# GUIDE TO STARTING A DIVERSITY LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

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INTRODUCTION

“What is diversity?” is a question that gets asked a lot, and one that is difficult to answer given the incredible scope of who is covered in the term diversity, namely everyone. Millennial diversity can be well described less as a melting pot and more of a tossed salad, where individuals define themselves and their information needs from a large array of choices rather than from a limited, prescribed list.

Most institutions may have diversity-oriented student groups at the university level, or groups that address a specific topic or population. However, many graduate students studying information professions may wish to participate in diversity-oriented learning opportunities within their school that are more well-suited to their future work as information professionals. Establishing a specialized student organization, not unlike student chapters of larger parent organizations, may be a good fit for your school.

This document is designed as a guide to establishing such an organization. It includes information on how one such organization was successfully established, and can be customized to fit the differing needs of your school. It discusses finding a purpose, how to get your organization off the ground, and what to do once you get there. A “New Organization Checklist” is provided at the end of the document to help organize and prioritize tasks along with sample policies and constitution.

If you have any questions about how we work, how we have evolved, or just want to chat, always feel free to reach out to us at iDiversity.UMD@gmail.com.

Good luck with forming your organization!

iDiversity

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ABOUT iDIVERSITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

iDiversity was created to address library and information science students’ invested interest and concern about the barriers to access created when issues of diversity, representation, accessibility, inclusion, and cultural competency are not successfully acknowledged throughout the information professions. One student was frustrated when she wanted to join an American Library Association Special Interest Group on Diversity and found that one didn’t exist. A professor suggested that she should start one in the school and agreed to serve as a mentor and faculty advisor. iDiversity was formerly founded on February 3rd, 2011, and has since gained strong support from University of Maryland iSchool students, faculty, and alumni as well as support from the community and academics from other areas of study.

iDiversity seeks to identify and share information about diversity issues, address the information needs of underserved populations, and raise awareness about diversity issues within a library and information science school. iDiversity seeks to achieve its goals by digital and community outreach, holding regular meetings that invite members and non-members to discuss issues of diversity, hosting programs, championing hands-on projects and training, and presenting at professional conferences and events.

iDiversity truly began in the first moments that the professor agreed to mentor the student in her endeavor and serve as a faculty advisor for the new organization. Working with that faculty member, the student identified and approached a group of like-minded students to form a core group who would ultimately serve as the first officers. This core group contacted the university’s graduate student services to be informed on regulations for student organizations. A constitution was drafted. They held open invitation meetings and addressed the faculty to gain support. They reached out to academics and professionals in the field to build actionable learning opportunities for students. They established a webspace and social media presence to share information. They spread the message that understanding issues of diversity in our profession is critical to serving the needs of our patrons and clients.

Now iDiversity hopes to see similarly dedicated student-driven groups established at other universities around the country and the globe to spread the message to an entire generation of budding professionals while reaching out to faculty, academics, and professionals already in the field.
MISSION AND VISION

Establish A Purpose

In the earliest stages of forming your organization, begin your focus with establishing a purpose. Why do you want to form this kind of group within your school and how will it benefit the school community and the profession at large?

Two primary reasons should receive strong consideration:

- To raise awareness of the critical nature of representation, inclusion, accessibility, and cultural competency within the information professions.
- To create opportunities for learning and action where diversity within the information professions is concerned or exists.

Why Are Mission and Vision Important?

A mission and vision are important for student groups because of the rapid turnover of “management” of such groups. A good mission and vision will embody a common purpose, set of goals, and the values of the group and will keep them constant from year to year. The mission and vision also give group members a clear sense of said purpose, goals, and values. Both the mission and vision are inward facing statements, to remind group members of the reason for the group, and outward facing statements, to give others a sense of what the group does.

Simply, a mission statement includes the purpose and objectives of the student group while a vision statement embodies not just the purpose but also the values of a student group. A vision statement also can include where the student groups hopes to be or what it hopes to achieve in future years.

Sample Mission and Vision

The following is the mission and vision of iDiversity at University of Maryland. In order to deliver a consistent message and ‘brand’, we ask you these mission and vision statements if you choose to call your organization iDiversity.

iDiversity’s Mission

iDiversity at the University of Maryland promotes awareness of diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility within the information professions. The iDiversity group strives to create and maintain a dialogue between iSchool students, alumni, and faculty, as well as information professionals outside the university, to ensure that issues of diversity are addressed in practice, research, and technology.

iDiversity’s Vision

For the iSchool: iDiversity will remain committed as a change agent to promote an inclusive and sustainable legacy of open communication, shared knowledge, mentoring, and cultural competency within the iSchool, as well as encourage a continuous culture of diversity within LIS education.

For the profession: iDiversity envisions a world where information spaces reflect the global community and a level playing field; information is equitably and inclusively accessible; research contributes new modes of access and representation for underserved populations; and diversity
becomes an integrated part of our consciousness as information professionals through exploration, education, and mentoring.
WRITING A CONSTITUTION

Why is a Constitution Important?

Most institutions require that a constitution or similar document be drafted and submitted before the organization can be formally established and recognized. This can be done by one core group member or collaboratively. Using tools such as Google Documents may be a good method for working collaboratively and clarifying the document before final submission. Check your institution’s requirements for an acceptable constitution.

A constitution can also serve as a point of order should administrative or membership situations arise where the best course of action is not immediately clear. Having a recognized constitution helps to ensure accountability.

What does a Constitution Contain?

Consider including some of the following:

- Mission and vision.
- Officers and role description.
- How officers will be selected, and how and when elections (if any) will be held.
- What to do if an officer cannot perform their duties.
- Who can be members (current students, alumni, faculty, etc.).
- How membership is obtained and maintained, and what members are entitled to.
- Policies (e.g. social media policy).

Sample Constitution

iDiversity’s most current constitution is included as a sample in Appendix 1.
DIGITAL PRESENCE

Why is a digital presence important?

A digital presence is invaluable to a successful group. Digital tools can help you get the word out about events, recruit new members and keep in touch with current members. Digital tools can also be used as a forum for generating ideas and reaching a wider audience than your school. The following are some tips for creating a digital presence.

Email

If your school does not already give you access to a specific email address, you should set up your own. Gmail is an excellent tool because it also offers access to Google Drive (for document management and editing), Google Forms (for questionnaires), Google Hangouts (for uploading videos of events and programs), and Google Calendar. Here are some tips for using email to support your activities:

- **Subject Lines**: Make sure your subject lines are specific, yet succinct. Vague language or long sentences can deter some recipients from opening emails.
- **Listservs**: Many universities create listservs to which students, faculty and staff can subscribe. This allows groups to send a single email to the listserv, which then forwards that email to subscribers.
- **Edit, Edit, Edit**: Before you hit send, make sure you read through the email one last time to catch grammatical errors as well content errors. This should be kept in mind for every aspect of your digital presence, including your website and social media posts.

Website

Websites are important for providing the fullest picture of your organization, including its executive board, purpose, mission, goals and how members can join and contact the organization. Most schools can provide you with a server on which to host your website. While you may designate a single Webmaster, it is valuable to have multiple people able to edit the website to keep it as up-to-date as possible. The design should refrain from being too complicated so that visitors can easily navigate to important information. It should also be accessible to all people. W3C offers tips and tools for making websites accessible at [www.w3.org/WAI/gettingstarted/Overview.html](http://www.w3.org/WAI/gettingstarted/Overview.html).

An important caution when building a website: while it might look nice to have it customized and complicated, it is important to keep in mind who will need to edit the website now, and in the future. One executive board might be very tech savvy and able to run a highly customized website, but the next board might not. Keep it simple enough.

Social Media

Social media provides an effective way of spreading the mission and values of your group, as well as informing members of upcoming events. The variety of social media tools available offer different pros and cons. Each group should evaluate their mission, the capabilities of their members and their time before committing to each social media tool. Here is a list of social media outlets to consider:

- **Facebook**: The most basic and widely used outlet, Facebook can be used to create a page through which to communicate to current and potential members. You can also schedule
posts for a specific time, which can be useful for keeping posts timely and not overloading followers.

• **Twitter**: Twitter is an excellent tool for sending quick snippets of information to followers, as well as networking with other groups. The 140-character limit can be a challenge for groups, so keep it in mind.

• **Google+**: Another tool that comes with your Gmail account, Google+ is similar to Facebook in many regards, though it is not nearly as popular.

• **Instagram**: This tool is a way of sharing images with followers. It can be useful to groups who take pictures of events or prefer communicating through images.

• **YouTube**: If you have the capability creating videos, of events and special speakers, for example, then YouTube is a useful tool for sharing these with members. You can also embed these videos using other social media tools.

**Social Media Policy**

Whatever tools you choose, you may choose to govern their use by a social media policy. This policy can ensure that social media content adheres to the organization’s mission and vision, as well as keeping their use consistent through the years. For an example of a social media policy, see Appendix 2.
EVENTS

Types of Events
In a diversity organization, it is important to get people (students, alumni, and faculty) interested and involved. Public events are a great way to do this. Organizing a panel discussion or book-and-bake sale can garner attention and provide a space for people to engage with current diversity-related world news.

How to Hold an Event
Holding an event in an academic setting involves a series of steps:

1. Select a date and time carefully.
   a. The timing of the event can vastly impact turn-out. If you are planning a panel discussion, it is best to schedule it when the majority of your intended participants can attend. Friday early evenings appear to work well, because it is both the end of the week and not during the workday. Weekends may work better in your institution, so asking around may prove valuable.
   b. Setting an event too close to Midterms, Breaks, and Finals can also diminish the available number of participants.

2. Schedule your space early.
   a. If you want to use a classroom or other specific area of a building, it is imperative to make the appropriate arrangements. Departmental and administrative secretaries are instrumental in determining if an area is available and can be reserved for your event.

3. Get the word out.
   a. Having an event that is not publicized is much like winking at someone in the dark; if the intended audience is not aware, the act will not have the intended effect. Emailing listservs, putting up fliers, utilizing social media, and conversing about the event will all help to draw attention to it. Catchy phrases and cheesy one-liners can grab attention. When making posters, opt for red accents; red draws attention more than other colors and will help your poster stand out.

4. Record the event.
   a. Not everyone who is interested in attending will be able to, so it is in the interest of all to record the panel discussion, post photos, and close caption any audio components. Posting these items to public forum will enable people to see what you accomplished, engage in the group, and will help to foster continued discussion.

5. Leave spaces clean.
   a. It goes without saying that leaving a room or outdoor space clean will make your group more attractive if it ever comes down to competing for event space in the future.

6. Remember to thank people.
   a. The person who helped you to secure the space for you event, the panelists, participants, and attendees all contributed to the success of your event. Making sure everyone's help is appreciated will aid in your future event triumphs.
PROJECTS

What are Projects?

Projects are a way for students to get involved in ongoing efforts to contribute to and/or learn about diversity within library and information professions. At the same time as offering students valuable hands-on experience, each project produces valuable outcomes that benefit others, often within both the institution and outside it.

iDiversity’s Projects

As of April 2014, iDiversity has five ongoing projects. These are:

- **Little Free Libraries:** Little Free Libraries are a doll-house sized “take a book, leave a book” gathering places where neighborhoods can thrive over having interesting, new, and changing literature. This project will place Little Free Libraries in areas of lower socio-economic status to help promote literacy and give more access to literature directly to a population who might otherwise not have easy access to it.

- **Curriculum Development:** There is an opportunity for every class at the iSchool to address diversity within its curriculum. Starting with the core classes, this project will develop a guide for instructors on how to incorporate more diversity within their curricula. By including diversity in every class, students at the iSchool will be aware of diversity issues that they can implement in their future careers.

- **Library Volunteering:** This project will help libraries with one-day volunteering opportunities, such as tackling a big project with several volunteers over a select number of hours, or helping staff and set up a library program or event.

- **Information Literacy Mentor Program:** In partnership with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), this project is designed to provide hands-on information literacy instruction experience through a one-on-one mentoring program with UDC students.

- **Closed Captioning:** Those involved in this project work on the wealth of iDiversity videos ranging from iDiversity talks, panel sessions, and speakers that are all in need of captioning. This project will help make valuable video content accessible to a wider audience.

Other Project Ideas

There are countless diversity-related projects that library and information science students could create. A good place to start is to look within the institution and see whether there are any unfulfilled diversity needs, since there will usually be helpful staff and faculty willing to help and/or advise. For example, does your institution’s own library system have any diversity-related programming or displays?

The local community is often in need of more or improved library and information services. Contact local libraries, museums, archives, and other information organizations to see if they have needs you can fulfill and that are relevant to your vision and mission. For example, a local historical house may need help setting up a physical archive and digital database of its small book collection.

Project Teams

Each project has a small team (three to five people) with a project lead that is responsible for providing the executive board with progress reports. The project lead may or may not be a member
of the board – if not, a member of the executive board should be assigned as the board liaison for that project so that there is always a connection between the executive board and a project.

**Funding**

Some projects require funding, but most can be successful with hard work alone. If funds are required, for example to buy materials to build a Little Free Library, first ask your faculty advisor for suggestions. Explore grants that may be awarded by your institution as a whole – grants for diversity-related projects may be awarded by a multicultural or diversity office.

Independent fundraising can be done by holding a book-and-bake sale, which have proven to be particularly popular (even more so if you offer juice boxes!). Allowing customers to pay whatever they wish, as opposed to setting prices, will garner more generous donations, especially if paying by card is an option (a service made easy by Square and Paypal, among others).

Funds raised can also be used to buy business cards that expand your physical presence, as well as edible goodies that attract attendees to events.
NEW ORGANIZATION CHECKLIST

This checklist summarizes the document above. Check off each of these to get on your way to starting a diversity-related student organization!

1. **Create a Mission for your organization.**
   a. If you wish to call your organization iDiversity, please use the Mission from iDiversity at University of Maryland to ensure continuity in branding.

2. **Create a Vision for your organization.**

3. **Write a Constitution (if applicable).**

4. **Create an organization email address.**

5. **Build a website.**
   a. What information will go on the website?
   b. What service will you host your website through?

6. **Create social media accounts for your social media.**

7. **Consider what kind of events you want to host.**

8. **Consider what kind of projects you want to pursue.**

9. **Hold a launch event.**

10. **Raise some money through fundraising or grants.**
   a. Buy business cards to hand out at events.
   b. Keep a little money aside for event food and beverages.
APPENDIX 1 – IDIVERSITY CONSTITUTION

Preamble
We, the members of iDiversity (or the “Organization”) do hereby establish this Constitution in order that our purpose be realized to its fullest extent.

Articles

Article I – Name
The name of the organization will be iDiversity.

Article II – Purpose
The purpose of iDiversity at the University of Maryland is to promote awareness of diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility within the information professions. The iDiversity student group strives to create and maintain a dialogue between iSchool students, alumni, and faculty, as well as information professionals outside the university, to ensure that issues of diversity are addressed in practice, research, and technology.

iDiversity understands and is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities of abiding by University of Maryland, College Park policies.

Article III – Membership
Membership will be limited to persons connected with the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park as faculty, staff, currently enrolled students, or alumni. To become a member of iDiversity, interested persons must attend one organization meeting and apply for membership.

In addition, in order to maintain active membership, members must do at least one of the following:
- Attend at least 75% of all open meetings and designated events during a given semester; or
- Actively participate in an iDiversity project (active participation in a project is to be defined, in writing, by that project’s Project Manager); or
- Attend at least one open meeting or designated event during a given semester and pay dues of $5.00 per semester.

iDiversity does not restrict membership or discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, personal appearance, age, national origin, political affiliation, or physical or mental disability. (For definitions of “personal appearance” and “sexual orientation,” see the University’s Code of Human Relations (“Code”).

Article IV – Officers
iDiversity will be governed by the following means:
1. The Executive Board will be comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Events Coordinator, Social Media Coordinator, Webmaster, Alumni Representative, and two At-Large members.
2. The current Executive Board of iDiversity will elect the incoming President, until such time that iDiversity has Voting Members (as defined in Article V(2)). The role and duties of the President are set forth in Appendix A.

3. The current Executive Board of iDiversity will elect the incoming Vice President, until such time that iDiversity has Voting Members (as defined in Article V(2)). The role and duties of the Vice President are set forth in Appendix A.

4. The current Executive Board of iDiversity will elect the incoming Secretary, until such time that iDiversity has Voting Members (as defined in Article V(2)). The role and duties of the Secretary are set forth in Appendix A.

5. The current Executive Board of iDiversity will elect the incoming Treasurer, until such time that iDiversity has Voting Members (as defined in Article V(2)). The role and duties of the Treasurer are set forth in Appendix A.

6. The Faculty/Staff Advisor will be appointed by the University of Maryland’s College of Information Studies. The role and duties of the faculty/staff advisor are set forth in Appendix A.

7. All officers of iDiversity must be currently enrolled students or alumni of the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park.

8. A complete and updated list of the duties of each office will be kept in Appendix A: Description of iDiversity Offices.

9. Any vacancy which may occur in an office will be filled by an appointment by the remaining members of the Executive Board.

10. The Executive Board will hold regular meetings, including at least four during each of the fall and spring semesters and at least one during the summer. Meetings can be held in person or by electronic means. The Executive Board is responsible for establishing policy, developing programs and projects, and ensuring that the organization's activities further its purpose.

Article V – Operations

(1) Open Meetings

Open meetings of the group will be held four times per semester for the purpose of discussing activities, programs, projects and other business. At such time as iDiversity has voting members, elections will take place at an Open Meeting.

A simple majority of active members shall constitute a quorum.

(2) Voting Eligibility

Members meeting all requirements of active members, as set forth in Article III, will be granted voting privileges and will hereinafter be referred to as “Voting Members”.

(3) Election Process

Until such time that iDiversity has Voting Members, all officers shall be elected by the existing Executive Board during the month of May, based upon a previously compiled list of nominated individuals.
Upon the establishment of Voting Members, all elections will be held on an annual basis during the month of May with at least one week’s notice given prior to the meeting at which elections are to be held. Terms of office shall begin on June 1st and run until the following May 31st. Once the President has taken nominations from the floor, the nomination process must be closed and the movement seconded by a Voting Member. The nominated parties will be allowed to vote. All voting shall be done by secret ballot to be collected and tabulated by the Treasurer and one Voting Member, to be appointed by the outgoing President.

(4) Removal

Any officer of iDiversity who acts in violation of the Organization's purpose or constitution may be removed from office by the following process:

1. At least three Voting Members of the Organization must present a written request to any member of the Executive Board.
2. The officer sought to be removed must receive written notification of this request. The written request must advise the officer to attend the next Open Meeting of the Organization and to be prepared to speak at this meeting.
3. Until such time that iDiversity has Voting Members, a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Executive Board is necessary to remove the officer. Upon the establishment of Voting Members, a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of Voting Members is necessary to remove the officer.

Article VI - Amendments

Until such time that iDiversity has Voting Members, amendment to the Constitution may be proposed in writing by any member of the Executive Board. Upon the establishment of Voting Members, amendments to the Constitution may additionally be proposed in writing by any Voting Member at any meeting at which 2/3 of the Voting Members are present.

These amendments will be placed on the agenda for the next Open Meeting of the Organization or, until the class of Voting Members is established, on the agenda for the next Executive Board meeting

Proposed amendments will become effective following approval of two-thirds (2/3)-majority vote of the Voting Members or, in the absence of Voting Members, of two-thirds (2/3)-majority vote of the Executive Board.

Article VII - Registration Renewal

iDiversity will apply to the Stamp Student Union for registration on an annual basis one month after the annual election is held.
Appendix A: Description of iDiversity Offices

All officers will be responsible for upholding the iDiversity Constitution, performing their specific duties, supporting fellow officers, meeting deadlines and actively promoting iDiversity.

Faculty Advisor
The Faculty Advisor will serve as mentor to organization members and be responsible for the following duties:

• Provide guidance regarding iDiversity goals, mission, and vision.
• Consult with the President about iDiversity direction and operations.
• Actively promote iDiversity to colleagues and at professional events.
• Provide counsel to iDiversity members and mediate disputes between iDiversity members.

President
The Office of the President will serve as the head and face of the organization and be responsible for the following duties:

• Create agendas for and preside at all iDiversity Executive Board meetings and iDiversity open meetings.
• Attend at least 75% of the Executive Board and open meetings of iDiversity.
• Meet monthly with the faculty advisor(s).
• Serve as liaison with faculty members and university offices.
• Oversee and provide direction for all iDiversity operations and hold officers accountable to deadlines.
• Appoint all committee chairpersons.
• Present all motions to the body present.
• Coordinate with Secretary regarding communications with members, volunteers, interested parties and outside contacts.
• Assist Events Coordinator in recruiting speakers and identifying trip sites for events.

Vice President
The Office of the Vice President will manage organization membership and elections and be responsible for the following duties:

• Plan and execute elections of officers and coordinate impartial tally.
• Actively recruit new student members from all concentrations.
• Attend SGA meetings.
• Manage membership, including:
  o Obtain mandatory member information and follow-up if necessary;
  o Maintain Excel spreadsheet of member information and attendance/participation at meetings and events and involvement with projects;
  o Periodically update President regarding new members;
  o Create semester report of member activity for records; and
  o Maintain an accurate list of members, including voting status.
• Maintain list of email contact information for members, volunteers and interested parties for the purpose of communication.
• Preside at Executive Board and open meetings in President’s absence.
• Support the President.

Secretary
The Office of Secretary will maintain records for the organization and be responsible for the following duties:
• Take minutes (or arrange proxy) at all Executive Board and open meetings, to be saved in a timely manner on a cloud-accessible platform.
• Keep a master file of all minutes and make them available, upon request, to any member of iDiversity.
• Ensure that rules and protocols are observed at all Executive Board and open meetings.
• Update and maintain iDiversity Google Calendar.
• Produce and issue surveys requested by the President or Vice President.
• Maintain iDiversity records and assist all officers by keeping a running list of events, budgets, task lists, announcement schedules, surveys, etc.
• Assist the President in communications with members, volunteers, interested parties and outside contacts.

Treasurer
The Office of the Treasurer will manage all accounts and financial transactions for the organization and be responsible for the following duties:
• Maintain a balanced budget.
• Handle all accounts and financial transactions.
• Check the accuracy of all bills and invoices and ensure their timely payment.
• Handle applications to secure funds in support of events, etc.
• Order and purchase marketing materials with the approval of a quorum of Executive Board Members.
• Participate in the collection and tabulation of election ballots, as set forth in Article V.

Events Coordinator
The Office of the Events Coordinator will coordinate with others as needed to manage all organization for events and be responsible for the following duties:
• Recruit speakers and identify trip sites for events, with the assistance of the President.
• Organize events, including securing bios and confirming speakers, coordinating with institutional liaisons for tours/field trips, and coordinating with other student organization liaisons for joint events.
• Book event spaces and arrange AV and catering (if needed).
• Set-up and clean-up for all events, or arrange proxy.
• Attend all events, record events on AV, document participants, and introduce speakers.
• Coordinate events communications with Social Media Coordinator.
Social Media Coordinator

The Office of the Social Media Coordinator will manage the social media presence for and actively promote the organization, and be responsible for the following duties:

• Manage Twitter account and communications: @LISDiversity.
• Manage blog including approving guest posts and comments and recruiting guest writers.
• Issue announcements to iSchool listservs and Dean’s News.
• Provide social media advertisement of iDiversity events, projects and open meetings.
• Advise the President of new opportunities that arise via iDiversity social media channels or new venues for social media outreach.

Webmaster

The Office of the Webmaster will manage the iDiversity website and be responsible for the following duties:

• Serve as administrator to the iDiversity website, including managing member authority, providing or facilitating technical support and moderating comments for respectful compliance.
• Perform or tap the expertise of another to make minor changes to the site as needed and increase levels of accessibility.
• Coordinate with iSchool IT staff as needed.

Alumni Representative

The Office of the Alumni Representative will serve as a liaison for alumni members and be responsible for the following duties:

• Serve as a point of contact for alumni and actively recruit alumni members.
• Coordinate with iSchool Marketing staff for alumni outreach.
• Represent iDiversity at professional events.

At Large Member

The Office of At Large Member will have such duties as are assigned by the President.
APPENDIX 2 – IDIVERSITY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Scope
This policy applies to the use of social media accounts managed by the iDiversity student organization at the University of Maryland. The policy includes the purpose of social media in support of iDiversity’s mission, administrative responsibilities and access policies, and best practices.

‘Social media’ refers to the Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Flickr iDiversity accounts.

Purpose
Social media provides an effective way of spreading the mission and values of iDiversity to the UMD population and beyond, as well as informing members of upcoming events. To better support this purpose, those posting to the iDiversity social media accounts should keep the message of iDiversity in mind to avoid diluting it.

iDiversity Mission
Posts to the iDiversity social media accounts should relate to the following mission statement in some way:

iDiversity at the University of Maryland promotes awareness of diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility within the information professions. The iDiversity group strives to create and maintain a dialogue between iSchool students, alumni, and faculty, as well as information professionals outside the university, to ensure that issues of diversity are addressed in practice, research, and technology.

What to Post
Types of posts vary depending on the social media in question. In general, the following topics are acceptable:

• Advertisements for events sponsored by iDiversity.
• Links to iDiversity blog posts.
• Pictures of iDiversity events.
• Advertisements for local events sponsored by other UMD or other organizations that relate to the iDiversity mission.
• Shared/retweeted social media posts that relate to the iDiversity mission.
• Links to articles, blog posts or news items relating to the iDiversity mission.

If an iDiversity member is unsure of whether a post is appropriate, they may clear the idea with the Social Media Coordinator.

Access
The following section outlines administrative responsibilities and access policies for iDiversity social media accounts.
Who has access?
Access to the social media accounts will be provided to each board member who expresses interest in posting to social media accounts. Responsibilities and procedures are outlined below.

Removing access
When board members graduate or otherwise leave the organization, they will lose access to social media accounts through password changes. This will be the responsibility of the President. If the President is the member leaving, they will delegate the duty to a board member who will be remaining with the organization.

Responsibilities
Social media accounts can be time consuming to maintain properly and involve a variety of jobs. The following responsibilities are divided up among board members to keep the sites active and responsive to their audience.

Administrative duties
These duties include fielding requests to follow/friend iDiversity pages, deleting problem posts and banning problem commenters. These duties are assigned to the Social Media Coordinator.

Weekly Posting
The Social Media Coordinator will post at least one item of interest related to the iDiversity mission per week.

Event Postings
In coordination with the Events Coordinator and President, the Social Media Coordinator will advertise iDiversity events.

Miscellaneous Posting
Other board members may post items of interest as they wish, including articles, blog posts, news items and non-iDiversity events.

Best Practices
The success of a social media depends on its purpose. The purpose of iDiversity’s social media is to promote events and issues related to the mission of the organization. If implemented, the following best practices will allow iDiversity to make the best use of social media to spread the message of inclusion.

Check spelling
Make sure you check spelling and grammar of posts. This will allow iDiversity to maintain authority and respect from its social media following.
Be consistent
Posting at least once a week will add value for our followers. This will bring followers back and help further spread the mission and values of iDiversity.

Think before you post
Part of the appeal of social media is that it is quick and relatively painless to post a great deal of content, especially through Facebook’s sharing and Twitter’s retweet tools. But the social media accounts represent iDiversity. Take a moment to review your post and consider how it represents iDiversity before posting.

Consider legal issues
Remember that any posts should refrain from inappropriate conduct such as sexual (or other) harassment, bullying, discrimination, defamation, infringement of copyright and trademark rights, and unauthorized disclosure of private information.

Interact
Interacting with your audience adds value to the accounts. Respond to comments or other interactions promptly. Ask for input from followers/friends/etc. on ideas being shared on social media sites. Start the conversation, but be prepared to keep it going.