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THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
Position Description

TITLE: Executive Director, External Relations and Communications
DIVISION: Office of the President
REPORTS TO: President
GRADE: 18
SUPERVISES: Management, Professional and Support Staff

BASIC FUNCTION:

Reporting to the President, the Executive Director of External Relations and Communications provides leadership for the University of Rhode Island in a creative, efficient and integrated approach to its internal and external community relations responsibilities, marketing and branding, and communications. Plan, develop and administer the overall community relations activities of the University with its key constituencies, including federal, state, and local government. Serve as the lead liaison with governmental offices and bodies, including the Rhode Island Board of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education. Create a climate of strong support and understanding of the University. Advise the President regarding, and administer the program in, media relations, marketing and branding, and public affairs. The Executive Director, External Relations & Communications is a member of the President's Senior Leadership Team.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Evaluate and develop a public relations strategy to articulate and advance the University's mission, goals, funding needs, and institutional capabilities and accomplishments, including the contributions and expertise of members of the University community. As directed by the President, develop strategies to address the legislative needs of the University and higher education, assess their effectiveness, and update them annually to be in line with the University's strategic priorities and goals.

Serve as the lead University liaison to the Rhode Island General Assembly, Office of the Governor, other governmental agencies and entities, the U.S. Congressional Delegation, and the government relations firm retained by the University of Rhode Island Foundation.

Working closely with the President, Provost, Vice Presidents and Deans, serve as coordinator and University representative in relationships with state agencies, business, labor and other organizations, developing initiatives which seek to build and diversify the economic base of Rhode Island.

Develop, cultivate, and maintain productive working relationships with the Congressional Delegation and their staffs in order to strengthen the University's effectiveness at the national level. Assist, as requested by the President, the work of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development in coordinating events involving the Congressional Delegation and federal agencies in Rhode Island.

Assume a leadership role in working with the President and other University leaders in the development of strategic initiatives, policies, projects, funding, and regulations related to the University's external relations and communications objectives.

Work with the Director, Communications and Marketing, on matters relating to public information and media relations with local, regional and national news organizations. Oversee proactive media assignments, including the development and promotion of in-depth feature news placements.

Evaluate and report to the President on public and media perceptions of and reactions to the issues and challenges confronting the University.

Develop approaches to improve the dissemination of information relating to the identity and mission of the University, and to assess and improve the University's governmental relations and legislative agenda. Review and coordinate institutional promotional campaigns, e.g., bond referenda.

Advise and assist the President in external relations within Rhode Island, including those with state government, local communities and organizations, and the private sector. Coordinate and work with community partners and other divisions of the University to enhance the University's outreach initiatives.

Direct and/or assist various departments and the University as a whole in establishing and/or strengthening collaborative ties with community partners.

Directly supervises two managers, the Director of Communications and Marketing, and the Editor-in-Chief of the Alumni and University magazine. Duties include responsibility for Publications & Creative Services. In addition, oversees a unit of approximately 22 staff, including preparation and management of its budget.

Oversee the planning and execution of special events, such as press conferences and other media opportunities.

Serve in other capacities and with additional responsibilities as assigned by the President.

LICENSES, TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT:

Personal computers, printers; word processing, database, spreadsheet software, and Web-based applications, and working knowledge, familiarity, or ability to learn electronic and social media systems.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS:

The incumbent is not substantially exposed to adverse environmental conditions.

QUALIFICATIONS:

REQUIRED: Master's degree, or other advanced degree, from an accredited institution; minimum of five years' experience in public affairs, government or community relations, or related area; demonstrated knowledge and expertise in the areas of communications, media relations and publications; demonstrated strong interpersonal skills, and written and oral communication skills; demonstrated experience supervising a professional support staff.

PREFERRED: Master's degree in communications, business, public affairs, or a related field, from an accredited institution; higher education experience in external relations and communications, or a similar field; administrative and/or management experience; work experience in the State of Rhode Island; demonstrated experience working with diverse groups/populations.

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