Pembroke Social Media Strategy and Guidelines

Rationale

We need to regularly review and adapt our communications channels in response to changing times. The prospective student audience in particular sees rapid change which we must assess and respond to.

Our goals on social media should be to achieve long-term audience growth and to build an authentic community of engaged followers and contributors, giving information and generating conversations.

Every channel requires a commitment to ongoing bespoke content and audience development.

Objectives

1. Raise the College’s profile locally as well as around the world
2. Demonstrate the cross-section of College life to prospective students
3. Encourage strong association with and affection for the College among alumni
4. Increase our overall audience size and interactions over time

Pembroke College social media channels

Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram

Pembroke is among the most-followed Oxford Colleges on social media. This has been achieved by dedicating time to engaging with this emerging audience, maintaining communication and thereby growing our followers.

Interaction has been focused on the sharing of images/news (primarily Fellows’ research and impact) and videos (lectures / events / student stories) via YouTube.

Pembroke College audience size (as of 11th November 2015):

- Facebook: 2046
- Twitter: 3082
- YouTube: 60 subscribers, almost 30,000 views
- LinkedIn: 1005
- Instagram: N/A (account to be set up soon)

Channel Use

Twitter is the channel most frequently used at this time. 60% of 18-24 years are Twitter users (45% of 25-34 year olds are users and 30% of those in the 45+ age bracket). The largest Oxford College following on Twitter is for Univ (3,972) so there is considerable potential for growth. It should be noted that Univ has exceptional numbers, compared to other Colleges. We will retweet content
from others (whether part of the University or not), dependent on whether it is of interest to our audience or not. We will join in conversations in which the College has a legitimate role to play, and we will tweet around relevant news hooks, whether planned and external or spontaneous and generated by the social media community – again, only where we have relevance and credibility.

**Facebook** is used in two ways: for sharing photographs and events with alumni on their group (they are able to view images from an e-news (or other) link without having their own Facebook account) and for attracting and informing prospective applicants on our Access and Admissions Facebook page. This latter page will soon be changed into a general ‘Pembroke College Oxford Official’ Facebook page as a platform for sharing photos, news, events and stories with a wider audience; prospective applicants, current staff and students, alumni and the general public.

**YouTube** is primarily being used as a hosting site for our videos (it’s an easy link). Our relationship with users on YouTube is not interactive. The option to comment is disabled.

**LinkedIn** has thus far not been used actively as a means of communication, but is useful for collecting contact information, and there has been sporadic ‘chat’ between alumni. It will be suggested that posts are made by the College less frequently than on other channels but more often than in the past – perhaps monthly or twice-termly – in order to summarise College news and events most relevant to alumni. LinkedIn will not be used to reach prospective applicants.

**Instagram** is exclusively a photo-sharing app, available on mobile only, with a young average user base. Most users are aged 25 and under, and the platform is very popular with those aged 21 and under. Therefore, Instagram is a logical choice for sharing beautiful and interesting photos of College life with prospective applicants. Current students and staff of Pembroke will be encouraged to submit photos to be shared on our Instagram website; in order to maintain appropriate standards and monitor tone, the photos will be submitted to the Communications team, who will review and upload accordingly.

### Content Generation

A group will be convened by the communications team twice a term to review relevant events, campaigns and other content for each channel. This will include the Admissions Officer, Alumni Relations Manager and student reps plus any others who would like to contribute. The Comms Team will then take responsibility for all posting except for the Facebook-specific alumni page, with support from other content group members on specific campaigns/events as appropriate.

### Content Guidelines

Data Protection Act 1998 – never disclose confidential information

Photographs – should be monitored for sensitive information (background details etc.)

- it is against policy to ‘tag’ individuals in Facebook photos
- we do not publish photographs of children under 16
- only name individuals who are appearing in a ‘public’ forum
- unflattering photographs should be avoided
**Respect and consideration is paramount.** This refers, not least, to fellow College/University members in line with the University Harassment Policy.

**Opinions which are discriminatory or likely to cause offence will never be expressed.** Especially those which could contravene the Equality Act 2010 (referring to gender/sexuality/nationality/disability/marriage/religion-belief).

**Content relating to the University should be flagged to those responsible for its generation before posting** (this does not refer to ‘retweeting’ which is information already in the public domain).

**We will not engage in overtly political debate or dialogue on social media.**

**Response guidelines**

Social media is about conversation and dialogue, not about being a one-way broadcast channel. These channels are rapidly becoming a primary mechanism allowing people to get in touch, ask questions, offer opinions and so forth. It is fundamentally important that the College engages in conversation on social media – and is seen to be doing so. The primary channels on which we are expected to engage with users are **Twitter** and – to a slightly lesser extent – **Facebook**.

We will respond to all genuine questions when a response is possible (i.e. non-confidential, we have the relevant info, etc.), and will also respond to comments mentioning the College. The level of response can range from a ‘favourite’ or ‘like’ (passive acknowledgment of a post) to a comment or dialogue.

In general, we respond to everything unless it is:

- Offensive/hate speech – on **Facebook** (where we have control), these posts will be **deleted**.
- Spam/sales/self-promotion – see above
- The type of ‘I want to study at Oxford, please tell me how’ post that we receive mainly on **Facebook** – these posts will not receive a response (even the negative response of deleting)
- The same user asking variations on the same question which has already received the appropriate response. Such recognised ‘repeat posters’ who post the same criticism or question to us will be invited to take the conversation offline (email).

**Taking things offline** – Take complaints offline as soon as we can if they can’t be defused in one reply, by encouraging people to email us. This makes them easier to deal with, and brings people back into a traditional dialogue, rather than a series of complaints spilling out over public social channels.

**What needs a response?**

Generally speaking, anything that asks us a direct question, levels a criticism directly at us, or aims some praise directly our way should be responded to. When a debate starts up around something that’s not directly related to us, we will usually leave the community to discuss it among themselves. Mentions in passing/neutral mentions can be passed over without comment.