following a name should be avoided, particularly if they are vague to the general public. "While Jim Smith, R.N.," is acceptable for instance, "Jane Sims, FNC," is not because the certification is not generally recognized outside the health care profession. However, if the certification is a pertinent part of the information, then include it by writing out the certification. For example, instead of writing Alexia Green, R.N., Ph.D., FAAN, write Alexia Green, R.N., Ph.D., also is a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing.

No more than two titles should be used after a name.

### **Institutional Titles**

A formal title is capitalized when it precedes a name, but is not capitalized when it follows a name. For example:

- President Douglas Jones, M.D., M.S.
- Earl Grey, president

"Professor" may be used as a formal title when a person holds that distinction.

When the title precedes a proper name, it is capitalized and never abbreviated.

When "professor" follows a proper name, it is preceded by appropriate rank, i.e., "assistant" or "associate" and is not capitalized.

### **Courtesy Titles**

"Mr.," "Mrs.," "Miss" and "Ms." are social or courtesy titles and should be avoided.

On second reference, refer to people, men and women, by their last name only. In cases of sensitive development publications, if a courtesy title is used, always use the individual's preference.

### **Group Designation**

"Faculty" and "staff" are collective nouns that may be used in the singular or in the plural. Whether the writer chooses singular or plural, antecedents should agree.

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### **Abbreviations**

Do not follow a school or college, department, center, institute or organization's full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses. For instance, the School of Medicine should never be abbreviated as "SOM." The Laura W. Bush

Institute for Women's Health should never be abbreviated as LWBIWH. University and college names, including TTUHSC, can be abbreviated only if the institution has adopted an acceptable abbreviation and the abbreviation has been defined in the first reference.

### **Name of Country**

U.S. is acceptable on all references for United States.

### **Names of States**

Recent updates to AP Style have eliminated all abbreviations for state names. All future communication at TTUHSC will adhere to this change and spell out state names.

### **Months**

Spell out the names of months in text material when they stand alone. The following abbreviations are used when providing a date, as in Jan. 13.

- Jan.
- Feb.
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- Aug.
- Sept.
- Oct.
- Nov.
- Dec.

### **Businesses Use**

"Co.," "Cos.," "Corp." or "Inc." for businesses that use "Company," "Companies," "Corporation" or "Incorporated" after their names.

Spell out the word if it falls within a business name, for example, "Aluminum Company of America."

### **Time of Day**

For times, use "a.m." and "p.m." with the hour.

Use "noon" instead of "12 p.m."

Use "midnight" instead of "12 a.m."

Do not use "12 noon" or "12 midnight" as these terms are redundant.

Use the word "to" instead of a dash or hyphen to indicate duration between times. For example, say "7 a.m. to 1 p.m."

Do not list "a.m." or "p.m." twice when indicating start and end times. Instead say "7 to 9 a.m."

### **Events**

Should follow “time, date, place” format.

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## **Capitalization**

### **Titles**

Use lowercase for professional titles unless they immediately precede a name.

When a person is identified strictly by title on second or subsequent references, the title is not capitalized. For example:

- Texas Tech’s chancellor is John Doe, who also is a medical doctor.
- Sam Jones, president of Texas Tech University, spoke Friday.
- President David Ray, M.D., M.S., awarded staff excellence awards Monday.
- The president spoke to the Lady Raiders after the team’s win.

### **Degrees**

Capitalize academic degrees as follows:

- Ph.D., M.D., M.S., M.A., B.S., B.A., Pharm.D., MOT, MSN
- Always include the periods in credentials with two periods.
- Use these abbreviations only after a complete name. Do not use with only a last name.
- In news releases, limit designations to only three degrees.

Generic terms for degrees are not capitalized, for example: “doctoral degree” or “doctorate,” “master’s degree,” “bachelor’s degree.” If you are using the formal name of a degree, it is capitalized. For example: he earned a Master of Science degree from Texas Tech University.

### **Academic Subjects**

Avoid capitalizing an academic subject when it is used as a general field of study.

Capitalize academic subjects when they are part of the official title of a university entity, when they are the name of a language, and when they are the official title of a course or a short title that includes the course number. For example:

- The College of Mass Communications offers programs in advertising, journalism, telecommunications and public relations.
- She majored in chemical engineering and minored in Russian.
- Department of Internal Medicine
- School of Nursing
- Area of Accounting
- He teaches Sociology 3350.

### **Other University-Related Uses**

Capitalize “institute,” “center,” “program,” “division” or “office” when it is part of the formal name, but not when used alone or informally. For example:

- The Center for Applied International Development Studies is a sponsor.
- The center uses advanced technology in research programs.

It is appropriate to refer to a center, institute, program, division or office by the appropriate designation, in lowercase letters, on subsequent references. For example:

- The International Center for Arid and Semiarid Land Studies received a major grant today. The center will use the money to a new project.  
Avoid capitalizing such words as “freshman,” “senior” or “graduate” when the words refer to a stage of study or the classification of a student rather than to the group. For example:
- She was a freshman, majoring in agricultural communications.

### **Government**

Avoid capitalizing the words “city,” “government,” “federal” or “state.” For example:

- United States government
- federal government
- the state Legislature
- Texas Legislature
- the state of Texas, unless referring to the state government, then State is capitalized
- the city of Lubbock, unless referring to the city government, then City is capitalized

Capitalize the formal names of federal or state agencies. For example:

- Texas Department of Agriculture

### **Seasons and Location**

Use lowercase for seasons. For example:

- Transfer students may begin studies in the spring, summer or fall.
- The spring semester begins Wednesday.

Capitalize “west” and other compass points when referring to a region. For example:

- In architecture and lifestyle, Texas Tech University reflects the American West.
- The people of West Texas were determined to have their own university.

Use lowercase for compass points when indicating a direction. For example:

- Many students travel west to the recreation areas of New Mexico.

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## **Numbers**

### **General Use**

Spell out numbers one through nine and first through ninth.

Use figures for numbers 10 and greater. Also use figures to refer to a numerical ranking, a unit of scientific measurement, a percentage or a unit of money. For example:

- Two
- No. 1
- 300

- 10
- 5 percent
- 10th
- 1,040
- 45 kg
- \$5 million
- 7 degrees Celsius or Fahrenheit

### **Starting a Sentence**

Always spell out a number at the beginning of a sentence. A better approach is to rewrite the sentence to avoid using a number at the beginning. For example:

- **INSTEAD OF:** Eight hundred and eighty five architecture majors are included in Texas Tech University’s total enrollment of 28,000.”
- **TRY:** Of Texas Tech’s total enrollment of 28,000 students, 885 are architecture majors.

### **Percentages, Fractions, Large Numbers**

Use numerals for percentages and spell out “percent.” For example:

- 90 percent
- 3 percent

Spell out fractions in text material. Hyphenate fractions when they are used as adjectives or adverbs. For example:

- The book is three-fourths complete.

Use a comma in numerals of 1,000 and above except for temperatures, years, street addresses, broadcast frequencies, room numbers, serial numbers and telephone numbers. For example:

- 2,354
- 3818 degrees Celsius
- 2000 B.C.
- (806) 742-2011

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### **Punctuation**

#### **Serial Comma**

A comma is not required before “and” or “or” in a series of three or more items unless it improves clarity. For example:

- Required courses include English, history and economics.
- Women’s sports now include basketball, softball, golf, tennis and soccer.
- Will you take your tests on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday?
- The departments of surgery, OB-GYN, and family and community medicine will have representatives at the job fair.

#### **Commas and Multiple Adjectives**

Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives equal in rank preceding a noun. For example:

- The summer was a long, hot season. (equal)
- She wore a cheap wool coat. (unequal)

### **Commas in Dates**

Use commas in full dates, but not between month and year or season and year. A comma also should follow the year when used with a month and day in the middle of a sentence. For example:

- The building will be completed in July 2004.
- He was on sabbatical during summer 2001.
- Nov. 22, 1963
- June 6, 1944, was D-Day.

### **Commas in Names**

Associated Press style requires that a comma not be used to separate a name and “Jr.” or “Sr.” or a name and a numeral. For example:

- John D. Rockefeller III

### **Hyphenation**

Hyphenate compound words used as adjectives, but not those that include an adverb ending in -ly. For example:

- The player scored a first-quarter touchdown.
- She has a full-time job in the Department of Surgery.
- The newly appointed director started in January.

### **Apostrophe for Possession**

Use the apostrophe to indicate possession. Note however, that “its” is a possessive pronoun that lacks an apostrophe. “It’s” is a contraction of “it is.”

### **Apostrophe for Plurals**

When words designate a word, do not use an apostrophe and an “s” to indicate plural. For example:

- No ‘ifs,’ ‘ands’ or ‘buts.’

Plurals of figures add an “s” not an apostrophe and an “s.” For example:

- 1920s
- 727s
- low 20s

For plurals of single letters, use an apostrophe and an “s”: For example:

- Mind your p’s and q’s
- Three R’s
- Four A’s and a B

For plurals of multiple letters, including acronyms, add “s.” For example:

- ABCs
- IOUs
- VIPs

### **Composition Titles**

Composition titles are the names of books, movies, operas, plays, poems, songs, television programs, lectures, speeches, works of art, etc. Associated Press style requires that these titles are enclosed in quotation marks and are never italicized.

### **Quotation Marks**

Do not use quotation marks, bold font, underline or italics casually or for emphasis.

Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks.

Question marks and exclamation marks go inside if they are part of the quoted material.

- Dr. Jones said, "It was a great day for everyone."
  - "I understand the directions," he said.
  - Have you seen "Harvey"?
  - The senator asked the nervous lobbyist: "Can you tell me that you honestly did not know the answer?"
- "Said" should always be used when quoting or paraphrasing a source. If quoting a publication, use "according to."

### **Exclamation Marks**

Avoid exclamation marks for emphasis. Use them only sparingly for emotion or a strong feeling.

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### **General Style**

#### **Preferences and Voice**

The following words have more than one spelling. These are preferred versions:

- Acknowledgment
- Adviser
- Judgment
- Percent
- Counselor
- Catalog
- Health care
- 'Orthopaedics' when in reference to the TTUHSC Department of Orthopaedics. For all other references, use 'orthopedics.'

Always write out "and" unless an ampersand (&) is used in an official name or title.

For publications, the names of companies and corporations that support Texas Tech University System programs should be spelled as they appear on their letterhead or corporate statements. Punctuation separating "Inc." should follow Associated Press style and not be used. For example:

- E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. Inc.

When referring to equipment that has been donated to the university or university system, give the proper trade name and spell the company correctly. For example:

- Microsoft Windows software  
Avoid redundancies. For example:
- **INSTEAD OF:** most unique
- **USE:** unique  
Avoid passive voice. For example:
- **INSTEAD OF:** The increase in salaries was approved by the Board of Regents.
- **TRY:** The Board of Regents approved the increase in salaries.  
Avoid beginning sentences with “There are” and “It is.”  
In formal writing, avoid first person (I, we) and second person (you).  
In less formal documents, first and second person sometimes may be used to create a more personal tone.

### **Diversity**

Every effort should be made to demonstrate diversity in photographs and copy, including featuring gender, racial and other minorities.

### **Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Language**

It is recommended that publications and letterhead from the Texas Tech University System, Texas Tech University and the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center should include some form of Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action statement.

At a minimum, it is recommended that you use: “An EEO/Affirmative Action Institution” on your publications.

For other wording, or for questions, please contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at (806) 742-3627.

### **Terminology**

Re-read copy carefully to avoid racist, sexist or insensitive implications.

“Handicapped,” “disabled” and “impaired” should be used carefully and only when clearly pertinent and appropriate for your material. Keep in mind the following meanings and choices:

- Disabled is a term describing an individual’s ability to do something independently.
- Impaired implies difficulties in handling certain tasks.
- Handicapped should be avoided to describe a disability. The best way to describe disabled individuals is “persons with disabilities.”

### **Races and Ethnicities**

Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, races and tribes. For example:

- African-American
- Arabic
- Arab

- Asian
- Caucasian
- Cherokee
- Chinese
- Hispanic
- Japanese
- Jewish
- Lakota
- Latin-American
- Mexican-American

Lower case “black,” “white” and other racial designations, whether used as adjectives or nouns.

For questions, please contact the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs at (806) 743-1522.

### **Gender-Specific Language**

Writers of Texas Tech University System publications should avoid suggestions that programs and aspects of general university life are limited to or directed at a specific gender.

Do not use “he” when the intent is “he or she” or “she or he.” For example:

- **INSTEAD OF:** A student applying for financial aid should file his application for admission by Jan. 1.
- **TRY:** Students applying for financial aid should file their applications for admission by Jan. 1.
- **INSTEAD OF:** The student must have an overall grade-point-average of at least 3.0 to satisfy the requirements of his school.
- **TRY:** A 3.0 grade-point-average is required to satisfy the requirements of the school.

Though “he or she” or “he/she” may be used occasionally, careful attention to writing will avoid awkward language and the over-use of these terms.

In some cases, the male and female references can be alternated. In other cases, no gender-specific word need be used at all.

### **Proper Gender Use**

When reference to a specific gender is necessary, “men” and “women” generally are the preferred titles. For example:

- Texas Tech University men may belong to several Greek and service organizations.
- Texas Tech University women have built an enviable reputation on the basketball court.
- Sigma Theta Tau is the international honor society for nursing. Membership is open to men and women, by invitation, based on high academic achievement. Sometimes “male” and “female” may be appropriate. For example:
- Male students are housed in Sneed Hall, while females occupy Horn and Knapp halls.
- Numbers of female faculty are increasing.

“Boys” and “girls” properly refer to children.

“Alumnus” (“alumni” in the plural) refers to a man who has attended a college or university. “Alumna” (“alumnae” in the plural) refers to a woman who has attended a school. “Alumni” is the correct Latin plural for use when referring to both men and women who have attended a school.

### **More Information**

If you have questions about style, refer to “The Associated Press Stylebook” or contact the Office of Communications and Marketing at (806) 743-2143.

### **Social Media**

In accordance with OP 67.03, TTUHSC Office of Communications and Marketing is responsible for maintaining and/or monitoring official pages related to the university, including but not limited to identities on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, blogs and Google pages related to TTUHSC. Social media experts are available within the Office of Communications and Marketing to discuss strategy and advise regarding content. The Office of Communications and Marketing has the authority to order the editing or removal of social media content it deems inappropriate, even if the content appears on an official TTUHSC page for which the office is not an administrator.

Contact the Office of Communications and Marketing at (806) 743-2143 with questions or concerns about social media.

### **Registering a New Social Media Page**

TTUHSC departments or other organizations who wish to start an affiliated social media page, must register the page with the Office of Communications and Marketing in advance. The Office of Communications and Marketing will help the new page administrator determine the goals, scope and objective of creating the page and work to outline a clear strategy to meet the desired objective.

In some cases, the Office of Communications and Marketing might deny a request to create a new social media page if the goals for the page are already addressed on another page, the subject matter is inappropriate, there is no clear strategy, the Office of Communications and Marketing does not believe the goals are appropriate or feasible for social media or other reasons.

### **Updating Social Media**

Updates to social media pages must follow best practices. These include:

- Posts should be made regularly in accordance with best practice of the particular social media platform used
- Posted content should be relevant to both TTUHSC and the objective of the page.
- Posted content should be appropriate, accurate and grammatically sound.

Additionally, page administrators should remain consistent in how often they post.

**Failure to comply**

If any existing page experiences an extended lapse in posts or continually fails to meet defined social media protocol, the Office of Communications and Marketing may require the page be shut down or that it be managed by the office until a qualified person in the department or organization is able to regain control of it.

**New Administrators**

If the page administrator changes at any time, the department or organization must contact the Office of Communications and Marketing to establish a working contact connection for any issues related to the page.

**Please see OP 67.03 for more information about TTUHSC social media.**