



Search for the Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications
University of Puget Sound
Tacoma, Washington

THE SEARCH

[University of Puget Sound](#) (Puget Sound), one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges located in the creative, urban city of Tacoma, Washington, seeks a strategic, collaborative, and innovative professional to serve as its Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications (AVP). With a visionary president, engaged and committed board of trustees, a dynamic and dedicated senior leadership team, passionate students, and exceptional faculty and staff, Puget Sound has strong momentum to achieve its ambitious 10-year strategic plan, [Leadership for a Changing World](#), which challenges the university to be bold and forward-looking in the delivery of education and in meeting the needs of current and future generations of students.

The university enrolls approximately 2,200 students on the 97-acre campus in Tacoma's residential North End. Some 240 distinguished faculty members offer courses in both traditional and distinctively interdisciplinary areas, in an undergraduate liberal arts curriculum and in several highly-regarded graduate programs. Puget Sound ranks #85 among National Liberal Arts Colleges according to *U.S. News & World Report* and is in the unique position of being the sole independent liberal arts college in Western Washington and one of only five in the Pacific Northwest.

The AVP is responsible for elevating the institutional brand and all marketing, communications, and messaging activities to ensure that internal and external audiences alike have an increased awareness and refined understanding of Puget Sound, its ambitions, and its role in higher education. The AVP will work closely with Victor Martin, Vice President for University Relations (VPUR), and senior leaders across the institution to build an integrated marketing and communications program that reflects and reinforces the university's strategic plan and ambitions for the future. Reporting to the VPUR and serving as a key member of the vice president's leadership team, the AVP will be the university's principal advisor on all marketing and communications-related matters. This is a tremendous opportunity for a dynamic and accomplished executive to define and build an innovative approach to marketing and communications that unifies messaging for Puget Sound, supports and furthers the goals of the entire university, increases awareness nationally and internationally, and engages all constituencies on and off campus.

The successful AVP must be a strategic and creative leader with a thorough understanding of best practices in marketing, communications, and branding. The ideal candidate will have substantial experience developing and implementing multi-faceted, integrated marketing and communications efforts that position and elevate the perception of an entire institution with multiple audiences. This person will possess keen strategic and planning skills, a thorough understanding of all traditional and digital media, and a comprehensive understanding of the marketing and communications process, from creative conception through fulfillment. Demonstrable leadership, vision, and managerial skills are key, as is a collaborative and collegial nature. The successful candidate will be intellectually curious and committed to active engagement in the campus and local communities. A bachelor's degree is required.

University of Puget Sound has retained the services of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to Isaacson, Miller as stated at the end of this position profile.

UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND

Founded in 1888 in a vibrant port city in the Pacific Northwest, the University of Puget Sound is an independent, residential, and predominantly undergraduate liberal arts institution, with graduate programs in education and health sciences, and undergraduate schools of both music and business leadership. Puget Sound seeks to foster continual engagement and exploration in an inclusive and welcoming environment and takes a highly collaborative and experiential approach to teaching and learning, led by faculty members who challenge students to think critically and creatively and make connections across disciplines. A Puget Sound education, both academic and co-curricular, encourages a rich knowledge of self and others; an appreciation of commonality and difference; the full, open, and civil discussion of ideas; thoughtful moral discourse; and the integration of learning, preparing the University's graduates to meet the highest tests of democratic citizenship. Such an education seeks to liberate each person's fullest intellectual and human potential to assist in the unfolding of creative and useful lives. Shared governance and institutional engagement and collaboration are key values at the University of Puget Sound.

In 2018, the university announced its multi-year, student-centered strategic plan, [Leadership for a Changing World](#), after an academic year of work between students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and trustees. The strategic plan consists of five goals: advancing institutional excellence, academic distinction, and student success; enriching the learning environment through increased diversity, inclusion, and access; supporting and inspiring faculty and staff; enhancing engagement with the community, including promotion of environmental justice and sustainability; and pursuing entrepreneurial and other opportunities to fully leverage and expand the university's assets.

To learn more about the University of Puget Sound, please visit: <https://www.pugetsound.edu/>.

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The associate vice president for marketing and communications (AVP) is a redefined role at Puget Sound, which recognizes the need for a strategic, proactive, and comprehensive approach to marketing, communications, and messaging to internal and external audiences alike.

Reporting to the vice president for university relations and participating as a member of the vice president's leadership team, the AVP will serve as the chief marketing and communications officer for the university, providing leadership and management of all communications and marketing strategy, execution, and evaluation to build awareness of Puget Sound and its impact on the lives of students, alumni, faculty, and the world. The AVP will provide strategic vision and direction in the creation and implementation of a comprehensive, innovative, and integrated marketing and communications program that highlights the university's strengths and fosters relationships with key constituents (e.g., prospective students and families, current students, senior administrators, faculty and staff, alumni, donors, and trustees) and external constituents and audiences (e.g., traditional news and digital media outlets; local community members and leaders; and peer institutions, associations, influencers, and thought leaders in higher education).

The AVP will collaborate closely with the vice president for university relations, members of the university relations leadership team, and key stakeholders across campus to refine the university's overarching positioning in authentic ways, address Puget Sound's current achievements, and recognize the potential for its future, as well as establish nuanced messages that target key constituencies and expand its national reach. To this end, the AVP will supervise a team responsible for marketing strategy, content development (editorial, design, photography/videography), project management and production, and communications vehicles including institutional website and digital projects, alumni communications, newsletters, social media accounts, media relations, and public relations. The AVP will also work closely with internal partners, including enrollment, athletics, academic affairs, student affairs, university relations, and other key staff and academic departments.

The responsibilities and duties of this role include the following:

- Create and lead a modern and innovative marketing and communications program, which incorporates all traditional and digital channels and media.
- With input from the VPUR and other senior leaders, build a comprehensive and strategic marketing and brand identity that is embraced by the university community, ensuring that all communications and publications adhere to strategic themes and guidelines and present a seamless image of the university.
- Assess existing vehicles and programs, both print and digital, and ensure that key messages and communications are disseminated in a robust, cohesive, and engaging format across a variety of vehicles and media.

- Develop and implement an aspirational strategic plan for Puget Sound's marketing and communications program that is innovative, progressive, and proactive, including messages and a brand identity that extend across all media and vehicles – regionally, nationally, and internationally – in ways that appropriately support the strategic plan and reflect the goals of the university.
- Collaborate and partner with the offices of the president, enrollment, university relations, academic affairs, athletics, student affairs, and other key units to identify and build consensus about areas of strategic focus, both long-term and throughout each academic year. Ensure they are well served and able to communicate with their audiences across all media in innovative and engaging ways.
- Partner with and provide guidance to marketing and communications staff in the office of the vice president for enrollment management to support their strategic initiatives and ensure alignment with enrollment marketing, student recruitment, and successful matriculation of prospective students.
- Oversee the marketing and communications team's work to develop brand guidance, ensure campus-wide brand coordination, and develop a quality control system to ensure internal/external communications cohere to the university's brand.
- Similarly, develop brand messaging, brand expression, and brand standardization strategies. Maintain the university's Visual Identity Guide and editorial standards, including a robust trademark licensing plan that protects the institution's registered marks and provides revenue generation activities.
- Set clear direction and priorities for a team of professional support personnel. Maintain a leadership style that is open and fluid, and which empowers staff through active communication and delegation. Continually assess staff strengths, recruit new staff as necessary, and maintain a high-quality, diverse team.
- Foster excellence in collaboration, customer service, and problem-solving, creating a team who are considered thought leaders across the university and whose opinions are sought after and respected.
- Promote excellence through well-defined and measurable goals; inspiring and motivating staff through the free flow of information, placing staff members' work within the context of the university's strategic plan, strategic priorities, and mission. Provide professional development opportunities as appropriate and encourage staff to set personal growth targets.
- Ensure that the president and other senior leaders are well-briefed and that their communications for all audiences reflect and reinforce Puget Sound's strategic goals and objectives.
- Partner with colleagues and leaders of diverse perspectives and backgrounds to develop communication strategies that reach out to and connect with traditionally underrepresented and under-served communities to support and enhance diversity in the university community.
- Oversee and provide leadership to operations and management groups in emergency situations. Lead crisis management planning and response, including establishing crisis communication policies. Provide messaging and talking points for contact officers and others related to emerging issues and communications needs.

- Develop an annual planning process that reflects the needs of the university through a strong yet flexible marketing and communications program with key themes and messages that can be adapted to suit various constituencies.
- Develop a forward-looking internal communications program that builds pride in the university as well as trust and confidence in organizational decision-making.
- Serve as a member and/or organizer of various communications workgroups and as a liaison to the communications and/or digital engagement committees of the Alumni Council.
- Attend trustee, alumni, donor, and other constituent events to interact with and learn more about audiences served by the university.
- Oversee the office of events within marketing & communication, ensuring that campus-wide and university relations events are strategic, consistent, engaging, and further the goals of the university.
- Oversee the university's community engagement efforts, in association with the office of the president, to stay connected to the greater Tacoma community; sponsor community events, particularly those related to education, to strengthen partnerships and pathways to Puget Sound.

The Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications will bring many of the following professional qualities and experiences:

- A deep appreciation for the history, achievements, and aspirations of the University of Puget Sound and the ability to articulate the university's mission and purpose to a diverse audience.
- Minimum of five years of experience envisioning, developing, and implementing an integrated strategic marketing and communications program that was successfully leveraged across an enterprise with multiple constituencies and a wide variety of audiences, preferably in higher education.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the strategies and industry best practices for all aspects of marketing, communications, positioning, and messaging, including sophisticated and creative use of brand journalism, social media, analytics, and other forms of digital communications in conveying information and content in ways that engage and excite constituents.
- Substantial experience evaluating the strengths of existing marketing and communications programs and identifying opportunities for improvement. Ability to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the communications process without sacrificing quality and impact. An aptitude for using data and metrics in decision-making and evaluating success of programs and campaigns.
- Demonstrated ability to craft substantive and cohesive messages based on an institution's history and strategic goals, communicate them successfully to key audiences, and adapt and adjust appropriately over time.
- Broad experience in strategic communications; digital, social, and print communications; media relations; and crisis management as well as successful experience dealing with local, state, and national media.

- Keen creative and design sensibilities, with a strong understanding of the marketing and communications process from creative concept through production and fulfillment. Ability to increase efficiency of a marketing and communications operation without sacrificing quality and impact.
- Unwavering focus on diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism, and how this work is amplified in the language, images, and channels that are used by an institution. Commitment to and experience with promoting and enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Engaging and persuasive written and oral communications and clear ability to serve as a professional and trusted representative of the university. A strong executive presence and commitment to the highest standards of professionalism.
- Experience working in an environment serving many internal partners and external constituents, often with a shared responsibility for communications.
- Collaborative and collegial orientation, eager and able to engage a diverse base of partners and build strong professional relationships, serving as a resource to others and obtaining their input; persuasive, persistent, and determined. A convener who can synthesize many ideas and produce work products that address a wide variety of goals and objectives.
- Able to communicate, relate, and work effectively with and demonstrate respect for people at all levels of the organization and wide variety of diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- The ability to intuit the unspoken and perceive what others do not understand. Exceptional diplomacy, discretion, and judgment as well as political savvy.
- Record of creative and entrepreneurial management; the ability to build, lead, mentor, and motivate staff; and the ability to encourage change and growth in both people and programs. A commitment to personal and professional development, and the ability to build a strong, autonomous, and collaborative team.
- A keen eye for operational efficiency and optimal use of resources; deep understanding of budgets and proven success managing them.
- High degree of integrity, character, and emotional maturity; humility, a sense of humor and life balance; and an outgoing, optimistic personality.
- Bachelor's degree required.

LOCATION & COMPENSATION

Tacoma is a community of approximately 200,000 residents and the political center of Pierce County, a county of 800,000 just 30 miles south of Seattle; 30 miles north of Olympia, the state capital; and with easy access to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Tacoma was recently named one of the nation's Most Livable Communities. It is situated on the shores of Commencement Bay, with the Olympic Mountains to the west, the Cascade Range to the east, and Mount Rainier visible from campus on clear days. The pedestrian-friendly city offers an ever-growing array of locally-owned and created vintage boutiques; independent bookstores; museums; restaurants; and the ubiquitous coffee shops that define the region,

as well as the 760-acre Point Defiance Park, including a zoo, aquarium, hiking trails, marina, and ferry service to nearby Vashon Island.

Located on 97 acres in Tacoma's residential North End neighborhood, the Puget Sound campus is among the University's most distinctive assets. The physical characteristics—its Tudor-Gothic architecture, open spaces, pathways, and landmarks—support a 24/7 living and learning environment. In the past decade, significant investment has been made in the physical infrastructure, including a new science laboratory building, a center for health sciences, an academic residence hall, and a new athletics and aquatics center. The Puget Sound area also offers internships, employment, and research opportunities unique to the geography of the region, and a thriving economy, including local businesses as well as Seattle-area corporations such as Amazon, Boeing, Hitachi, Microsoft, Starbucks, and others.

The anticipated compensation range for this role is **\$130K-\$150K**. In addition to the salary range listed herein, University of Puget Sound offers a wealth of benefits to make working at the university even more rewarding. These benefits may include comprehensive health insurance, sick and vacation time, retirement savings plans, and access to a number of perks. Please refer to the link listed [here](#) to learn more about University of Puget Sound's compensation practices and benefits. Salary offers are determined based on final candidate qualifications and experience; the budget for the position; and in support of fair, equitable, and consistent pay practices at University of Puget Sound.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search:

[https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-puget-sound/
associate-vice-president-marketing-and-communications](https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-puget-sound/associate-vice-president-marketing-and-communications)

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University of Puget Sound is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to recruiting, hiring, and retaining the most qualified persons based on job-related criteria. The University will not engage in or tolerate any discrimination or harassment in the workplace as prohibited by local, state, or federal law. More specifically, no applicant or staff member will be discriminated against or harassed on the basis of their sex, race, color, nation of origin, religion, creed, age, disability, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, veteran or military status, gender identity, political affiliation, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law.