

**Job Title:** Director of Strategic Communications for Advancement

**Department:** External Affairs

**Date Prepared:**  12/1/23

**Reports To:** Vice President for External Affairs/Dual reporting lines to Executive Directors of Development and Alumni Affairs

**Job Summary:**

Directs and oversees the development and execution of a strategic, comprehensive and effective communication plan, specifically tailored to engage, enhance perception and strengthen connections with alumni, donors and friends of the University. Ensures effective coordination between the USM Foundation and Southern Miss Alumni Association and its audiences, while driving these efforts toward the University’s overall communications goals. Builds and manages a team of professionals to support Advancement Communications.

**Primary Job Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Collaborates with leadership of the USM Foundation and Southern Miss Alumni Association to understand the vision, mission and key priorities of each organization. Examines the constituent landscape to create a comprehensive communications strategy for University Advancement. Oversees the development of effective messaging to accomplish communication objectives for both internal and external stakeholders for alumni communications, fundraising activities and opportunities and event promotion. Measures and reports on effectiveness and adapts strategy as needed.
2. Leads, motivates and manages the Advancement Strategic Communications team to design and deploy strategies and tactics focused on achieving the goals and objectives of the Advancement organizations. Responsible for hiring, orientation, on-going training and professional development, performance planning and evaluation of the staff. Provides leadership regarding project workflow to ensure each initiative is completed within the agreed upon timeframe and budget to achieve maximum effectiveness.
3. Cultivates relationships with communications professionals and leaders from other areas of campus and the community to assist in the development of alumni and donor stories that highlight the work of University units, as appropriate. Works with University Communications, the Alumni Association, the USM Foundation and Southern Miss Athletics to ensure a collaborative approach to overall University communications.
4. Oversees the production and dissemination of all Advancement communication materials. This includes (but is not limited to) *The Talon*, the Alumni Association’s quarterly alumni magazine, as well as materials related to Association membership campaigns, program marketing and event promotion, the USM Foundation’s annual Impact Report, materials for Foundation activities and proposals and other materials for University partners. Writes and disseminates news releases and plans press announcements for items of interest. Drafts remarks, creates presentation materials and/or correspondence for Executive Directors, Board chairman, University President, etc. as needed.
5. Oversees the creation and implementation of a digital strategy for each of the Advancement organizations’ digital channels. Coordinates, maintains and monitors the USM Foundation and Southern Miss Alumni Association digital presence, including websites and various social media outlets. This includes the identification of the target audience for each group, content, posting frequency and measurement of the success of each channel.
6. Adheres to University, Foundation and Association policies, procedures and regulations. Performs other duties as assigned.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

A Bachelor’s degree in Communication, or related field, and a minimum of five years of experience leading in a complex communication environment. Must have a valid driver’s license. Supervisory experience.

**Preferred Qualifications:**

Masters degree preferred. Experience in a higher education environment and/or non-profits.

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA):**

Employees of this position are prohibited from disclosing confidential and proprietary information of donors and prospects, the Foundation, the University and its employees or students. This confidentiality obligation is effective while employed in this position and continues after termination of employment.

* Comprehensive understanding of key communication practices within a complex setting.
* Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to communicate and interact effectively with a diverse group of people
* Ability to clearly and persuasively communicate concepts and ideas and garner the confidence of stakeholders
* Track record of setting high performance standards and building high performance teams
* Demonstrated understanding of using data to drive decision-making
* Strong grasp of digital technology
* Ability to remain agile in a dynamic workflow
* Demonstrated ability to create new and unique content
* Ability to read, analyze, and interpret general business communications, financial reports, governmental regulations and legal documents
* Ability to write speeches, press releases, articles for publication and other communication materials that conform to prescribed style and format
* Ability to respond to inquiries or complaints from customers, regulatory agencies or members of the business community
* Ability to work before and after normal business hours, including weekends
* Ability to travel or complete overnight stays
* Self-motivated and accountable for results
* Seeks opportunities for development for both self and team
* Creates opportunities to apply new learnings and best practices into innovative solutions that positively impact results
* Sets clear expectations for performance, provides meaningful feedback, holds employees accountable and recognizes successes
* Effectively engages and interacts with others to collaborate and provide value-added support that enhances results and team effectiveness
* Ability to analyze, organize and prioritize work while meeting multiple deadlines
* Ability to process and handle confidential information with discretion
* Understands higher education and non-profits and can use industry terminology fluently
* Thinks strategically and asks critical questions to delve to root cause to identify solutions
* Understands the interconnection of decisions, actions, outcomes and measures

**Supervisory Responsibilities:**

Manages the work of a team of communications professionals with positions to be determined.

**Physical Requirements:**

Please identify all physical requirements for the position. Enter **NR, O, F, C,** in the Maximum Required Frequency column below.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Frequency Ranking** | | **Percent of Time** | | | **Range of Hours Worked Given Length of Shift:** | | | | | | | | | | | |
|
| **Not Required** | **(NR)** |  | | | **8 Hours** | | | **9 Hours** | | | **10 Hours** | | | **12 Hours** | | |
| **Or Never** |
| **Occasionally** | **(O)** | 0 | - | 33% | 0 | to | 2.5 | 0 | to | 3 | 0 | to | 3.5 | 0 | to | 4 |
| **Frequently** | **(F)** | 34 | - | 66% | 2.5 | to | 5.5 | 3 | to | 6 | 3.5 | to | 7 | 4 | to | 8 |
| **Continuously** | **(C)** | 67 | - | 100% | 5.5 | to | 8 | 6 | to | 9 | 7 | to | 10 | 8 | to | 12 |

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| --- | --- |
| **Maximum Required Frequency** | **Functional Activities (Typical)** |
| C | Sitting - able to remain in a stationary position |
| O | Standing - able to remain standing in a stationary position |
| O | Climbing - use objects to ascend and/or descend |
| O | Positions self to accomplish tasks (squat, stoop, crouch, crawl, kneel) |
| F | Lift/move items weighing up to 10 pounds (0 – 10 lbs.) |
| O | Lift/move items weighing up to 20 pounds (11 – 20 lbs.) |
| NR | Lift/move items weighing up to 35 pounds (21 – 35 lbs.) |
| NR | Lift/move items weighing up to 50 pounds (36 – 50 lbs.) |
| NR | Lift/move items weighing up to 100+ pounds (76 ≥ 100 lbs.) |
| O | Push/pull - move items from one area to another |
| O | Reach – ability to retrieve items above shoulders |
| C | Use of keyboard and mouse (sporadic 10 key) |
| C | Able to communicate with internal and external customers |
| F | Must be able to detect items from a close distance |
| O | Must be able to detect items from a long distance |
| C | Must be able to distinguish colors |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Maximum**  **Required Frequency** | **Work Environment/Conditions** |
| O | Works in outdoor weather conditions |
| C | Works inside |
| NR | Exposure to solvents or chemicals |
| O | Exposure to excess noise |
| NR | Exposure to dust, fumes, gases, or other irritating substances (paint, glue) |