



BRAND IDENTITY GUIDE



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# INTRODUCTION

# UT SOUTHERN INTRODUCTION

## Who We Are... *The Firehawk.*

The UT Southern Firehawk is more than just a mascot; it symbolizes the transformative journey every student embarks upon. The firehawk embodies the spirit of resilience, innovation, and the drive to ignite change—mirroring the personal growth and discovery that define the UT Southern experience.

Fire is one of the most powerful forces on Earth, historically setting humans apart through its transformative power. Fire brings warmth, banishes darkness, and reveals what was once hidden. It has been a universal symbol of illumination, knowledge, and inspiration—central to the stories that have shaped human experience for millennia.

Much like its namesake, the Australian firehawk, known for strategically spreading flames to uncover new opportunities, our students are trained to harness their inner spark. The firehawk doesn't just survive near the flames; it uses fire to its advantage, creating new paths and opportunities even in challenging conditions. The Australian firehawk has been known not only to hunt near active fires, but to purposefully flush out additional prey by picking up burning sticks in their talons or beaks and spreading fires to new areas, often up to a mile away.

At UT Southern, we believe every student carries a hidden spark of greatness—a potential not just to transform themselves but to impact the world. Our role is to provide the environment, guidance, and resources needed to cultivate that spark into a powerful flame. By the end of their journey, each student becomes a true Firehawk, equipped with their own unique fire of knowledge, passion, and purpose. They leave UT Southern ready to light the way for others, turning challenges into opportunities and carrying their flame far beyond our campus.

## UT SOUTHERN BRAND STATEMENTS

Our brand statements are powerful, memorable phrases that capture the essence of UT Southern. They are at the core of our identity, defining who we are and what we stand for. Use these statements as the foundation for creating posters, brochures, social media content, merchandise, and advertisements that reflect our unique story.

### *Simply put, UT Southern is...*

- ***Focused on Your Success, Driven by Community:** Big enough to provide opportunities, yet small enough to know and support every student personally.*
- ***The Best of Both Worlds:** Experience the resources and benefits of a public university in an environment that feels like a close-knit private college. Where Connection Inspires Growth: A place where collaboration and personal connections come first, ensuring every student has the support and opportunities needed for lifelong success. Where collaboration and connection take center stage, ensuring that you have every opportunity for lifelong achievement.*
- ***A Home for Ambition and Belonging:** More than a campus; we are a nurturing community of friends, mentors, and advocates dedicated to your personal and professional growth.*

**These statements embody UT Southern's commitment to personalized education, community engagement, and a supportive environment where every student can thrive.**

## OUR BRAND ARCHETYPES

Pioneering psychologist Carl Jung theorized that we use symbolism to make complex concepts easier to understand. A key part of this symbolism is the theory of archetypes—universal models that are instantly recognizable and relatable, transcending language, culture, and time. These archetypes influence behavior on a subconscious level, creating a sense of familiarity and emotional connection.

Brand archetypes consist of twelve distinct traits that help personify a brand, setting it apart from the competition and providing a foundation for defining the identity of a company or institution.

### Primary Archetype: The Caregiver

UT Southern's primary brand archetype is **The Caregiver**. The Caregiver represents our commitment to nurturing, supporting, and guiding students throughout their educational journey. This archetype embodies the heart of UT Southern—a place where every student is valued, supported, and empowered to grow in a welcoming and inclusive environment. The Caregiver is about creating a sense of belonging, offering personalized attention, and fostering a community where everyone can thrive.

- **Desire:** To protect, nurture, and help others succeed
- **Goal:** To create a supportive community that fosters growth and belonging
- **Strategy:** Provide guidance, mentorship, and resources to help students thrive
- **Brand Message:** "Here, you're not just a student—you're family."
- **Traits:** Compassion, Empathy, Support, Trust, Community
- **Fears:** Neglect, Exclusion, Harm, Isolation, Failure to care
- **Other Caregiver Brands:** Johnson & Johnson, UNICEF, Campbell's Soup, TOMS

### Secondary Archetype: The Explorer

Our secondary brand archetype is **The Explorer**. The Explorer embodies the spirit of discovery, curiosity, and the pursuit of new experiences—core elements of UT Southern's commitment to fostering independent thinkers and innovators. The Explorer represents our encouragement of students to forge their own paths, embrace challenges, and explore new opportunities in a supportive environment. It reflects UT Southern's innovative, forward-thinking approach and the adventurous mindset we cultivate in our students.

- **Desire:** Freedom of Discovery
- **Goal:** Growth through new experiences and personal fulfillment
- **Strategy:** Encourage independent thinking and exploration
- **Brand Message:** "Forge your own path and discover your potential."
- **Traits:** Curiosity, Adventure, Innovation, Independence, Pioneering
- **Fears:** Conformity, Stagnation, Limited opportunities, Fear of the unknown, Playing it safe
- **Other Explorer Brands:** NASA, Jeep, The North Face, Subaru, National Geographic

### Supportive Archetype: The Hero

While not the primary focus, **The Hero** serves as a supportive archetype that highlights UT Southern's commitment to resilience, achievement, and inspiring students to overcome challenges. The Hero complements our nurturing and exploratory nature by reinforcing the value of courage, hard work, and making a positive impact.

- **Desire:** Mastery and making a difference
- **Goal:** To inspire and empower students to achieve their best
- **Strategy:** Motivate through challenge, recognize success, and foster resilience
- **Brand Message:** "Rise to the challenge and make your mark."
- **Traits:** Bravery, Determination, Leadership, Inspiration, Growth
- **Fears:** Weakness, Injustice, Failure to make an impact
- **Other Explorer Brands:** Nike, BMW, FedEx, Adidas, The Marine Corps

### Why This Combination Works for UT Southern

This blend of archetypes—The Caregiver, The Explorer, and supportive elements of The Hero—reflects UT Southern's unique identity. The Caregiver underscores our nurturing, community-centered approach, The Explorer captures our spirit of innovation and discovery, and The Hero adds an aspirational layer that encourages students to be resilient and impactful. Together, these archetypes position UT Southern as a distinctive institution where students are supported, inspired, and empowered to explore their full potential.

## OUR THREE BRAND PILLARS

UT Southern's brand pillars form the foundation of who we are and what sets us apart. They represent the core of our identity and the building blocks of all our messaging. Everything we say about our campus and our student experience should connect to at least one of these pillars.

- **Academic Excellence:** At UT Southern, students are empowered to explore new career paths, discover passions, and develop their unique talents. Our small, personalized classes, led by dedicated professors who know you by name, create an environment where students receive the attention, mentorship, and support they need to thrive. Here, academic excellence isn't just about learning—it's about becoming your best self.
- **Transformational Student Experience:** UT Southern offers the best of both worlds: the benefits of a large university within the welcoming setting of a close-knit, supportive campus. Our vibrant campus life includes a variety of extracurricular activities that foster strong, life-long friendships and a sense of belonging. As part of the UT System, students gain valuable connections across the state, positioning them for success beyond their time here.
- **Campus and Community Engagement:** Community is at the heart of UT Southern. Whether it's the supportive network of faculty and staff, the camaraderie among students, or the deep ties to our hometown of Pulaski, we are United by a commitment to each other. Beyond our campus, we prepare students to make a difference in the communities they will join after graduation, equipping them with the skills, empathy, and confidence to lead and serve.

UT Southern is a *place of possible*, where hospitality meets higher education, and every student is empowered to discover their path and make meaningful impact.

## OUR TAGLINE SYSTEM

A tagline is a concise statement of a brand's promise that helps convey our message and create a strong emotional connection. Taglines are important because they link our name to our core values and brand identity. UT Southern uses one master tagline and three supporting taglines across its marketing efforts to capture the essence of our commitment to students, academics, athletics, and growth.

- **Main:** *Ignite your future.* Our primary tagline embodies UT Southern's mission to empower students, sparking personal and academic growth in a nurturing, innovative environment.
- **Academic:** *Spark your passion.* This tagline reflects our commitment to helping students discover and cultivate their interests and talents through personalized learning and mentorship.
- **Athletics:** *Fan the fire.* Highlighting the spirit and energy of UT Southern athletics, this tagline encourages students to push their limits, celebrate team spirit, and achieve greatness on and off the field.
- **Advancement:** *Fuel the future.* This tagline speaks to our vision of ongoing growth and development, emphasizing the importance of investing in the future of our students, campus, and community.

These taglines connect directly to UT Southern's identity as a place where students are supported, inspired, and equipped to explore new possibilities, make meaningful connections, and drive positive change.

# UT SOUTHERN BRAND OVERVIEW

The **Brand Overview** illustrates the proper hierarchy of visual assets and coinciding usage within the complete suite of visual marks for UT Southern.



PRIMARY MARK 1



PRIMARY MARK 2



SECONDARY MARK 1



SECONDARY MARK 2



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DEPARTMENT-SPECIFIC MARKS



**CORE MARKS**

## UT SOUTHERN PRIMARY 1 MARK



The first of the two primary options for identifying the UT Southern brand on stationery, templates (i.e. email signatures), signage, website header, and vehicles.

Additional color and background applications are to be applied as demonstrated below.



Use black and white only when reasonable and full color isn't an option.

PMS 151 C

PMS Cool Gray 11 C

## UT SOUTHERN PRIMARY 2 MARK



The second of two **Primary Mark** options for identifying the UT Southern brand on stationery, templates (i.e. email signatures), signage, website header, and vehicles.

The primary 3-level left-align logo should be used when communicating with legislative or trustee audiences or when multiple UT campuses/institutes are represented.

Additional color and background applications are to be applied as demonstrated below.



PMS 151 C

PMS Cool Gray 11 C

Use black and white only when reasonable and full color isn't an option.

**SECONDARY MARKS**

## UT SOUTHERN SECONDARY 1 MARK



The first of two **Secondary Mark** options for identifying the UT Southern brand on stationery, templates (i.e. email signatures), signage, website header, and vehicles.

The primary 3-level left-align logo should be used when communicating with legislative or trustee audiences or when multiple UT campuses/institutes are represented.

Additional color and background applications are to be applied as demonstrated below.



## UT SOUTHERN SECONDARY 2 MARK



The second of two **Secondary Mark** options for identifying the UT Southern brand on stationery, templates (i.e. email signatures), signage, website header, and vehicles.

The primary 3-level left-align logo should be used when communicating with legislative or trustee audiences or when multiple UT campuses/institutes are represented.

Additional color and background applications are to be applied as demonstrated below.

The logo is displayed on a dark gray rectangular background. The 'UT' monogram is orange, and the word 'SOUTHERN' is in white, serif capital letters.

The logo is displayed on a solid orange rectangular background. The 'UT' monogram and the word 'SOUTHERN' are both in white, serif capital letters.

The logo is displayed on a white rectangular background with a thin black border. The 'UT' monogram is black, and the word 'SOUTHERN' is in black, serif capital letters.

The logo is displayed on a solid black rectangular background. The 'UT' monogram and the word 'SOUTHERN' are both in white, serif capital letters.

## UT SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT LOGO EXAMPLE

The UT Southern logo system enables each college and office to be individually recognized while preserving the overall brand identity. Various logo unit lockups are available, and they must be created and approved exclusively by the Marketing department. Alterations or redesigns are not allowed.



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**TYPOGRAPHY & COLOR**



The first Official Typeface of UT Southern is Montserrat and may be used for Headlines and Body Copy.

It is a modern clean sans serif that is accessible and welcoming. Montserrat can be used in a variety of different weights to create dynamic layouts.

Montserrat is available via Adobe Fonts ([fonts.adobe.com](https://fonts.adobe.com)).

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

!@#\$%^&\*()-\_+=+;:;'",.?

The second Official Typeface of UT Southern is Goudy Old Style and may be used for Headlines and Body Copy.

It is a serif that is familiar and empowering. Uppercase Goudy Old Style can be used for headlines.

Goudy Old Style is available via Adobe Fonts ([fonts.adobe.com](https://fonts.adobe.com)).

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
!@#\$%^&\*()-\_+=+;:’”,.?

The third Official Typeface of UT Southern is Winlove and may be used as a decorative font.

It is an organic handwritten script that is modern, simple, and authentic.

Winlove is available for download upon request.

A b c d e f g h i j k l m n  
o p q r s t u v w x y z  
! @ # \$ % & \* ( ) - = + ; : , . ?

# UT SOUTHERN PRIMARY PALETTE COLOR INFORMATION

All colors used in each UT Southern brand trademark must adhere to the official Color Information standards at left.

PANTONE, CMYK, RGB, HEX, and thread color specifications are provided to help guide the application process for all identity touchpoints.

PRIMARY PALETTE



## **DARK GRAY**

*PANTONE Cool Gray 11 C*

*RGB: 88, 89, 91*

*CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 80*

*HEX: 58595B*

*Thread: Madeira 1288. RA 2731*



## **ORANGE**

*PANTONE 151 C*

*RGB: 255, 131, 0*

*CMYK: 0, 50, 100, 0*

*HEX: FF8300*

*Thread: Madeira 1278. RA 2328*



## **LIGHT GRAY**

*PANTONE 429 C*

*RGB: 169, 175, 183*

*CMYK: 6, 2, 0, 33*

*HEX: A9AFB7*

*Thread: Madeira*

PRIMARY ACCENT PALETTE



## **FIERY BLAZE**

*RGB: 200, 16, 46*

*CMYK: 0, 92, 77, 22*

*HEX: C8102E*



## **WHITE**

*RGB: 255, 255, 255*

*CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 0*

*HEX: FFFFFFFF*

## UT SOUTHERN SECONDARY PALETTE COLOR INFORMATION

All colors used in each UT Southern brand trademark must adhere to the official Color Information standards at left.

PANTONE, CMYK, RGB, HEX, and thread color specifications are provided to help guide the application process for all identity touchpoints.

### SECONDARY PALETTE



#### **AQUA BLUE**

*Pantone: 2391 C*

*RGB: 0, 129, 166*

*CMYK: 86, 23, 16, 9*

*HEX: 0081A6*



#### **SPARK**

*RGB: 251, 186, 70*

*CMYK: 0, 26, 72, 2*

*HEX: FBBA46*



#### **SEA BLUE**

*RGB: 42, 95, 153*

*CMYK: 73, 38, 0, 40*

*HEX: 2A5F99*



#### **GREEN**

*RGB: 85, 158, 137*

*CMYK: 46, 0, 13, 38*

*HEX: 559E89*



#### **EARTHY BROWN**

*RGB: 129, 89, 35*

*CMYK: 0, 31, 73, 49*

*HEX: 815923*

# BRAND GUIDELINES

# UT SOUTHERN SAFE ZONE & SIZING

1



## 1 - SAFE ZONE INFORMATION

A protected field the height and width of the Tennessee symbol in the UT Southern logo should surround the family of marks at all times. This protective field ensures a clear and prominent presentation of all marks within the brand identity.

Example shows text too close to logo.

## 2 - SIZING INFORMATION

To ensure proper legibility of the variety of marks within the brand identity, please adhere to the measurements shown below for the minimum size requirements for high-resolution printed images.

2



### MINIMUM HEIGHT

- Primary 1 - (.75" or 75 pixels in height)
- Primary 2 - (.3125" or 32 pixels in height)
- Secondary 1 - (.375" or 36 pixels in height)
- Secondary 2 - (.25" or 24 pixels in height)

# UT SOUTHERN VIOLATION INFORMATION

1



2



3



4



5



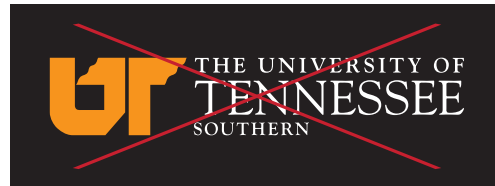
6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



To ensure performance, each mark must be displayed properly and may never be altered or modified in any way.

The Violation Information listed below and shown at left demonstrates unacceptable uses of the marks within the academic brand identity.

1. Do not alter the orientation or proportions of marks.
2. Do not alter, rescale, or reformat elements in marks.
3. Do not change typefaces within marks.
4. Do not alter colors within marks.
5. Do not outline marks.
6. Do not crop marks in any way.
7. Do not place marks on visually distracting grounds.
8. Do not place marks against colors not in brand family.
9. Only official PANTONE colors may be used.
10. Do not add elements to marks.
11. Do not make low-quality reproductions of marks.
12. Do not add type to marks.
13. Do not tilt logo.
14. Do not stretch or compress logo.



## UT SOUTHERN BRANDED CLOTHING GUIDELINES

The Branded Clothing Guide is intended to outline all potential application options for UT Southern branding clothing items, creating a consistent look and feel across the department. All branded clothing must adhere to the graphic standards displayed.

Use black and white only when reasonable and full color isn't an option.



**UT** SOUTHERN

**UT** SOUTHERN

**UT** SOUTHERN

**UT** SOUTHERN

**FIRST YEAR  
EXPERIENCE**

**UT**  
SOUTHERN

**UT**  
SOUTHERN

**UT**  
SOUTHERN

**UT**  
SOUTHERN

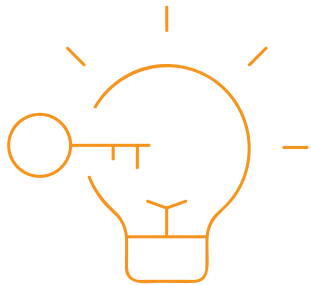
Text on sleeve is an additional option; Montserrat must be used for font.

Academic iconography is to be used as a supplement in academic resources such as powerpoints and course brochures.



## UT SOUTHERN ICONOGRAPHY

Marketing Iconography is to be used for supplementary design purposes in marketing, such as in brochures, flyers, etc.



## UT SOUTHERN CHANCELLOR'S SEAL

The Chancellor's Seal is reserved for official documents relating to the Chancellor. It should not be used to represent UT Southern, or for any other purposes. The one-color gray may only be used when orange is not acceptable for contrast.



Letterhead template is accessible under Communication Resources in Sharepoint.

To order a business card or name tag, please fill out the form accessible via Sharepoint.

Please utilize Arial font in place of Montserrat. Suggested font size is 12 pt, and line spacing is 1.15.



August 21, 20XX

Firehawks  
123 Central Avenue  
Pulaski, TN 12345

Dear Firehawks,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Maecenas porttitor congue massa. Fusce posuere, magna sed pulvinar ultricies, purus lectus malesuada libero, sit amet commodo magna eros quis urna. Nunc viverra imperdiet enim. Fusce est. Vivamus a tellus. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Proin pharetra nonummy pede. Mauris et orci. Aenean nec lorem. In porttitor. Donec laoreet nonummy augue. Suspendisse dui purus, scelerisque at, vulputate vitae, pretium mattis, nunc. Mauris eget neque at sem venenatis eleifend. Ut nonummy.

Nunc viverra imperdiet enim. Fusce est. Vivamus a tellus. Proin pharetra nonummy pede. Mauris et orci. Aenean nec lorem. In porttitor. Donec laoreet nonummy augue. Suspendisse dui purus, scelerisque at, vulputate vitae, pretium mattis, nunc. Mauris eget neque at sem venenatis eleifend. Ut nonummy. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas.

Sincerely,

First Last  
Title of Author

433 W Madison Street • Pulaski, TN 38478 • (931) 363-9800 phone • (931) 363-9800 fax  
utsouthern.edu



**LINDA C. MARTIN**  
*Interim Chancellor*

**OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR**

931-363-9802 office  
865-924-9746 cell  
lcmartin@utsouthern.edu

433 W Madison Street  
Pulaski, TN 38478  
utsouthern.edu



**FIRST LAST**

## UT SOUTHERN PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

Shortcut logos should be used when branding promotional items in order to maximize visibility. Select either shortcut logo to best suit item.

Use black and white only when reasonable and full color isn't an option.



# COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

# UT SOUTHERN COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

## HOW WE COMMUNICATE

### Welcome to “The Front Porch”

The foundation of our brand is the voice, tone, and messaging we use when communicating to both current and prospective students. These three areas define the “feel” of UT Southern and constitute the most vital aspect of every marketing effort. As such, it is extremely important that every image and word emotionally conveys the UT Southern experience.

Throughout the South, the front porch is considered a room of its own, no less than the living room or kitchen. It's the place of stories and memories, where family gathers and neighbors are met with warm smiles and sincere welcomes.

At UT Southern, every postcard, social post, and email to prospective students should be written and designed as if they were visiting our own “front porch”. That means communication that is inviting, informing, and invigorating.

It is important to regularly check in across all channels to ensure our communications are aligning with our brand voice.

- **Welcoming and Caring:** We believe every student carries a spark of greatness inside them. UT Southern's mission is to provide the necessary ingredients to turn that spark into a fire that brings light to the world.

We believe in family, and how the power of diverse viewpoints and ideas strengthen the bonds of our family. That's why we can't wait to welcome new students to the UT Southern experience. When they see the columns, they know they're home.

- **Conversational and Caring:** We steer clear of the jargon that permeates higher education and rely on simple words that convey striking significance. The UT Southern experience relies on a supportive, nurturing environment that is immersed in a community of people who know and care about our students.
- **Positive and Motivational:** We're in the business of helping students ignite their passions and discover a purpose only they can fulfill. We create connections — to one another, to career opportunities, and to big ideas. With a degree from UT Southern, your only limits are the ones you place on yourself.
- **Student Centric:** Our students are our first priority. We care about them, their needs, and their passions. We meet them where they are in their journey, whether it's the excitement of welcome week, the stress of midterms, the anticipation of a big game, or the joy of graduation. College is an experience, and it's one we want to share with every student. We see and showcase our university through their eyes, not our own.

- **Helpful and Empowering:** This is a campus where kindness rules and where everyone is treated with respect. We strive to offer help when it's needed and to empower students, staff, and faculty to reach their fullest potential. We also strive to help our region reach its full potential by infusing the workforce with graduates trained for success. We are Tennessee's nurses, teachers, scientists, programmers, analysts, and professionals in training. We are tradition. We are tomorrow. We are the Firehawks.

## OUR BRAND TONE

Our brand voice is what we say to our audience. Our brand tone is how we say it. It's the mood or emotion we want to convey in every message to prospective students by using specific word choices and writing styles. Put simply, our tone is how we communicate our voice.

In most cases, especially when speaking to current and prospective students, the UT Southern tone is upbeat, informal, and approachable. We don't talk past people, we engage them with language that's accessible, helpful, and clearly understood.

Note the difference between nearly identical phrases:

<b>“Let’s talk soon! :)”</b> YES: Playful, light, a conversation to look forward to.	<b>“Thank you so much!”</b> YES: Playful, light, ends a conversation on a positive note.
<b>“Let’s talk. Soon.”</b> NO: Serious, dispassionate, a bit ominous.	<b>“Thanks.”</b> NO: Serious, passionate, a bit ominous.
<b>“Looking forward to our chat!”</b> YES: Playful, light, a conversation to look forward to.	<b>“We’re so happy to have you!”</b> YES: Playful, light, endearing.
<b>“Let’s discuss later.”</b> NO: Serious, dispassionate, a bit ominous.	<b>“Thanks for coming.”</b> NO: Serious, dispassionate, unwelcoming.



## OUR BRAND MESSAGING

In our content creation, storytelling, and social media interactions, we use language that aligns with our brand pillars and reflects UT Southern's identity as a nurturing, innovative, and community-centered institution. Here are some refined phrases to incorporate into your writing to ensure consistency and strengthen our brand messaging:

### Education

- Unleashing boundless opportunities for every student.
- Committed to the success of each student—your journey is our priority.
- Honoring our rich heritage while embracing limitless educational possibilities.
- Putting you first in a personalized, transformative educational experience.
- A campus dedicated to empowering you on your path to achievement.

### Access

- Making quality education accessible, affordable, and accessible for all.
- Delivering a private college experience with the value of a public education.
- Launching graduates into a world of lifelong opportunities.
- Connecting students to diverse career paths and professional networks.

### Experience

- Offering a full university experience within a close-knit community.
- Turning friendships into lifelong bonds that feel like family.
- A place where learning, belonging, and exploration come together.
- Where Southern hospitality meets higher education.
- Feeling at home from the moment the columns come into view.

## OUR BRAND HASHTAGS

Our brand hashtags are a key part of our digital identity, helping to build community, drive engagement, and amplify our message across social media platforms. These hashtags reflect UT Southern's spirit, values, and the vibrant Firehawk community.

### University

- #IgniteYourFuture
- #DiscoverUTSouthern
- #UTSouthern
- #FuelTheFuture

### Athletics

- #GoFirehawks
- #WeAreFirehawks
- #FanTheFire
- #FirehawkCountry

## WRITING GUIDE: BEST PRACTICES AND TIPS

### Grammar

Follow standard English grammar rules, but don't let rigid adherence to AP style hinder your connection with the UT Southern audience, especially on social media. For example, use "ages 18–21" rather than "ages 18 through 21."

While technically correct, using "whom" can feel overly formal and may shift the tone away from UT Southern's approachable voice. In customer service communications and on social media, it's okay to use exclamation points and emoticons (within reason) to convey warmth and enthusiasm. Always use the Oxford comma in written communications for clarity and consistency.

### Building Trust

Build trust by taking personal responsibility in your communications. Show that you are actively engaged, such as by saying, "I am taking this next step on your behalf to answer your question or connect you with what you need." This approach demonstrates commitment and fosters a sense of reliability.

### Recognizing Individuals

Always remember you're speaking to a person, not just a number. If you can't directly resolve an issue, provide a call to action, such as, "Message me back here if you need additional help." Avoid making individuals feel as though they've been passed off without a personal touch; maintain a connection by offering clear, personal follow-up.

### Slang

Slang can add personality and relatability to your messaging but use it sparingly to avoid sounding dated or inauthentic. Slang works best in social media posts and email campaigns but should be avoided in formal marketing materials and website content.

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

When using an abbreviation or acronym that might not be immediately recognized, always spell it out on first mention. Avoid higher education jargon to keep your communication clear and accessible to all audiences.

## **Pronouns**

Highlight the student's significance to UT Southern by using “you” and “your.” For instance, say, “Your career begins at UT Southern.” When speaking on behalf of the university, use “we” to foster a sense of community and partnership, as in, “Not sure what career path you want to take? We’re here to help.” For engagement interactions on social media, use “I” to create a direct, personal connection.

## **Putting People First**

Always prioritize the student in your messaging. For example, “You want a career. We want to help.” Use people-first language that emphasizes the individual over their attributes, such as “a man who is tall” rather than “a tall man,” or “a woman who is studying nursing” instead of “a female nurse.” This approach places the individual at the forefront, recognizing that we are all more than just our descriptors.

## **Infusing Action**

Use action-oriented language when appropriate, especially in email subject lines, ad copy, and marketing materials. Start with verbs like “Start your career” or “Take control.” This isn’t a strict rule but a best practice to maintain an energetic and inviting tone. Encourage the audience to take action rather than issuing commands, making the invitation feel empowering and motivating.

## **Using First Names**

Whenever possible, address individuals by their first names. UT Southern is a place where you’re more than just a number—you’re recognized as a person with a unique identity. Using first names reinforces our commitment to personal connections and a sense of belonging, making every interaction feel individualized and meaningful.



