

## **College of Education Social Network Points for Discussion**

The majority of college students belong to some type of social network. Through the virtual environment of the World Wide Web students share their thoughts, chat with friends, and build communities. Although these communities are fun and have many benefits, there are risks inherent with their use. As a future teacher it is important for you to be aware that some of these risks could damage your future employment opportunities. It is important to remember that on-line postings are available to anyone, including prospective employers. It is also important to understand that postings can be copied, modified and posted to other sites. Once posted on the Internet, digital information is accessible to anyone, anywhere, anytime, **forever**.

Because **teachers are** viewed as **role models** for young people, school communities and society in general hold teachers to a higher standard of conduct. Modern technology allows students to observe teacher behaviors in new ways. This makes **professional digital citizenship** a crucial issue for teachers and pre-service teachers.

It is the vision of the College of Education to prepare educators who are “knowledgeable, ethical, caring decision makers.” In order to ensure opportunities for a long-term successful teaching career, the following list of risky behaviors are provided for your consideration.

- Your reputation is at stake! Online profiles posted should be consistent with the image you wish to present to future employers.
- As a student teacher, harassing language, possible university alcohol, and/or drug policy violations are subject to investigation and sanction.
- Involvement with videos of inappropriate, illegal, questionable material or discussing obscene libelous or inappropriate topics or images may result in a negative reference or non-consideration for an employment decision.
- Participation in wiki blogs with inappropriate topics may result in a negative reference or non-consideration for an employment decision.
- Instant messaging (IM) or chatting with students or colleagues regarding inappropriate personal topics may result in charges such as sexual harassment.
- Text messaging K-12 students about inappropriate personal issues or topics may result in termination of student teaching or lab experiences and termination of employment.

This list contains examples and is not exhaustive. New technologies (not listed here) may have similar issues or repercussions. Please use professionalism when considering the use of social networking and the possible ethical issues involved.