



Office of the President

1301 College Avenue

Fredericksburg, VA 22401-5300

Executive Director of University Communications

Position Description

The Executive Director reports to the Office of the President, specifically the Chief of Staff, and oversees the Office of University Communications.

This position coordinates the University's external relations and communications, including mass media, social media, the institution's website, publications, marketing and advertising channels, special events, and other forms of communication to support UMW's overall mission and goals, including student and faculty recruitment and retention, fund raising, alumni relations, and community and government relations. The Executive Director will have responsibility for the development and execution of a communications strategy that drives local, state, and national media relations, raises UMW's public profile and increases brand awareness. This position will help amplify the reach of the school's core messages while building the school's external reputation. In addition, the person in this role will oversee all internal and crisis communication efforts.

The Executive Director must understand the nature and purpose of communication in higher education and demonstrate the following: strong management skills; excellent communication skills; superior strategic and tactical communication instincts; knowledge of web, social and other forms of digital media; understanding of the communication needs of a diverse and inclusive community; and an ability to lead, mentor, and train staff to superior performance.

The Executive Director should embrace the unique nature of the University of Mary Washington and be able to articulate the case for the liberal arts and the virtues of a student-centric environment which places a premium on high-quality instruction.

Required Experience

The Executive Director should have, at a minimum, an earned bachelor's degree, 10 years of work experience and a record of career advancement, and significant experience as a successful leader with an ability to develop a broad and innovative vision for communication.

Preferred Experience

Extensive experience in higher education communications/public relations; experience as an institutional spokesperson, facility with both traditional and emerging media and technologies; Expertise in writing, editing, proofing, publishing, and web and graphic design; Experience in the leadership and management of professional marketing and communications staff.

Core Competencies/responsibilities

- Coordinate the public response to events which require University action including but not limited to: communication staff, internal stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni), media outlets, local and state communities, and other external audiences; as well as serving as university spokesperson or identifying appropriate expert spokespeople as appropriate to the situation.
- Develop, implement, and maintain strategies and programs to enhance the visibility, brand, and reputation of the University.
- Develop and maintain effective communication strategies with a variety of internal and external audiences.
- Work with units across the university to ensure a consistent and complementary set of University communications, including Academic Affairs, Admissions, Athletics, Advancement/Alumni Relations, and Student Affairs. Develop strategies for coordinating messaging across all UMW communication channels.
- Provide leadership for University crisis communication and reputation management.
- Promote university priorities and image to internal and external constituents. Serve as a visible leader to promote institutional goals and objectives. Maintain current knowledge of university-wide priorities.
- Oversee the operation of the Office of University Communications including: the University website, media relations & PR, marketing, design services, and social media.

Office of University Communications

The mission of the Office of University Communications is to promote the UMW brand and to champion the University through all means of communication. The Office of University Communications coordinates the institution's external relations and communications programs, utilizing the mass and social media, the Internet and social media in all forms, publications, special events, and other forms of communication with regional, state, and national outlets to support the University's mission and goals. **The Office is comprised of the following components: University Marketing, Digital Communications, Media and Public Relations, and Design Services.** By communicating Mary Washington's distinctive identity within the Virginia system of higher education, with its emphasis on a broad liberal arts education and high-quality instruction, the office also performs a marketing function supporting such areas as student recruitment, faculty recruitment and retention, fundraising, alumni relations, community relations, and governmental support.