UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
Position Description

TITLE:            Specialist, Public Information & Communications
DIVISION:         University Advancement
REPORTS TO:       Director of Communications
                   Department of Communications/News Bureau
GRADE:            12
SUPERVISES:       Support staff, interns, student workers

BASIC FUNCTION:
Responsible for assisting the director in all marketing, advertising, public relations, and communications efforts for the University of Rhode Island. Responsibilities include keeping the University's constituencies - alumni, donors, general public, media and other key audiences - updated on University projects and initiatives. In this role, author and develop general information brochures, fact sheets, reports, press releases, e-mail correspondence, and other materials, as needed.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Serve as communications liaison for the seven academic colleges, including the College of Continuing Education at the Providence Campus; the Division of Student Life, the Division of University Advancement, University College, Admissions, Alumni Affairs/Association, and other areas, as needed.

Advise University faculty, departments, and students in how to generate publicity. Work with local, regional, and national print, broadcast, cable, and internet media outlets to generate coverage for University campaigns, programs and accomplishments.

Work with the director in implementing the University's crisis communications plan.

Represent the University, its policies, initiatives, and issue positions to the local, regional and national press. Represent the University in public forums, at cultivation events, and at press conferences.

With the director and/or in the director's absence, serve as spokesperson and/or communications liaison for the University.
With the director and/or in the director's absence, serve as crisis communications liaison with top officials of the University, the crisis management team, the Police Department, college deans, director of athletics, and other departments and offices, as needed and required. The public information officer may be called upon to manage such communication in the director's absence, and must be available after hours to assist the director, university officials, or others in a crisis situation.

Work with the staff of the Development Office to provide communications support for the University's Capital Campaigns and other fundraising initiatives and projects.

Work with the Alumni Association staff to provide communications support for the program activities of the Alumni Association.

Work with news and communications personnel from other state colleges, non-profit organizations, private corporations, charitable foundations, federal and state political leaders and others in making joint announcements about programs, gifts, policies, or initiatives.

Assist in developing and maintaining a cohesive presence for the University on the World Wide Web, including maintaining an internet site for current news and information about University programs, initiatives, research developments and events. Maintain an appropriate flow of news and information on the University's official newsline: URI NewsLine.

Research, design, develop and maintain a News Sources Directory of faculty/staff experts for use primarily by news media, but also for use by local government, grassroots organizations, businesses and others in search of resources/experts.

Research, design, develop and maintain a Speakers Bureau Directory of faculty/staff experts for use by non-profit organizations, chambers of commerce, rotaries and others in search of public speakers. Respond to requests from a variety of community organizations for speakers.

Research, develop and promote information about URI research, programs, and achievements through various media outlets. Generate and pitch stories about the University, its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors to local, regional, and national press.

Coordinate and produce press materials for all major University-wide events such as Convocation, Commencement, Honors Colloquium, Alumni events such as Homecoming and Alumni Weekend.

Respond quickly (to meet reporters/assignment editor's deadlines) to frequent media requests for expert resources, information and assistance.
Cultivate strong working relationships with local, regional, and national print, broadcast outlets. Conduct regular visits to media outlets and develop opportunities for media to meet at the University with faculty, students, and/or administrators.

Advise faculty, staff and students on ways to make news; gather information for publicity purposes; determine news value of story ideas.

OTHER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Perform additional duties as requested.

LICENSES, TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT:

Personal computers, printers, and word processing, database management, and spreadsheet software.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS:

This position is not substantially exposed to adverse environmental conditions.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Bachelor's degree in English, communications, journalism, or marketing required; master's degree preferred. Must have a minimum of seven years' full-time employment in public relations, newspaper writing, reporting or editing, marketing or communications, with proven skills and accomplishments in the areas of public information dissemination, public relations, and media placements. Communications and/or media relations experience at an institution of higher education preferred. Must have excellent verbal and written communication skills. Must be able to organize, coordinate, and supervise support staff, interns, and student workers. Must be able to interpret and communicate institutional policies, plan, objectives, rules and regulations. Proficient skills in word processing, preferably on a Macintosh, required. Ability to use the Internet for research and communications is preferred. Must possess strong interpersonal skills.

ALL REQUIREMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO POSSIBLE MODIFICATION TO REASONABLY ACCOMMODATE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.