



Amherst College

Office of Human Resources

JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: Director of Strategic Communications

Department: Communications Reports to title: Chief Communications Officer

Full Time: X Part Time: _____ Date Prepared: 11.15.19

Job Group/Level: SM-4 Regular Daily Work Schedule: _____ to _____

Pay Type: Weekly _____ Monthly X Months Per Year: 12 Hours Per Week: 40

(Summer Months) Months Per Year: _____ Hours Per Week: _____

1. Summary of Position:

The Director of Strategic Communications works to develop creative, effective communications strategies that serve the mission of the College and consistently engage its many diverse constituencies, with specific responsibility for Amherst's arts programs and museums and direct involvement with social media and media relations. Reporting to the Chief Communications Officer and serving as an integral member of the Office of Communications' senior leadership team, the Director oversees the Associate Director of Social and New Media and, in that role, provides support, input and expertise to the Associate Director, as well as serving as a social media back-up in the division. The Director also will partner with the Director of Media Communications on developing and executing strategic media relations plans for the College and will build and leverage relationships with key members of the media in pursuit of that goal.

With respect to the arts, the Director serves as a strategic consultant for colleagues across the College to strengthen the impact of the collective Amherst Arts & Museums, as well as individual departments and museums; to promote transparency and build relationships between departments; and to support interdisciplinary faculty connections. The Director serves as one of the primary organizers of LitFest, Amherst College's annual literary festival, overseeing key aspects of the event in collaboration with the Conferences and Special Events unit and other campus leaders.

In addition to expertise in media relations and social media, the Director will contribute to the division's work in crisis communications and data analytics, as well as serve as a strategic consultant and project manager on a variety of projects that involve individuals, depart and consistently engaging its many diverse constituencies and divisions across campus, including select Bicentennial activities.

The Director will take appropriate actions to support a diverse workforce and participate in the College's efforts to create a respectful, inclusive, and welcoming work environment.

2. Principal Duties and Responsibilities:

80% Social Media, Media Relations, Strategic Consulting and Crisis Communications

- Oversee the Associate Director of Social and New Media on the College's social media strategy, audience growth and engagement (including with people who hold historically marginalized identities), and data analysis, and serve as backup to the Associate Director, as needed.
- Help to monitor and continually expand the division's expertise in cutting-edge social media practices and technologies to ensure that Amherst is a leader among liberal arts colleges in strategically using such communications platforms.
- Support the Associate Director of Social and New Media in the collection and analysis of data, including the growth and engagement metrics of Amherst's social channels.
- Partner with the Director of Media Communications on conceiving, planning and executing the division's media and public relations strategy.
- With the Director of Media Communications, generate stories and news media coverage on all platforms and respond to media inquiries, as necessary.
- In concert with the Director of Media Communications, build and leverage relationships with key print, broadcast and digital journalists.
- Serve as a key member of the Communications team regarding the logistics, strategy, and execution of crisis communications, including close collaboration with the Associate Director of Social and New Media.
- Draft and edit press releases, statements, talking points and other announcements on strategic initiatives, crises and other timely communications on behalf of the College, as needed.
- Serve as a consultant to campus colleagues from a variety of backgrounds in conceiving, planning and executing strategic communications projects and news dissemination, and coordinating those strategies with other units, when applicable.
- Monitor and analyzing media coverage and activity, including overseeing data collection and reporting.

15% Project Management

- Overseeing select projects from start to finish, including but not limited to: catalog, annual report, sustainability reports, accessibility initiatives, select Bicentennial activities, and other ongoing and new projects.

5% Perform other duties/functions as requested

All employees are expected to participate in the College's efforts to create a respectful, inclusive, and welcoming work environment.

3. Internal-External Interaction/Communication:

The Director of Strategic Communications will work closely with the Chief Communications Officer and all other members of the Communications team, as well as numerous constituencies across and off campus, including faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and freelancers, vendors, peer institutions and others. The Director will interact, in concert with the Director of Media Communications, with members of the media.

4. Education: (include certifications and licenses)

Required: Bachelor's degree in journalism, communications, public relations or a related field

Preferred:

5. Experience: (List specific skills necessary to perform this job)

Required:

- 10 years of experience in communications, social media, media relations and/or a related field.
- Deep knowledge of traditional and social media.
- Strong collaboration skills with individuals from varied backgrounds.
- Excellent interpersonal, written and verbal communication skills, including speaking and writing clearly, persuasively and creatively to a diverse audience.
- Excellent and demonstrated editorial judgment.
- Demonstrated skill in content editing, including copy editing and proofreading.
- Demonstrated experience and success with proactive media relations work on all platforms.
- Proven experience with analytics tools, and data collection and analysis.
- Knowledge of news media databases (Cision, etc.).
- Excellent organizational and time management skills.
- Excellent problem-solving skills.
- Work outside normal business hours including evenings and weekends, as required.
- Experience working with a diverse community.

Preferred:

- Experience working in higher education.
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6. Environmental and Physical Demands: (Please describe the work environment and unusual physical demands, i.e. lifting requirements.)

Frequent walking and standing throughout the day; lifting and carrying up to 10 pounds (laptop computer); repetitive motions including fingers, wrists, arms, and hands; visual (e.g., computer screens)

7. Decision Making:

Requires performing advanced work in the professional field. Identifies key barrier/core problems and applies problem solving skills in order to deal creatively with complex situations. Makes decisions under conditions of uncertainty, sometimes with incomplete information and with aggressive deadlines. Solves moderately complex problems for the office, using assessment tools and proven techniques.

8. Supervision Exercised/Received:

Works with a high degree of independence.

Supervisory Responsibility: Yes X _____ No _____

Number of Employees Supervised: 3

