

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, performs tasks in support of College's marketing and communications efforts. The communication specialist helps to build relationships and positive associations with the public through communication and events, including writing and distributing news stories; writing and editing content for publications; taking, organizing, and sharing photographs; developing awareness and understanding of the College on social media and the web; answering questions from the public; supporting outreach or public events; representing the College at events; and placing media advertising.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision from the Director, Marketing and Communications. Exercises no direct supervision of staff. May provide technical and functional direction to student workers or hourly workers.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is a journey-level professional classification that performs duties in the development of public affairs, public awareness and information, community relations and outreach, and media relations materials and program concepts. The incumbent is expected to be able to take assigned projects of moderate to significant difficulty and sensitivity and carry them through from initial concept to finished communications materials or events, utilizing sound judgment, the application of proven public/media relations and communications principles, and skillful, persuasive writing, and presentation approaches with a minimum of direction and supervision. This class is distinguished from the Director, Marketing and Communications in that the latter has overall responsibility for all functions of the department, its strategy, and for developing, implementing, and interpreting public policy.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

1. Researches, writes, proofreads and edits a variety of material for the College, including news releases, news stories, web copy, public service announcements, newsletters, articles, brochures, and reports.
2. Provides emergency communication support, such as maintaining the communication plan; staying up-to-date on the campus emergency notification systems; developing and editing emergency communication templates; and information gathering, dissemination, monitoring, analysis, and planning.
3. Serves as College photographer for marketing projects, publications, brochures, web site, and documentation of campus events; develops and maintains photo archives and graphic images; oversees outsourced photo shoots; performs photo enhancements.
4. Acts as media liaison resource and College spokesperson when directed.
5. Coordinates production of Performing Arts programs for the music, theater, and dance departments throughout the academic year, as needed; coordinates production of the Performing Arts annual brochure; writes, copy and curates photography for the brochure; serves as liaison between staff, program directors, and graphic artists.
6. Serves as editor of College online news, regularly providing news and photographs online and in social media.
7. Assists in concept development, coordination, implementation, and participation in special events.
8. Represents the College at events, such as the Walnut Community Festival.

9. Confers with representatives of other departments, committees, and vendors as required by project assignments.
10. May develop or arrange for the development of public, media, and community relations materials in Spanish or other languages in addition to English.
11. Participates on committees, task forces, and special assignments, including, but not limited to Screening and Selection Committees and affiliated trainings. Prepares and delivers oral presentations related to assigned areas if needed.
12. Learns and applies emerging technologies and, as necessary, to perform duties in an efficient, organized, and timely manner.
13. Performs other related or lower classification duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

1. Current theories, concepts, methods, and techniques of professional communication.
2. Principles and practices of writing in a variety of styles, including business, promotional, journalistic, and web.
3. Methods and practices applied in design and implementation of communications projects and programs.
4. Methods and techniques of modern photography, including lighting equipment, Photo editing software and photo and copy editing principles, and organization and maintenance of electronic photo archives.
5. Public/media relations and communication industry practices and trends.
6. Applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulatory codes, ordinances, and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
6. Record-keeping principles and procedures.
7. Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work.
8. English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
9. Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, students, and College staff, including individuals of various ages, disabilities, various socioeconomic and ethnic groups.

Skills & Abilities to:

1. Apply writing style and techniques appropriate for differing business and journalistic/public relations purposes and for a variety of internal and external audiences.
2. Develop compelling communications for a variety of publications and platforms, including print and Web.
3. Research, develop, proofread, and edit written materials accurately and concisely.
4. Interpret, explain, and ensure compliance with College policies and procedures, complex laws, codes, regulations, and ordinances.
5. Maintain accurate files, records, and archives.
6. Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical time deadlines.
7. Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
8. Understand scope of authority in making independent decisions.
9. Review situations accurately and determine appropriate course of action using judgment according to established policies and procedures.

10. Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Equivalent to graduation from a regionally accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in communications, journalism, public relations, public administration, or a related field and five (5) years of progressively responsible professional experience in professional writing, public and media relations, and programs and projects similar to those administered by the College, which included responsibility for writing materials and designing graphic treatments.

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Licenses and Certifications:

The incumbent may periodically be required to travel to a variety of locations. If operating a vehicle, incumbents must have the ability to secure and maintain a valid California driver's license.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing in and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Incumbents in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Incumbents must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects weighing up to 50 pounds.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

Incumbents work indoors and outdoors, and are frequently exposed to dust, fumes, and allergens and occasionally exposed to loud noise levels, inclement weather conditions, chemicals, mechanical and/or electrical hazards, and hazardous physical substances. Incumbents may interact with staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.