



## We Need To Talk: Digital Practices & Ethics in Our Profession

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Sponsored by the Graduate Students and New Professionals Community of Practice

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<p>Paul Eaton, Ph.D. Sam Houston State University <a href="#">@profpeaton</a> <a href="#">profpeaton.com</a></p>	<p>Laura A. Pasquini, Ph.D. University of North Texas <a href="#">@laurapasquini</a> <a href="#">techknowtools.com</a></p>	<p>Josie Ahlquist, Ed.D. Florida State University <a href="#">@josieahlquist</a> <a href="#">josieahlquist.com</a></p>
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## Overview

As Student Affairs educators leverage technology for professional practice, we have failed to discuss how our digital lives intersect with our work lives. This competency-based, case study guide is designed to facilitate conversations about expectations and realities of what it means to be a professional online. To help you discuss ways to support digital-ethical professional practice in higher education, we have identified a few scenarios to discuss and develop a positive culture online. We encourage your to start an open dialogue on these issues and identify potential solutions to address unwanted interactions and inappropriate behaviors in professional online networks. Please feel free to bring these case studies back to your campus and/or graduate programs to continue the conversations. This resource is shared with the following Creative Commons license: [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

## Goals

At the end of this competency-based session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe professional, ethical issues related to digital practices and online behavior.
2. Identify actions and responsibilities within professional online networks and digital communities.
3. Outline resources and effective strategies to support digital professional practice.
4. List questions, issues, and concerns about digital professional practice and ethics online.

## Guidelines for discussion

Let's have a real discussion about digital practices and issues online:

- We want open conversation
- No "stupid" questions/ideas
- Candid problem-solving
- Transcribe your main points, questions, & resources
- Share suggestions for practice

## Instructor/Trainer Guides

If you create a course assignment, lesson plan, or a training workshop around these digital ethics case studies, please let us know! We are keen to learn about other issues and concerns that technology brings to graduate students and new professionals. Thanks!



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## Student Affairs Professional Competencies

The 10 professional competency areas is intended to set out the scope and content of professional attributes required of student affairs educators to succeed within the current higher educational environment as well as projected future environments.

### Technology

#### TOOLS

Are you aware of the different functionality of tech tools? How do online tools influence face-to-face or “real world” interactions, and vice-versa?

#### DATA COMPLIANCE

What are the legal issues associated with technologies? How do we utilize these technologies in an ethical manner? What about inclusiveness and accessibility in our technology use?

#### DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP & ONLINE LEARNING

What is your own digital identity? What does it mean to be a good citizen in digital spaces? Do you understand the ways that online learning and digital networks influence professional work or student experiences?

### Personal & Ethical Foundations

#### WELLNESS & HEALTHY LIVING

Holistic wellness; building wellness practices into one’s personal and professional life, and seeking help when needed.

#### ETHICAL CODES & PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Knowing professional ethical codes; understanding one’s personal ethical values, and their intersections with culture; holding others accountable and seeking counsel for ethical decision making.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION

Understanding one’s values, beliefs, biases; engage in self-reflection; making meaning of one’s experiences.

[Click here](#) for the ACPA / NASPA Professional Competencies.

[Click here](#) for the ACPA / NASPA Professional Competencies Rubrics.

[Click here](#) for NASPA Professional Division Standards Competency Resources.

#ACPA18 Convention Workshop Resources: <http://bit.ly/sadigitalethics>



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# #ACPA18: Digital Practices & Ethics Online

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## Case #1

### Topic

### Over Participation in Professional Learning Networks

How do you connect online to learn and enhance what you do? Do you have social, digital networks that support your training and ongoing professional development? How do these affinity groups and online communities impact your ongoing learning and the work you do?

### Scenario

As a recent graduate, Gabriel just celebrated his six month work anniversary at a small private university in an urban location. Gabriel works and lives on-campus in student housing, however, the campus is primarily a commuter school. Because the urban location has a high cost of living, most professionals also commute a long distance to work. As a graduate hall director at his previous institution, Gabriel was able to get involved and have support to attend two professional associations and even held a regional leadership position. In his graduate program, he learned about professional learning networks (PLNs) like Twitter and Facebook groups where he was able to network with another colleague, find information and even friendship.

In his new role and institutions, budgets have recently been cut for professional development including both travels as well as association membership fees. Neither the department nor the division offers many opportunities for socials or professional development. Because of this, Gabriel has found it very difficult to connect with other higher education professionals on campus, as well as continue his growth as a new professional. To stay engaged with his PLNs, Gabriel adds the #sachat Twitter chat to his schedule in addition to another career counseling chat. He blocked them off as busy so he wouldn't forget they were happening but also so a judicial case would not be scheduled for them. Gabriel also added himself to a couple more Facebook groups related to student affairs to review daily. In a short period of time, this new professional was finally feeling connected and informed as he was in graduate school. These PLNs were an area he was building professional relationships and personal support.

During his a weekly 1-on-1 with his director, Gabriel was given feedback that a number of staff and one student reported he is "always on Facebook and Twitter." Even the judicial office had made a complaint to his supervisor about his limited availability for meetings. This director does not have a Twitter account and only uses Facebook for close friends and family. In the meeting, the director informed Gabriel that he would need to delete any non-work events from his calendar, that would take place between 8-5pm. Further, he asked him to report how often he logs on to social media websites at his workstation, reminding him that the university tracks every activity on university-owned devices, including his university-owned cell phone. In shock from this feedback and directive, Gabriel apologized and said he would make the appropriate actions to correct his behavior. He asked to leave the 1-on-1 early and returned to his office.



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## Discuss

As a group, read and reflect on the following questions related to the scenario and connected to the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies related to Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF) and Technology (TECH).

### I. Describe the issues in this case.

What are some of the issues in this case? What are the key concepts you found important to discuss in this case study?

### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What if you were this supervisor in this situation, what would you do/say?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

### IV. Share suggestions, resources & practices.

What are some resources and/or ideas you could share related to this topic? (e.g. articles, websites, practices, policies, legal briefs, examples, etc.)

### V. List questions & unresolved issues of the case.

What other questions or issues are left unresolved from your discussion that you would like to bring back to the rest of the group to discuss?



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## Case #2

### Topic

### Social Media & Student Supervision

How can you supervise and support your student staff online and in digital environments? What is considered acceptable behavior at your institution? Are there policies, guidelines, and expected behaviors outlined in your employee manual or student code of conduct?

### Scenario

This is the second time Raquel (they/them/their) has applied to become a resident assistant (RA) for a competitive student housing program at large public liberal arts university in the northwest. RAs are generously compensated with both room, board and a stipend, along with various leadership trainings and even a conference across the country. The first year Raquel did not receive an offer, so this year they were thrilled to be invited to join a first-year residence hall team. Raquel is a communications major. As an early adopter and frequent user of social media, they immediately updated their profile on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram to announce the newly minted RA position to celebrate.

Formally accepting the position includes signing a code of conduct and contract agreement with an updated social media policy requirement prohibiting RAs from using social media in their role. To sign these RA agreements and contracts, a mandatory staff was set for all new and returning RAs. When Raquel arrived to this meeting, they recognized another student, Jake, who is a returning RA in the freshman area. Jake waved Raquel over and said, “Hey I gotta be honest with you - you know about the new social media policy as an RA right? I would lock all your pages down now, before the your boss follows you.” Raquel replied they had nothing to hide. They had already created a Facebook group for their residents and they were currently designing a Snapchat geofilter for their floor and brainstorming ideas for the creation of a YouTube web series about life as an RA. Jake laughed and said there was no way the resident directors (RDs) would approve these ideas. Raquel tried to laugh it off too, but felt disheartened.

Over the last three years, RAs had lost their jobs due to their poor judgement shared online, posting controversial political comments, and monitoring/tracking residents’ actions via social media. In response, the residence life department of residence created guidelines, including *asking* RA’s not to follow/connect with their current residents and to not patrol resident social media pages. RAs would not be allowed to create Facebook groups or text group chats (e.g. Whatsapp or GroupMe) for their resident community. Finally, a role modeling statement was included stating that RAs’ social media activity would be held to a higher standard, specifically: “This includes, but is not limited to derogatory or offensive statements, depictions of underage or excessive alcohol use, and illicit drug references.” Everyone sat in silence. Raquel had nothing to hide on social media and they were disappointed in this policy as they saw this ban on social, digital spaces as a missed opportunity for building community among their residents.



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What are some of the issues in this case? What are the key concepts you found important to discuss in this case study?

### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What if you were this supervisor or student advisor in this situation?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

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## Case #3

### Topic

#### Digital Office Boundaries & Expectations

Should you be required to join or use a digital/social platform for work? What happens if you make a personal account a professional account, moving from private/closed to public? How will you set digital boundaries in your professional role, with regards to your job responsibilities and expectations?

### Scenario

Samir has been in her position as an assistant dean for the College of Business academic advising office for the past five years. She has a strong working relationships with her peers and the learners she supports in this college on campus. The position which supervises her role and the office is an associate dean role; however, this position has had a continual turnover since she has been working at this public, midsize university. The latest hire as the associate dean, Dr. Martinez, has been on the job for six months and is asking staff to have a stronger digital presence on visual platforms, such as Snapchat and Instagram. These are a couple of social media platforms Samir is not as comfortable using for work, as she often shares private and personal photos and video clips among her own personal, private network. Both her Snapchat and Instagram feed is set to private and this is a closed social space she uses with her close friends and family members. Dr. Martinez thinks it is important to be present on these emerging networks as they believe this is where most of their traditional student population is active and present online.

In addition to the request to expand per social media presence for advising, Samir has also noticed that Dr. Martinez will continue to send email beyond the typical 8 to 5 working hours set for the division. Messages, requests, and action items are constantly sent during the evening and on the weekend. Although there has not been a direct requirement to respond, many of these messages come with an expectation of expedient response after work hours.

Samir has been in student support and academic advising for almost 8 years, and loves working with her learners. What Samir enjoys most about her job was not only the impact she got to make on-campus, but the boundaries she was able to delineate in work and nonwork time. With previous experience in student housing and residence life, where she was always on call and felt completely burned out, she hoped her role as an academic advisor would have more structure to her schedule and built in boundaries for her role. So, both being requested to be more active on social media for work and fielding email messaging while not at work has been a point of tension with her new supervisor and questioning if this position is the best professional fit now. Samir has found herself very frustrated and lately expressed this in her latest one-on-one. Samir went so far to state she would not be checking email when not in the office, nor would she be using Snapchat or Instagram public for professional use with her team or advisees.



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### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What would you do/say if you were this supervisor in this situation?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

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## Case #4

### Topic

### Crowdsourcing Ideas & Resource Sharing

Have you asked peers online to share ideas or resources? Is it ethical to an idea from someone if they openly, digitally shared? How can we “share” responsibly and attribute others work?

### Scenario

You are at a small, private university located in a large metropolitan area in the midwest with approximately 3000 students, 2000 of which are living on campus. You are a member of Campus Activities Programming team, and this is your first-year in a post-graduate role as a Coordinator for Leadership and Service. Although you are new to Campus/Student Activities as a functional area, you are excited to take on this position to support both your colleagues in the division and the talented undergraduate students who work or volunteer for your office. You have previous experiences with working on a Residence Life Team and loved programming events with your residents. So far, your first semester in this role has been a success and now you are approaching winter break, you are busy preparing and organizing the Alternative Winter and Spring Break travels and your team has begun to map out the events for the Spring semester.

The Director of Student Involvement and Leadership approaches you to inquire if you would be interested in designing a student leadership and involvement fair for April. The goal is to develop a collaborative event to engage and connect the division and career services with campus departments, academic disciplines, community partners, and industry leaders. Part of the planning will require you to consider the approach and best way to engage campus stakeholders before, during, and after the day of the event. Although you have participated in other day-long events to support and promote activities from your team, you are starting at ground zero for this event. You are nervous about this large endeavor as you have never prepared such a large event on campus, but you are excited for the opportunity and challenge.

As you begin to think about how to approach this, you consider reaching out to peers from your grad cohort and your personal learning network online. You decide to post a message to solicit for ideas on the Student Affairs Professionals Facebook group, via the #SAchat hashtag, and within the Millennials in Student Affairs group. You figure that others might already be doing this type of thing, so why reinvent the wheel, right? You beginning getting a number of responses, comments, and links to resources from these SA pros who are interested in helping you get your event started. This is great! As you compile items, you begin to put ideas together from templates and planning resources a number of colleagues shared with you online. You find one excellent idea from a peer that shares an event planning strategy you decide to alter with your own college’s branding and logo to present to your director and team -- this should not be a problem, as your digital peer openly shared in the online network with you and others, right?



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What are some of the issues in this case? What are the key concepts you found important to discuss in this case study?

### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What might you say/do if you learned someone took your idea without giving attribution or credit?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

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- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

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## Case #5

### Topic

#### Cyberstanding in Our Digital Communities

What is your responsibility in an online community as a participant or lurker of the conversation? What actions do you take when you see a harsh conversation or inappropriate behaviors online? When you witness peers being digitally dragged or called out online, in a group, in a hashtag community, what is your responsibility as a professional?

### Scenario

As a 1st year graduate student, you have been encouraged by your mentors to connect with professionals and colleagues at conferences, meetings, and online. From following, friending, and joining a number of communities on social media, you are learning quite a bit about your professional interest area, Orientation and New Student Programs, and like-minded colleagues who are open to sharing and discussing issues you are reading and discovering about the student affairs field from your program. Unlike your peers in your graduate cohort, you are only one of two people who have dipped a toe into professional networking online. These professional learning networks are like a richer extension to your classroom discussions, and you appreciate the broader involvement, interests, and perspective these digital dialogues offer.

During a #sachat conversation, you notice there is a sidebar discussion about a contested issue with a small group of the Twitter chat participants. This appears to be a conversation that is carried over from the Student Affairs Professional Facebook group, as they have also include the hashtag #thatSAfacebookgroup. You begin to follow the rogue hashtag as you are curious about the topic that has peaked others interest and it seems more interesting than the actual #sachat topic that day. It appears this Twitter rogue hashtag conversation is related to a Facebook thread about a social justice issue connected to a recent campus event.

Although you agree with the spirit of the conversation and think a healthy debate is great for professionals, you think much of the talk is personally directed and targeting a specific population and a few select members that crossover between the #SAchat and SA Pro Facebook group. A few of the tweets pose racially targeted comments and inappropriate slurs you would not expect to see from student affairs educators. You are concerned about this type of online behavior as this digital dragging is approaching what you think to be cyberbullying. It appears that these colleagues are not fully aware that their comments are public and these posts are quite hurtful to a number of your professional peers. You want to say something; however, you are not sure how to approach this discussion that you are not directly invited to or involved it. That being said, you feel that someone should speak up. Your concern is what you might say may not be heard, could be misinterpreted, or even dismissed as “just a” graduate student.



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### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What might you say/do if you were a colleague or peer from this professional online network and you witnessed this?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

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## Case #6

### Topic

#### Digital and Social Network F.O.M.O.

As you enter into a new workplace or professional environment, how will you engage with your colleagues and/or supervisor on digital, social networks? What information and social media platforms will you bring to work with you? How will you connect with professionals and colleagues if you have decided not to join a social media platform or connect via a digital app?

### Scenario

You recently accepted a new position with a vibrant Student Affairs division at a large, public institution. This university has three campuses with 70,000 students spread over a large metropolitan area. You have a local team of 10 supporting first year experiences and living-learning communities, however, your division prides itself on transparency and open communication across all functional areas and all campuses. To support open and regular communication, the leadership in the division has created a Facebook group to allow for communication, knowledge sharing, announcements, event planning, and more. Additionally, you learn this space can often share ideas, issues, and social gatherings for staff members from your division. It seems that the culture of your new employer feels differently, and they are very keen to “friend” you and add you to this division’s Facebook group.

In thinking about your own relationship and professional network building in your role, you have not considered including any professionals at your campus as part of your Facebook network. You have used Facebook as a place to stay in touch with family and close friends from back home; however, you are less interested in being on this platform in recent months. In your time away from school and moving to a new city, you have been concerned that you are overusing this social media site and living more on the screen than in your new city. As a fresh start with your new move and new job, you have decided to delete your Facebook account. The termination of this social media channel is in hopes to be more productive and focus your time and energy into your role and getting acquainted with your new surroundings.

You want to appear collegial and be a “team player”; however, you are not sure how you should approach this concern with both your supervisor and new colleagues. Also, you are starting to think you will be missing out on critical information for your job and also the fun events, sharing, and personal relationship building that might be happening within your division’s Facebook group. The fear of missing out (F.O.M.O.) has come over you and presented you with a great deal of anxiety and stress for how to best deal with this situation.



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### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What might you say/do if you were a colleague or supervisor approached by your employer about this issue?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

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## Case #7

### Topic

#### Giving Digital Access to All

How do you incorporate universal design and digital access in your role on campus? How is your office ADA compliant, with regards to accessibility online?

### Scenario

You are at a small liberal arts college in the Pacific Northwest with a student population of 5500 primarily undergraduate students. As a member of the student affairs division, you are the coordinator who is responsible for managing and directing the social media accounts for your department of 45 employees and 15 student staff. Much of your work requires you to curate and develop content to post online for upcoming events, campaigns, and documenting activities throughout the division. Although you produce much of this digital content and maintain a calendar for communication, you have several students and other professional staff who are also responsible for developing content and documenting events or activities for your social media channels. There are a number of account managers and/or administrators for the six social media platforms you maintain, that is, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The sharing of responsibilities for contributing to these platforms is part of the open culture of your department, which is highly engaged and involved on campus.

You have worked hard to ensure that your social media accounts are accessible to those with various forms of disability, such as visual and hearing impairments, to include the appropriate tags, labels, transcripts, and information required to make media files ADA compliant. Despite the accessibility and universal design training you have provided the team, you receive several complaints from the Office for Disability Accommodations itemizing a number of social media posts and even a few web pages are not meeting the web accessibility standards required for campus stakeholders. By reviewing these complaints, it appears that many of the posts and websites flagged for violation are coming from sites directed by student organizations and clubs.

The Office for Disability Accommodations has requested you remove access to social media accounts and college websites, until those individuals can receive appropriate training and direction for web accessibility needs. Additionally, you will need to conduct a complete audit of your online spaces (e.g. social media, websites, etc.) to ensure these are corrected and/or removed, if they are representing the college. Possible recourse for failing to comply with the ADA and accessibility requirements for online, may result in reporting such infractions to the college leadership and could result in federal legal action with the U.S. Justice Department.



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What are some of the issues in this case? What are the key concepts you found important to discuss in this case study?

### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What might you say/do if you were the supervisor approached by your employee about this issue?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

### IV. Share suggestions, resources & practices.

What are some resources and/or ideas you could share related to this topic? (e.g. articles, websites, practices, policies, legal briefs, examples, etc.)

### V. List questions & unresolved issues of the case.

What other questions or issues are left unresolved from your discussion that you would like to bring back to the rest of the group to discuss?



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## Case #8

### Topic

### A Digital Cry For Help

Sometimes we say more on social media and digital applications than we do face-to-face with peers. How might you approach a colleague who has posted a “cry for help”? What do you do if a peer posts directly or indirectly about an issue they are struggling with online?

### Scenario

You work at a large research university. Your division of student affairs has a large number of employees, with over 20 departments and close to 250 professional staff. You work in the Department of Campus Activities, serving in the role of Assistant Director, but have built professional and personal relationships with colleagues across the campus. One of the ways you keep up with everyone is through your robust social media presence. You utilize your personal social media spaces in order to post about your work, the students in your office, promote events, and keep up with others work across campus. Your division encourages professionals to build relationships through social media, including with students and colleagues on campus or in the field.

One day you are scrolling through your Instagram feed, and you notice a colleague, from a different department on campus, has posted a photo of themselves having a drink at a bar. There is no caption or hashtag for this photo. You don’t really suspect much, assuming your peer is just out for a drink with friends. However, over the next few days, you start to notice some troubling signs on this colleague’s social media accounts. They begin posting a lot of photos of alcohol - beer; hard liquor; shot glasses. You also notice that these posts begin having captions and hashtags: “Drinking away the day. #instaparty;” “A cold one for a cold life. #YOLO;” “A shot for the soul. #nightlife”

You do not really have a close relationship with this professional and you are more of a campus acquaintance. But do you know this professional is well connected with students who are likely seeing these posts. A number of students are connected and follow this professional online, and you are worried about the influence and modeling online by this professional. You are concerned with their daily post about drinking. You think these are displaying signs for a potential alcohol problem, and you suspect they might be self-medicating with alcohol to deal with the stress, issues, or conflict they are struggling with in their personal/professional life.

You don’t necessarily feel comfortable approaching this professional directly. That being said, you do want to make sure this professional has the support and help they might need to deal with their struggles. Additionally, you also want to make sure this colleague is putting out appropriate digital messages and images, as they are a member of your campus community and online professional network.



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## Discuss

As a group, read and reflect on the following questions related to the scenario and connected to the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies related to Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF) and Technology (TECH).

### I. Describe the issues in this case.

What are some of the issues in this case? What are the key concepts you found important to discuss in this case study?

### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What might you do if these messages were posted by a student you know well and/or work with on campus?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

### IV. Share suggestions, resources & practices.

What are some resources and/or ideas you could share related to this topic? (e.g. articles, websites, practices, policies, legal briefs, examples, etc.)

### V. List questions & unresolved issues of the case.

What other questions or issues are left unresolved from your discussion that you would like to bring back to the rest of the group to discuss?



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## Case #9

### Topic

#### Dual Digital Personas

Can you keep up two profiles that are separate from your work self and personal life? What happens when you decide to vent on your personal digital networks, and your colleagues or supervisor find out? What happens online is your real life -- how will you deal with it?

### Scenario

Based on your experiences in your graduate program cohort and in conversations with your mentors, you have made the decision to keep two separate social media accounts. This is a primary platform where you engage and connect with others (e.g. a blog or video channel or perhaps a Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat account -- you decide). One represents your professional self -- the one where you showcase your work, share with colleagues at your institution, connect with others from a professional organization, and direct learners at your campus to connect with you. The other social media account is more personal in nature, and one where you have been interacting with your friends and family since you were in high school. There are a number of random conversations, personal opinions, and images on this platform that you thought were not as “professional” to be used in your student affairs professional role.

Having two separate social media accounts on this specific platform allows you to keep your work and personal lives compartmentalized and distinct. You have also worked to make sure that your personal account has some set privacy restrictions, so only those who are your personal friends can see what you post.

As you have joined your student affairs team, you have begun to add a few of your colleagues to your personal social media platform as you have developed a rapport and consider a few of these co-workers to be really good friends. Now there is some crossover of colleagues on your personal and professional social media spaces.

Lately, you have been facing some particularly stressful times at work, and one day, on your personal social media account, you post a short rant about the stress you have been facing in your role. The next day, your supervisor calls you to say that they’d like to meet with you, and when you go into their office they have a screenshot of your rant from your personal social media account that was emailed to them from an “anonymous” source. This colleague brought this to your supervisor’s attention as they were concerned you might post this negative information about the division on your professional social media account that is connected to a large number of campus stakeholders.



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## Discuss

As a group, read and reflect on the following questions related to the scenario and connected to the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies related to Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF) and Technology (TECH).

### I. Describe the issues in this case.

What are some of the issues in this case? What are the key concepts you found important to discuss in this case study?

### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What might you say/do if you were a colleague or supervisor who found this post?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

### IV. Share suggestions, resources & practices.

What are some resources and/or ideas you could share related to this topic? (e.g. articles, websites, practices, policies, legal briefs, examples, etc.)

### V. List questions & unresolved issues of the case.

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## Case #10

### Topic

#### Politics, Debate, and Being Objective Online

Active, vocal students are great, but sometimes their engagement might go beyond the limits of what is acceptable. What happens when the topic is hot and emotions rise? How can you engage your learners and yourself in a civil digital debate or open discussion online?

### Scenario

Regional State University is located in a rural community of approximately 70,000 residents. The mid-sized public university campus supports a student population of around 25,000 students, most of whom are undergraduates.

The university President, responding to calls for increasing dialogue and engagement on campus, has invited two speakers to campus. One is a speaker with a conservative lens; the other a speaker with a more liberal perspective. Each speaker leans towards extreme views and both have been known to spark controversy during other campus visits. However, the university President remains committed to enacting free speech and engaging students in important dialogues and debates that represent both sides of a political issue.

The Division of Student Affairs has been asked to help facilitate a series of events leading up to each of the events. These include pre-speaker forums, informational posters on campus regarding tips for dialogue, working with faculty to promote the events in their courses, and a social media campaign to promote the events and engage students in digital dialogue. You are part of a team who has been asked by the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA) to monitor and encourage dialogue with students through various social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The VPSA and President have asked staff and faculty to maintain a position of neutrality and objectivity – helping to formulate questions and leave room for the student voice - so staff are directed not to take or state their own position during these events.

As you work to create dialog between students to hype up an upcoming talk on campus, you begin to see the conversation on the social media channels get heated. You see that students in the Twitter backchannel are not only increasingly hostile and vitriolic, but also spreading misinformation on both sides. This is very frustrating to you, as you pride yourself in being informed with a strong set of opinions and beliefs on this debated issue. While you want to support and not intrude upon the student-led dialogue, you are finding that it is beginning to maintain your neutrality and objectivity as, as you believe your views, perspectives and the facts on particular topics are increasingly challenged.



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## Discuss

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### I. Describe the issues in this case.

What are some of the issues in this case? What are the key concepts you found important to discuss in this case study?

### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What would you do/say if you were the campus leadership (President or VP/SA) in this scenario, and witness this dialog online?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

### IV. Share suggestions, resources & practices.

What are some resources and/or ideas you could share related to this topic? (e.g. articles, websites, practices, policies, legal briefs, examples, etc.)

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## Case #11

### Topic

#### When Digital Civil Discourse Goes South

What are the community standards for your formal/informal digital professional communities?  
What are the unwritten practices or cultural norms within your professional learning networks?

### Scenario

As a mid-career practitioner, you have decided to set professional goals and seek out ongoing learning beyond your formal graduate studies. To do this, you are a member of several online professional learning networks related to your work in higher education and student affairs (Facebook groups, listservs, Twitter hashtags, etc.). Some are connected to formal professional associations (e.g. ACPA, NASPA, & NODA) and your leadership role in these organizations. Additionally, you have valued being part of digital learning spaces online where you find support, share resources, and dialog with colleagues beyond your institution and across the country. You have been the moderator for the #sagrad Twitter chat in the past, and you now contribute as an Admin and moderator role in “The Admin” Facebook group. You enjoy engaging in vibrant discussions and consider online communities of practice a place for training and development. Your supervisor is aware and very supportive of your involvement in these formal and informal professional communities, as you have become a mentor and role model for other professionals in the field. Additionally, your boss believes your contributions and involvement in these professional networks reflects your continued drive in your role on campus as well.

As you are scrolling through your social media feeds, you find a blog post shared by a professional in the field that takes a particular stance and position on a topic that others within the field and your professional learning network find contentious or contested. Soon your feed and additional social streams start discussing this blog post and sharing their opinions and perspectives. Some peers are in agreement with the original blog post and are praising the professional for being so bold and speaking up on this issue. Others are not as impressed and there are a growing number of new posts sharing the opposite perspectives on the issue. As you read through the digital comments, threads, and discussions, you are able to understand both sides of the argument and appreciate the open and transparent discussion online.

By mid-day, you return to your social streams to find this civil discourse was neither civil or a discourse anymore. The conversation started to attack the professional who started the dialog on this topic and there seems to be more name calling and derogatory comments from different sides of the debate. After a rather heated and now long thread on Facebook there seems to be more name calling and call outs than any real discussion now. As a leader and contributor to this community, someone in this Facebook group tags you directly and asks for you to share your public opinion and thoughts on the issue and the original blog of contention.



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## Discuss

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### I. Describe the issues in this case.

What are some of the issues in this case? What are the key concepts you found important to discuss in this case study?

### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? What would you say/do if you saw this type of civil discourse within an online community you are a member of?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

### IV. Share suggestions, resources & practices.

What are some resources and/or ideas you could share related to this topic? (e.g. articles, websites, practices, policies, legal briefs, examples, etc.)

### V. List questions & unresolved issues of the case.

What other questions or issues are left unresolved from your discussion that you would like to bring back to the rest of the group to discuss?



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## Case #12

### Topic

#### Not Just Punking Out on LinkedIn

What happens when a course requirement crosses a student's choice for privacy? How can you support your learners or peers who struggle with a scholastic expectation to present a public and open profile online? What alternatives could be suggested for a digital profile or portfolio?

### Scenario

Jimena is an active part of your Learning Center's *Study Smarter, Not Harder* learning skills program. Your role on campus is to design, coordinate, and deliver these face-to-face and online workshops that support undergraduate students develop productivity and learning skills to be successful in college. You met Jimena when she signed up for the Learning Skills series of workshop series during transfer orientation. She mentioned that she wanted to be academically ready for the rigor of university-level courses as this was her first time with a full course schedule of 5 classes, unlike her part-time learning experience in community college.

At the end of the time management workshop, Jimena asks if she can speak to you about an issue she is struggling with for one of her courses. Jimena shares that she is having challenges in an introduction communication course she is in this semester. This course requires all learners to edit and/or set up a LinkedIn account to showcase their work, volunteer, involvement on campus and more. The project of creating a portfolio is not the issue, as Jimena would like to be able to showcase her graphic design experience and artwork online. What seems to be the main concern is the public nature of the LinkedIn profile.

Jimena is an undocumented student who is currently estranged from her father. She has concerns about her privacy for two reasons: she does not wish to be located by her father who might also identify her to ICE. To avoid any issues with sharing information online, she barely uses any social media platform or website. The digital spaces she occupies are ones where she can use a screen name or be anonymous online. As some social media platforms, like LinkedIn and Facebook, require you to use a real name and this would be the expectation of the assignment, she has concerns for her personal data being made public online.

Jimena really enjoys the course and sees how valuable this will be for degree and personal development. That being said, she cannot afford to skip this assignment (and lose the points), nor does she want this faculty member to think she is slacking off on the first major assignment. As you have some experience being digitally, socially networked and you have developed a rapport with Jimena, she has approached you to help her figure out how to not punk out on this LinkedIn course requirement.



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## Discuss

As a group, read and reflect on the following questions related to the scenario and connected to the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies related to Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF) and Technology (TECH).

### I. Describe the issues in this case.

What are some of the issues in this case? What are the key concepts you found important to discuss in this case study?

### II. Identify the action needed.

What course of action would you take in this scenario, if you were the key person described in this case study? How might you respond and/or accomodate this student if they approached you with this situation?

### III. Outline expectations & responsibilities.

How does your responsibility as a graduate student and/or staff member:

- A. Meet college/university expectations?
- B. Impact your own values and personal beliefs?
- C. Influence your decision on what to do in this scenario?

### IV. Share suggestions, resources & practices.

What are some resources and/or ideas you could share related to this topic? (e.g. articles, websites, practices, policies, legal briefs, examples, etc.)

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