



Executive Director of Marketing and Communications
University of Michigan Law School
Ann Arbor, Michigan

THE SEARCH

The University of Michigan Law School (Michigan Law) seeks an experienced and collaborative marketing strategist and communications leader to serve as its Executive Director of Marketing and Communications.

Founded in 1859, Michigan Law is one of the oldest law schools in the United States and celebrates a long and distinguished history. Michigan Law is consistently ranked among the top 10 law schools in the nation and enjoys international renown for its academic rigor, stunning physical surroundings, preeminent faculty and scholarship, and collegial academic community. The Executive Director of Marketing and Communications will report to the Chief of Staff and serve as a key member of the Dean's senior leadership team. The Executive Director will help articulate and advance Michigan Law's distinctive position, aligning marketing and communications priorities, strategy, and resources to support the Law School's mission, strategic goals, and long-term success.

The ideal candidate will bring strategic vision, sound judgment, and a willingness to engage deeply in the work. They will be an experienced communications leader and trusted advisor with a track record of developing and implementing high-level, sophisticated marketing and communications strategies. They will bring strong judgment about priorities and opportunities for impact, along with experience leading talented teams to produce compelling, effective work. This is an opportunity for a proven leader to help shape and articulate the story of one of the nation's leading law schools.

Michigan Law has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. A list of the qualifications and characteristics desired, as well as instructions for submitting applications and inquiries, can be found at the conclusion of this document.

THE ROLE

Reporting to the Chief of Staff and serving as a key member of Dean Neel Sukhatme's senior leadership team, the Executive Director of Marketing and Communications will provide strategic vision and leadership for the Law School's marketing and communications efforts. The Executive Director will develop and implement a marketing and integrated communications strategy that advances the Law School's mission, strategic priorities, reputation, and visibility among internal and external audiences. The Executive Director will help establish institutional communications priorities, identify opportunities where marketing and communications can have the greatest impact, and ensure that the team's work and resources are aligned with the Law School's broader goals.

The Executive Director will manage a budget of \$600,000 and lead a talented team of 10 responsible for a broad portfolio that includes strategic communications, media relations, editorial and content development, social media, digital and web strategy, marketing, creative services, and internal communications.

The Marketing and Communications team produces and manages a wide range of communications across platforms and audiences. These include Michigan Law's digital and web presence; *Law Quadrangle*, the Law School's twice-annual alumni magazine and its online counterpart; *Amicus*, an electronic newsletter featuring news and stories from across the Michigan Law community; social media channels; publications and materials supporting admissions, development and alumni relations; and communications supporting Law School events, programs, and initiatives.

Importantly, the Executive Director will also serve as a trusted advisor to the Dean, other senior leaders, and faculty, providing thoughtful and candid counsel on institutional messaging, reputation, and sensitive and emerging issues. The Executive Director will bring sound judgment and organizational savvy, with an ability to navigate complex institutional dynamics and build trust across a wide range of stakeholders. They will understand not only how best to communicate, but when, why, and to whom, while ensuring a coordinated approach to messaging with University counterparts.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Advance Michigan Law's vision, visibility, and impact

Michigan Law is entering a period of momentum and opportunity under Dean Sukhatme's leadership. The Executive Director of Marketing and Communications will play a central role in translating the Law School's aspirations, accomplishments, and strategic priorities into a compelling and cohesive institutional narrative that resonates with a broad range of audiences. A key priority will be articulating what most distinctly defines Michigan Law and ensuring that those differentiators are communicated consistently and authentically across audiences and channels. Working closely with the Dean, senior leaders, faculty, and staff, the Executive Director will help articulate and communicate the vision for the future of Michigan Law while amplifying the impact of its faculty, students, alumni, and programs.

The Executive Director will identify opportunities to elevate the visibility, expertise, and reputation of the Law School and its community, while strengthening engagement with prospective students, alumni, donors, the legal profession, and the broader public. This leader will ensure that Michigan Law's communications reflect both its longstanding excellence and its continued evolution in a rapidly changing higher education and legal landscape.

Strengthen and evolve marketing and communications capabilities

The Executive Director will have an opportunity to build upon a strong communications foundation while helping Michigan Law adopt a more integrated, data-informed, and digitally sophisticated approach to marketing and communications. The Executive Director will evaluate existing practices and identify innovative strategies that enhance effectiveness, expand reach, and support institutional priorities. The Executive Director will strengthen Michigan Law's marketing capabilities, bringing a sophisticated understanding of audiences, positioning, channels, and performance to efforts designed to reach and engage key constituencies. The Executive Director will bring a strategic and proactive approach to this work.

This leader will champion a culture of innovation, experimentation, and assessment, using data and analytics to better understand and engage key constituencies. Working with colleagues across the Law School and the University, the Executive Director will guide efforts to strengthen Michigan Law's digital presence, including its web strategy and user experience, ensuring that communications platforms effectively serve multiple audiences and communicate the full breadth of the institution's excellence and impact.

Serve as a strategic advisor and counselor to senior leaders

As a member of the Dean's senior leadership team, the Executive Director will bring a strategic communications perspective to institutional decision-making, anticipating communications opportunities, risks, and implications and helping shape approaches before decisions are made. The successful candidate will bring sound judgment, discretion, and political acuity to a highly visible leadership role, partnering closely with the Dean and other senior leaders to navigate both opportunities and challenges with clarity and confidence. The Executive Director will provide thoughtful counsel on executive communications, media relations, and issues management, ensuring that communications are aligned with institutional priorities and values and appropriately responsive to internal and external audiences.

Lead and develop a talented, long-standing team

The Executive Director will lead a highly respected communications team with deep institutional knowledge, significant expertise, and a track record of accomplishment. The next Executive Director will have an opportunity to build upon these strengths while establishing a clear strategic direction for the office and fostering a culture of collaboration, creativity, accountability, and continuous learning. By empowering team members, clarifying priorities and processes, and aligning the office around a shared

vision for the future, the Executive Director will position the team to meet evolving institutional needs while continuing to deliver communications and marketing efforts of the highest quality.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualities and experiences:

- Significant, progressively responsible experience in marketing, communications, public relations, media relations, or a related field. Experience in a law school, the legal industry, or higher education would be especially valuable, though candidates with relevant experience in other complex organizations are encouraged to apply.
- Significant supervisory and management experience, with a demonstrated track record of leading, developing, and supporting high-performing teams.
- Demonstrated success developing and implementing marketing and integrated communications strategies that build awareness, strengthen institutional positioning, engage priority audiences, and advance organizational goals and priorities.
- Demonstrated ability to establish strategic priorities, manage competing demands, and focus communications resources on efforts with the greatest institutional impact.
- Sophisticated knowledge of digital marketing, social media, audience engagement, analytics, and evolving communications technologies, with a demonstrated curiosity and enthusiasm for adopting new tools and approaches (e.g., A/B testing or other causal inference methods).
- Demonstrated experience using artificial intelligence tools and thoughtfully integrating AI into marketing and communications strategies, workflows, or team practices.
- Strong fluency in web strategy, content management, user experience, accessibility, and analytics, with experience overseeing complex institutional websites and digital platforms.
- Experience using data and audience insights to shape strategy, assess effectiveness, and improve results.
- Experience serving as a trusted advisor to senior leaders, anticipating communications opportunities, risks, and implications and providing thoughtful counsel on institutional messaging, reputation management, and sensitive or complex issues, including in moments of crisis.
- Demonstrated ability to translate complex ideas and priorities into clear, compelling communications for varied audiences.
- Demonstrated ability to build trust, influence without relying on formal authority, and collaborate effectively across a complex organization with varied stakeholders and perspectives.
- Exceptional written, verbal, interpersonal, and presentation skills.
- Intellectual curiosity, creativity, and appreciation for the mission of a leading academic institution.
- Bachelor's degree required. Advanced degree in communications, journalism, public relations, marketing, or a related field strongly preferred.

LOCATION

The University of Michigan and Ann Arbor go hand-in-hand, possessing an intertwined city and culture. Ann Arbor is many things, including a bustling university town, culinary hotspot, and a tech hub with a walkable downtown that includes world-class arts and culture. Located in southeast Michigan, Ann Arbor lies at the center of a greater collection of communities in Washtenaw County. With so many thriving communities nearby, Ann Arbor has become a cultural melting pot and urban oasis and is widely recognized as one of the best college towns and places to live in the United States. In and around Ann Arbor, there are many sites to explore, including scenic strolls along the Huron River or spots where locals can be found kayaking, snowshoeing, and biking when they aren't attending a U-M athletic event. The Detroit airport is only a 30-minute car ride away, making travel easily accessible. The state's largest city, Detroit, is only 45 minutes from Ann Arbor and is known for its music and arts scene, history, and restaurants.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue on a rolling basis until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-michigan-law-school/executive-director-marketing-and-communications>.

Kelly McLaughlin, Diana Carmona, and Jenny Rubin
Isaacson, Miller

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Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office (ECRT) at 734-763-0235 and ecrtoffice@umich.edu, and as follows:

- *Sex/Gender Identity/Gender Expression/Sexual Orientation, including sexual misconduct: ECRT Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Director and Title IX Coordinator*
- *Disability: ECRT Disability Director and ADA Coordinator*
- *Race/Color/National Origin/Age/Marital Status/Religion/Height/Weight/Veteran Status: ECRT Civil Rights Director*

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