



Chief Communications and Marketing Officer

WIDA

Madison, WI

THE SEARCH

WIDA, the leader in the research and development of products and services to support multilingual learners (MLs) and their educators, seeks a strategic and mission-focused leader to serve as the organization's Chief Communications and Marketing Officer (CCMO). WIDA offers a fully integrated, research-based academic language development system, including language standards, assessments, professional learning, and technical assistance, delivered through its unique consortium model currently serving 42 states, territories, and federal agencies. The organization is housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's top-ranked School of Education. Since its founding in 2003, WIDA has experienced impressive growth and currently employs 150 staff members with annual revenues of \$90 million.

Reporting to the Executive Director of WIDA, the Chief Communications and Marketing Officer will join the organization at a moment of tremendous opportunity. Over the past 21 years, WIDA has evolved from a grant proposal involving three states into the foremost provider of language development resources for MLs and their educators nationwide. WIDA's products are unmatched, as is its commitment to providing world class educational opportunities for MLs. In recent years, the business landscape of multilingual learning has transformed, leading to greater competition in the language assessment and professional learning markets. The political landscape has similarly evolved, reinforcing the need for WIDA to ensure its educational philosophy is reflected in its products and services.

The Chief Communications and Marketing Officer will work with Executive Director Jenni Torres and the WIDA senior leadership team on overall strategic priorities and initiatives. In addition, the CCMO will oversee marketing and communications and will be charged with leveraging WIDA's strong brand to further amplify the organization's impact; partnering across the organization to ensure that marketing and communications is seamlessly integrated across WIDA's core functions; leading a highly effective team of communications and marketing professionals through a period of organizational change and growth; and cementing WIDA's role as an important thought leader in multilingualism, reaching relevant audiences, new and old, within and beyond its consortium.

The Chief Communications and Marketing Officer will bring a deep knowledge of strategic communications, integrated marketing, brand identity, best practices in marketing and communications, as well as a willingness to engage with and embrace WIDA's mission in multilingual learning. The successful candidate will have at least seven years of leadership experience in communications-focused roles and will have a well-developed capacity for strategic thinking, relationship-building, and leading teams of committed mission-driven professionals.

WIDA has retained the national search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this important search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

As part of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education, WIDA benefits from the institution's collaborative spirit as well as the material and intellectual resources of the nation's best education school, as named in the 2025 edition of *US News and World Report's* Best Education Schools ranking. The School of Education is one of 13 schools and colleges on the prestigious, 933-acre UW-Madison campus.

Many of the School's programs are widely regarded as being among the very best in the nation. The people and units that make up the School are addressing some of society's most critical needs – from challenges in education at all levels, to issues in health and other human services – while also contributing to quality of life through the arts.

The School is home to ten academic departments, a diverse range of research projects, and an array of outreach efforts. In addition to several core education programs, about half of the School's students are enrolled in fine art, dance, counseling, occupational therapy, and exercise science programs. It also houses several service units that serve the School and the broader community.

As of fall 2023, the School of Education enrolled 2,026 undergraduate and special majors (including second/additional majors) and 1,172 graduate and professional majors (including second/add majors). The School of Education employed 824 faculty and staff as of October 2023.

WIDA and the UW-Madison School of Education have a longstanding collaboration with the [Wisconsin Center for Education Products and Services](#) (WCEPS), which assists the University with the delivery of copyrightable products to educators and students around the world. A WCEPS-managed storefront is the key distributor of WIDA publications, assessments, and professional learning products to educators outside the WIDA Consortium.

For more information about the School of Education, please visit: <https://www.education.wisc.edu/>

ABOUT WIDA

WIDA is UW-Madison School of Education's largest fee-for-service program. Its mission is to advance academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse through high-quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators. WIDA products and services are trusted by 42 U.S. states, territories, and federal agencies.

WIDA's story begins with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which brought English Language Learners (ELLs) into the national spotlight. In 2003, the Wisconsin Department of Public Education was awarded an Enhanced Assessment Grant and WIDA was created to support it. In 2006, WIDA moved to its current home at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Today, WIDA offers a comprehensive suite of assessments, each built on a foundation of strong research and anchored in the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards. The ELD Standards represent the social, instructional, and academic language students use to engage with peers, educators, and the curriculum in schools and highlight the language needed to meet academic expectations set by state, college, and career readiness standards, as well as other content standards.

Using the ELD Standards, WIDA assessments identify and place MLs, and measure and determine progress toward English language development for K-12 learners. The WIDA ACCESS, begun in 2004, is the collective name for WIDA's suite of summative English language proficiency assessments. ACCESS is taken annually by more than two million MLs in Kindergarten through Grade 12 in all 42 WIDA Consortium member states, territories, and federal agencies. Scores measure student learning towards a standard or goal and are used to describe student performance in terms of the WIDA ELD Standards and proficiency level descriptors. ACCESS, like other WIDA assessments, is offered online and on paper.

In addition to ACCESS, WIDA offers several other assessments, including WIDA Screener, an English language proficiency assessment given to new students in grades K-12 to help educators identify whether they are English language learners. WIDA also offers an interim assessment through MODEL (Measure of Developing English Language), a suite of English language proficiency assessments for Grades K-12 that can be used to predict student performance on ACCESS for multilingual learners domestically and internationally as a measure of language development. WIDA also supports Spanish language learners in grades K-12 with WIDA Español.

WIDA provides tools and resources to empower educators and advance the field of language development. The organization's professional learning reaches more than 40,000 educators annually and it hosts the largest conference dedicated to educators of early childhood through Grade 12 multilingual learners, offering nearly 2,000 attendees access to more than 100 educator-developed sessions. Today, most of WIDA's professional learning offerings are entirely digital.

About WIDA's Executive Director

Dr. Jenni Torres is the Executive Director of WIDA and assumed her role in January 2025. Dr. Torres brings more than 25 years of experience in language education, as well as experience in both professional learning and multilingual education. Prior to WIDA, she served as the Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at Waterford.org. She started her career as a language teacher at the elementary and middle school levels before transitioning to work in the education technology space.

Dr. Torres received her EdD in Educational Leadership & Policy from American University and her MEd from Harvard Graduate School of Education in Teaching & Curriculum with a specialty in world languages.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING OFFICER

The Chief Communications and Marketing Officer will join WIDA at a moment of organizational transition. Executive Director Jenni Torres joined WIDA in January 2025 as founder Tim Boals transitioned into the role of Founder and Senior Principal Investigator following many years of organizational achievement. Since its founding, WIDA has grown exponentially and carries strong name recognition in the multilingual space.

Reporting to Executive Director Jenni Torres, the Chief Communications and Marketing Officer will serve on WIDA's senior leadership team and oversee a team of 15 talented staff across communications and marketing, as well as a budget of \$4.3 million inclusive of staff and vendor management. The CCMO will have three direct reports with responsibility for brand identity, strategic communications, public relations, technical writing and editing, and marketing within the WIDA Consortium. The CCMO will be a communications expert and strategic thinker with experience working in complex environments and will promote continued collaboration across teams within WIDA while exploring partnerships outside the organization that promote multilingualism and the power of multilingual learners.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING OFFICER

The Chief Communications and Marketing Officer will be expected to address the opportunities listed below:

Leverage WIDA's singular brand to amplify impact within and outside the WIDA Consortium

The Chief Communications and Marketing Officer will join an organization with an established and well-respected identity as the leading provider of research-backed products and services for multilingual learners and their educators. WIDA provides a wide range of tools to its consortium members beyond its flagship summative assessment, and the CCMO will lead efforts to increase utilization of these tools such as professional learning courses by educators within the WIDA Consortium. As WIDA endeavors to reach

a wider educator audience, the CCMO will ensure that WIDA's external content and messaging is digestible to and practical for a breadth of educators, both within and outside the Consortium, who interact with multilingual students in myriad ways. To support these efforts, the CCMO will bring a knowledge of best practices in today's communications and marketing context, including leveraging social media and using data to inform marketing and communications strategies.

Additionally, the CCMO will support the development and expansion of external partnerships that impact marketing and brand perception, including with vendors such as with the Wisconsin Center for Education Products and Services (WCEPS). WIDA's next marketing leader will bring strong experience working with external partners and creating alignment with them to greater serve the mission of the organization.

Partner across the organization to ensure that marketing and communications are integrated across WIDA's core functions

At WIDA, marketing and communications takes an integrated approach, where members of the marketing and communications team work closely with key verticals such as assessment, professional learning, and state relations to ensure consistency, clarity, and accessibility. The CCMO will continue to nurture this cross-functional approach, working closely with other key leaders to understand team and project needs, and working in tandem with WIDA leadership and verticals to achieve the organization's mission-driven goals.

Lead a strong marketing and communications team through a period of organizational change and through shifts in the educational landscape

Sitting at the helm of a large and talented marketing and communications team, the CCMO will be a skilled manager and compelling communicator. To serve successfully in this role, the new leader will contribute to a culture of transparency, support, and shared goals and understanding. Additionally, as the landscape in which WIDA operates becomes more competitive, the CCMO may need to introduce new practices in marketing that allow for wider reach in the educator landscape, while demonstrating fidelity to WIDA's nonprofit mission and culture.

Position WIDA as a key thought leader in multilingualism

WIDA's consortium model has created a deep network of educators, researchers, and state partners, many of whom are natural champions of WIDA. The CCMO will utilize these perspectives to broadcast the perspectives of consortium members, educators, and other key partners to display broadly the critical role that WIDA plays in classrooms across the nation.

The CCMO will be a promoter of multilingualism, familiar with asset-based approaches, and will use these frameworks to make WIDA a default and trusted voice in the national conversation around multilingual narratives and the power of multilingualism while navigating challenging political ecosystems.

Additionally, the CCMO will be comfortable working in a multilingual space, recognizing that WIDA creates and shares resources across multiple languages including English and Spanish.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The successful candidate will possess many of the following professional experiences and personal characteristics:

- At least seven years of management experience in a communications-focused role, preferably at a large-scale education-related organization;
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills; strong writing ability and the ability to create communications that instill organizational pride and inspire readers;
- A successful track record of developing and implementing strategic communications and content marketing plans and a track record of measuring the success of such plans;
- Demonstrated ability to proactively listen to and interpret political and educational landscape to inform strategic decisions, identify trends, drive informed decision-making, and guide WIDA in best supporting multilingual learners;
- Excellence in organizational management and demonstrated ability to coach staff, lead other leaders, and manage high-performance teams;
- A proven ability to build relationships and influence outcomes, with and without formal authority;
- Familiarity with digital marketing and social media as key parts of comprehensive communications and marketing strategies;
- Experience managing brand consistency across audiences, ensuring and strengthening its resonance with a broad range of stakeholders;
- Ability to work within a dynamic, fast-paced, and collaborative environment while driving solutions forward;
- Excellent professional judgment managing change;
- Multilingual or bilingual/biliterate, and/or a multilingual professional or educational background;
- A willingness to engage in and deepen knowledge of WIDA's mission and values.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

WIDA has engaged Isaacson, Miller for this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be sent in strict confidence to: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/wida/chief-communications-marketing-officer>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Jeff Kessner, Diana Carmona, and Jenny Rubin
Isaacson, Miller

The University of Wisconsin System will not reveal the identities of applicants who request confidentiality in writing. See Wis. Stat. sec. 19.36(7). Candidates who are selected as finalists will be invited for campus interviews and their names will be announced publicly.

The University of Wisconsin is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We promote excellence through diversity and encourage all qualified individuals to apply.

If you need to request an accommodation because of a disability, you can find information about how to make a request at the following website: <https://oed.wisc.edu/disability-accommodation-information-for-applicants/>

Employment will require a criminal background check. It will also require you and your references to answer questions regarding sexual violence and sexual harassment.

The Annual Security and Fire Safety Report contains current campus safety and disciplinary policies, crime statistics for the previous 3 calendar years, and on-campus student housing fire safety policies and fire statistics for the previous 3 calendar years. UW-Madison will provide a paper copy upon request; please contact the University of Wisconsin Police Department.

This document has been prepared based on information provided by WIDA and University of Wisconsin (UW). The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by WIDA and UW would supersede any conflicting information in this document.