

DESERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Director, Public Affairs and Community Relations

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Under the direction of the Executive Director of Institutional Advancement or designee, the Director of Public Affairs and Community Relations oversees the Office of Public Affairs, managing internal and external communications, media relations, social media, publications and the College website. The Director develops and implements communication strategies that support the College's goals and ensure consistent branding and messaging.

This position requires strong writing, editing, and public speaking skills; knowledge of community engagement; and the ability to support leadership and speeches, presentations, and media responses. The Director also applies basic skills in photography, videography, and design, and serves as a media liaison and spokesperson for the College as needed.

REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. 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.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic communications plan to strengthen relations with diverse stakeholders; direct all community outreach efforts to communicate the college's mission and secure ongoing media coverage in local, regional, national, and specialized (e.g., Spanish-language) outlets.
3. Provide strategic counsel to college leadership on public affairs, media, and legislative matters. Monitor state and federal legislation, advise leadership on potential impacts, and advocate on behalf of the District to elected officials.
4. Formulate and update policies related to public information and community relations. Manage all college responses to California Public Records Act (CPRA) requests, including maintaining all records and developing related Board policy.
5. Develop and maintain extensive media contacts, respond to inquiries in a timely manner, and proactively build positive working relationships with the press. Provide media guidance and prepare leadership for interviews. Support the Executive Director in their role as spokesperson by responding promptly to media inquiries and preparing timely and accurate news releases.
6. Maintain internal and external calendar of events to cover and serve as an event coordinator for assigned special events.
7. Oversee the planning and production of major college events and reports, such as Commencement and the Annual Report. Manage the internal and external events calendar and direct all event-related photography and videography for use in publications and archives.
8. Serve as a primary author and reviewer for executive and internal/external communications; research, write, and produce a wide array of materials, including news releases, reports, newsletters, talking points, speeches, presentations, social media posts, and video scripts.

9. Manage and enforce the college's brand identity, style guide, and logos. Ensure all publications and communications are proofed for quality, consistency, and alignment with the college mission, assisting departments as needed to maintain brand standards and AP style.
10. 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.
11. Direct the policies, content strategy, and brand consistency for the District's website, portal pages, and social media channels; coordinate with Information Technology on standards, presentation, navigation, and digital accessibility (per section 508/WCAG)
12. Develop and manage the budget for the Office of Public Affairs.
13. Oversee the photography and videography of college events for use on websites, publications, and the college's image library and archives.
14. Collaborate with the Director of Student Life and Student Ambassadors as appropriate.
15. Act as the campus liaison to KCOD radio, Chaparral newspaper, and other student communication organizations and clubs, as assigned.
16. Assist the Executive Director of Institutional Advancement in directing crisis communications and communications related to emergency preparedness/planning. Serve as District Public Information Officer on the district Emergency Response Team.
17. In coordination with the Vice President of Administrative Services, develop and maintain campus signage/wayfinding systems and maps as needed and maintain accuracy of campus signage. Meet schedules and timelines, organize multiple projects efficiently and effectively and carry out required project details.
18. Seek and participate in professional development, and campus committee activities.
19. 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.
20. Ensure accessibility of webpages, media, and materials created.
21. Perform other work-related duties and special projects as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

1. Public relations, strategic communications, and community/government relations
2. Internal and external communication strategies and AP style
3. Digital and social media trends and engagement strategies
4. Crisis communication planning and implementation
5. Meeting facilitation and presentation techniques
6. English grammar, composition, and professional writing standards
7. Media production, design, layout, and content management systems
8. Photography, videography, and digital media tools
9. Communication planning, budgeting, and staff supervision
10. District policies, and local, state, and federal regulations affecting community colleges
11. Microsoft Office and relevant communication or design software
12. Cultural awareness and sensitivity to diverse populations

Ability to:

1. Think creatively and strategically in communication planning
2. Develop and lead media relations, marketing, and awareness campaigns
3. Supervise, train, and evaluate staff effectively
4. Prioritize tasks, manage multiple deadlines, and adapt to changing needs
5. Communicate clearly and professionally in writing and speech
6. Build positive relationships across diverse internal and external groups
7. Apply critical thinking and sound judgment to problem-solving
8. Monitor legislation impacting community colleges
9. Maintain confidentiality and work independently with minimal direction
10. Establish and maintain cooperative and effective working relationships with others, including those from a diverse academic socioeconomic cultural, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students, faculty, and staff.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in communications, public relations, journalism, public administration, marketing, film and media studies or related field and Five (5) years of experience developing targeted content in public affairs, public administration 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.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Environment: Office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Sit or stand for an extended period of time, pushing and pulling, and visual acuity. The ability to type, use phone, stand intermittently, walk, bend and stoop, occasionally lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects of light to moderate weight (up to 25 lbs.).

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

- Classified Administrator
- Leadership Salary Schedule: Range 9

Personnel Management Committee: November 6, 2025

Board Approved: April 20, 2018; December 17, 2021, November 14, 2025