Best Practices

- When using photos of identifiable people, use full names when you have approval <u>and</u> it serves a purpose; otherwise refrain from using names to help protect people's privacy. http://communications.highline.edu//docs/ReleaseandAssignment.pdf
- Sites should be updated at least once a week, or as appropriate, based on their purpose.
  - Facebook: Timely responses are critical. You should plan for a minimum of 3 -4 posts a day.
  - Twitter: You are offering a service to your followers/visitors. What you're putting out content-wise, and why, can help you decide the number and content of tweets sent out. (**"**For Twitter Newbies—Twitbies" *By Fritz McDonald, Vice President Creative Strategy)*
- Facebook content should be 75% fun, 25% information

Tips and Tools

- Twitalyzer   http://twitalyzer.com/help.asp http://twitalyzer.com/help.asp#definitions
- Twitter.grader.com: Twitter Grader is a free tool that allows you to check the power of your twitter profile compared to millions of other users that have been graded.
- http://bit.ly/ or http://tinyurl.com - shorten a long URL
- NCMPR recommended sites:
  - Promotion – St Charles CC (look for the official site) http://www.facebook.com/stchas
  - Retention – Bristol CC http://www.facebook.com/BristolCommunityCollege

1. add a photo to your profile—it will help people remember you.
2. start by sending a tweet or two each day to see how it feels. If you're stuck for content, write down some ideas for tweets before sending them out—this will build your confidence. Also, you can visit Web pages and blogs that are particularly interesting and share them by retweeting (defined below). Look for a "share" or "retweet" button—this is probably the easiest way to get involved and will also earn you followers.
3. you are offering a service to your followers. what you're putting out content-wise and why can help you decide the number and content of tweets sent out
4. Trending—you can follow the hot trends about what people are tweeting. You can find the list on the lower right column of your home page. Click on a link and you will go to the tweetstream (conversation) on that topic. You can also change the list—hit the change link just below "Trending" to update. If you want to, you can participate in these conversations, but you must stay on topic. To learn how to participate, go to the Trending Topics help page. Unfortunately, the higher ed community is not all that large compared to other communities, and doesn't often spark trending topics.
5. @replies are public replies to individual tweets—they should show up in your tweets to your followers. This reply/update starts with a user name: @+username and then your message. It's one way people talk to each other on Twitter without spamming them, and a good thing to do but not overdo. You should do it when you want to begin or be part of a conversation. You can also get mentioned in

other people's tweets—you'll see your @username. Usually, this is a positive thing.

6. Download and use TweetDeck—a very useful tool for tracking and being alerted to tweets, friends, and communities. It's still free as far as I know.

7. Tweetie is the iPhone app you can use to connect to Twitter when you're on the road. Twitterberry is an RIM app that does similar things. Check the apps your phone offers—if you can't get Tweetie, you should be able to get something like it. This will save you from getting text message charges.

8. Like all good websites, Twitter has a great help/resources page. The link is up in the top right corner of your home page.

9. Be aware of the 140 character limit—it sneaks up on you. However, if you use TweetDeck it will automatically shorten most tweets that are over the limit. If you are 200 characters over the limit, it won't shorten them, but you can link to services like bit.ly or tinyurl to shorten them. TweetDeck will do this automatically, but every now and then it won't work on something way too long. It's better to master the art of short messages. Get to the point and remember you only have room to make one point.

10. Retweeting is a great way to make new friends on Twitter. You have to be following whoever you retweet to do so, but when you do it you attract interest from other people who are not currently following you. On your Twitter profile page, you can do it manually—you'll see the 'reweet' button on the right side of the tweet. TweetDeck gives you the tools to do it automatically and easily. Don't retweet everything and don't retweet all day long, but get into the habit of retweeting things you think are valuable and worth repeating. It's a great way to build community.

11. You can and should block unsavory characters who are trying to follow you. Twitter is so-so on monitoring spam and sleaze; you have to be on the alert.

12. Hashtags are a way to group tweets around a particular subject—they are commonly used at conferences and events. A hashtag looks

like this: #simtech09...the # symbol always precedes the title or name. When you use them, you participate in the discussion at the event or on that topic alone. You can also follow the tweetstream on that topic or event.

13. Remember that Twitter is still new—it's the youngest major platform—and we're all still trying to figure it out.

14. If you really like Twitter, then this book is the best guide I've seen on the subject: **The Twitter Book**