

DESERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
**Public Information Officer**

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Under the direction of the Executive Director of Institutional Advancement, the Public Information Officer (PIO) directs the day-to-day operations of the Public Relations and Communication Department, which includes a consistent and favorable representation of the District to internal and external constituencies. Public Information Officer is responsible for creating and overseeing staff's creation of high-quality content and collateral, ensuring it aligns with College of the Desert's mission, strategic goals, supports the brand, and promotes the college's programs, events, faculty expertise, and student achievements. Directs the general operations of public information, graphics, branding, and all internal and external communication, ensuring that the areas operate efficiently and effectively utilizing the latest technological advances. The PIO must be an exceptional writer and proofreader who is digitally savvy, develops internal and external content for social media, websites, newsletters, press releases, and events, and supports the Superintendent/President and other designated executive team members with talking points, speeches, presentations, and other print and electronic communications. The PIO must also be proficient at photography, videography, and the basics of layout and design. This position serves as a media liaison and may act as a spokesperson when needed.

REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Select, train, assign, supervise, and evaluate the work and performance of assigned staff; recommend transfers, reassignments, discipline, terminations, promotions, and other personnel actions as appropriate.
- Provide assistance, advice, and counsel to the Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and other staff in strategic communication, marketing, outreach, public affairs, media, and other related areas.
- Direct community outreach efforts of the District to communicate the District's mission, relevance, and accomplishments to the community in all forms of media and in person.
- Formulate policies and procedures related to public information and community relations.
- Assist in developing and implementing an effective and strategic annual Communications Plan to consistently secure ongoing media coverage of college news and events in local, regional, and national news outlets and higher education-related publications, including Spanish language media.
- Develop and maintain a broad list of media contacts.
- Maintain internal and external calendar of events to cover and also serve as an event coordinator for assigned special events.
- Conduct research, develop, and write news releases, reports, newsletters, talking points, speeches, presentations, social media posts, video scripts, web-based content, and other communication materials for internal and external distribution.
- Ensure all publications and communications representing the college are adequately proofed for spelling, grammar, print quality, and consistency with the College's brand, organizational strategies, and mission.

- Assist in producing the Annual Report, State of the College, Commencement, FLEX, and other major college events and reports, as assigned. Oversee the creation of collateral materials for internal and external audiences.
- Establish and manage positive and effective working relationships with the media and personnel from other organizations, creating good public relations for College of the Desert and assisting the Executive Director in their spokesperson role; respond to media inquiries and create news releases for the appropriate media in a timely manner. Act as college spokesperson as necessary.
- Manage the college's public information responses per the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and California Public Records Act (CPRA). Maintain records of FOIA/CPRA requests and responses. Develop and update Board policy and procedure for responding to public records requests.
- In coordination with the Office of Information Technology, direct and manage the policies, procedures, standards, presentation, and content of the District's website and social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Develop and manage the budget for public information.
- Manage campus fidelity to the college style guide, brand images, logos, stationery, etc.
- Oversee the photography and videography of college events for use on websites, publications, and the college's image library and archives.
- Assist in providing media guidance to the leadership team and ensure they have the correct information to deliver appropriate messages during interviews with the media.
- Serve as author and reviewer of executive communications, speeches, and letters, as needed.
- Oversee the coordination of the content and consistency of design and branding of college web, portal pages, and social media. Provide input regarding website navigation.
- Assist departments in the preparation, messaging, editing, and dissemination of print and digital public information materials and special event promotion for all college constituent groups while ensuring brand standards and AP writing style are maintained.
- Assist with government and legislative affairs; stay current on and monitor state and federal legislative proposals affecting community colleges; updates and advises College leadership and staff about relevant policy proposals and actions works with College staff to analyze potential impacts on the College; communicates with the College community to inform them of relevant government issues; advocate on behalf of the District with elected officials in support/opposition of legislation, capital projects, and public policy issues both state and federal.
- Coordinate and conduct campus tours for community members and other dignitaries as requested. Provide support as requested to the Foundation for tours for potential donors. Collaborate with the Director of Student Life and Student Ambassadors as appropriate. Develop and oversee college-wide protocol for tours in collaboration with others.
- Act as the campus liaison to KCOD radio, Chaparral newspaper, and other student communication organizations and clubs, as assigned.
- Assist the Executive Director in directing crisis communications and communications related to emergency preparedness/planning. Serve as District Public Information Officer on the district Emergency Response Team.
- Develop and maintain campus signage/wayfinding systems and maps as needed and maintain accuracy of campus signage.

- Maintain accurate and active Speakers Bureau of campus specialists in various subject areas to respond to community requests and perform outreach activities in the community.
- Meet schedules and timelines, organize multiple projects efficiently and effectively and carry out required project details.
- Seek and participate in professional development, and campus committee activities.
- Represent the College at a variety of community and organizational events.
- Work collaboratively with the College of the Desert Foundation, Alumni Association and other auxiliary entities to ensure messaging is aligned, accurate and in compliance with College branding guidelines.
- Ensure accessibility of webpages, media, and materials created.
- Perform other work-related duties as assigned.

## **JOB REQUIREMENTS**

Experience working in communications, public relations and/or media relations; managing projects; developing and implementing communication strategies; creating targeted content; writing news-style articles, newsletters, news releases, speeches, talking points, social media, etc.; editing and proofreading; taking photos and videos; supervising staff; leading projects; coordinating public events and developing messaging plans;

Skill in organization and planning; meeting deadlines; building collaborative relationships; verbal and written communication; self-motivation; and innovation.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES**

### **Knowledge of:**

Knowledge of internal and external communication strategies; current trends in digital media/social media; AP style; communication practices and techniques, including social media; crisis communications strategies, planning, and implementation; methods and techniques of facilitating meetings and conducting presentations; correct structure and content of the English language, composition, spelling, and grammar; punctuation, media production, communication, and dissemination techniques and methods, including electronic and print; business and management principles of communication, planning, time management, budget development, and supervising and motivating employees; District board policies, administrative procedures, institutional goals, and their implementation; local, state, and federal policies, procedures, laws, and regulations governing community colleges; modern office technology and practices, procedures and equipment including Microsoft Office; understanding and sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds of college personnel, students, and community members; the basics of design, layout, and print production, website development, and content management; photographic and video techniques and operation of digital camera equipment; modern equipment and communication tools, including computers and graphic software programs relevant to work performed.

### **Ability to:**

Ability to think creatively and strategically; evaluate the work of assigned staff and provide constructive feedback; respond to communication-related issues in a timely manner; adapt to varied situations; quickly adjust priorities; work closely and cooperatively with all campus

constituents including faculty, staff, administration, students, alumni, community members, donors, and media representatives; fluently write and speak English utilizing correct grammar and punctuation to convey and receive information effectively; listen to and interact with all constituents to provide the information they need and in a timely manner; utilize critical thinking, logic, and reasoning to identify strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems and campus communications; monitor pending state and federal legislation that impacts community colleges and provide appropriate timely action; work effectively while multitasking and meeting deadlines; operate computer and applicable software including Microsoft Office applications and other design software; work confidentially and with discretion; train and provide work direction to others; work and communicate respectfully and effectively with people at various levels within the organization and community from diverse backgrounds, work independently with little direction; sit or stand for extended periods of time; bend at the waist, and kneel or crouch.

#### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination equivalent to:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in communications, public relations, journalism, public administration, marketing, or related field and
- Five (5) years of experience developing targeted content in public affairs or communications, preferably in a higher education setting, including at least two (2) years directing the work of others; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

#### PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Ability to fluently speak and write in Spanish.

#### WORKING CONDITIONS

Office environment with frequent interruptions. Driving a vehicle to conduct work as necessary. Requires evening and weekend responsibility to address media inquiries, attend functions, and complete required tasks.

#### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Classified Supervisor

Approved: April 20, 2018; December 17, 2021

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