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Important notice regarding the use of social media by Stellenbosch University students and staff

Stellenbosch University (SU) recognises the importance of the internet and social media¹ in shaping public thinking about our University and our services, students, staff and stakeholders. SU also recognises the importance of our students and staff engaging in and helping to stimulate conversation through interaction in social media. Students and staff are encouraged to interact online about SU matters and developments in higher education. However, it is important to understand that **the use of social media as a communication channel is subject to existing SU policies and procedures**, specifically the:

- [Disciplinary Code for Students of Stellenbosch University](#) (applicable to students)
- [Policy on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment](#) (applicable to staff and students)
- [Electronic Communications Policy](#) (applicable to staff and students)

All students and staff are responsible for their own compliance with these policies and should take the time to read and understand these. Behaviours such as misconduct, harassment and victimisation conducted online are addressed in these policies. Any form of online bullying, verbal abuse, defamation, slander and/or name-calling, among others, falls into the same category as face-to-face communication and written communication.

Allegations of online misconduct, harassment and victimisation are regarded just as seriously as similar actions through traditional verbal and written communication. An aggrieved party may report such behaviour (e.g. misconduct, harassment or victimisation through any of the social media channels) to the **Equality Unit**, which may refer matters to Student Discipline (for students) or Human Resources (for staff) as necessary.

The Equality Unit's contact details are:

- unfair@sun.ac.za
- 021 808-3136
- 39 Victoria Street, Stellenbosch

The Corporate Communication Division is developing a comprehensive Social Media Policy but until the policy has been completed, the rules in existing policies and this notice will apply.

*Issued by the Senior Director: Corporate Communication
10 February 2017*

¹ "Social media" is defined as any mobile or web-based application or service that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content, such as a blog, wiki, social network and other interactive websites. Examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and news websites that allow the public to comment.