

# Emerson

## Vice President for Marketing and Communications

[Emerson College](#) invites applications and nominations for the position of Vice President for Marketing and Communications. Reporting to Emerson's new President, [Dr. Jay M. Bernhardt](#), the Vice President is responsible for delivering Emerson's unique story to the world, strategically building the College's global brand, and coordinating the development of impactful and timely information for the Emerson community and external constituents and partners.

As its mission statement establishes, "Emerson College educates students to assume positions of leadership in communication and the arts and to advance scholarship and creative work that brings innovation, depth, and diversity to these disciplines. This mission is informed by core liberal arts values that seek to promote civic engagement, encourage ethical practices, foster respect for human diversity, and inspire students to create and communicate with clarity, integrity, and conviction."

Founded in 1880 and spanning three distinct global campuses, Emerson College is steeped in the values of equity, access, and social justice. It serves over 4,100 undergraduate and 1,500 graduate students. Its main campus is located in the heart of Boston's Theatre District and offers the entire Emerson community experiences that are sewn into the very fabric of Boston. Emerson's Los Angeles campus provides a West Coast experience for up to 215 students pursuing semester-long internships related to their field of study in iconic Hollywood. The Kasteel Well campus in the Netherlands has been a hub for international scholarship and research for more than 35 years. Emerson enjoys strong partnerships with institutions across the world, including the Paris College of Art, which adds to the richness of the Emerson experience. Emerson also has its Emerson Prison Initiative (EPI), which works to democratize access to college education. See the [facts sheet](#) for more information about Emerson.

Emerson educates future leaders in the arts and communication; inspires generations of students to think boldly and creatively; and ensures that all students, faculty, staff, and alumni contribute powerfully to the cultural, social, political, and civic landscape. Deliberately committed to a grounding in the liberal arts and interdisciplinarity, the curriculum enables students to pursue academic majors and programs such as Film and Television, Journalism, Literature, Marketing, Publishing, Theater, Communication Studies, Health & Social Change, Communication Science and Disorders, Writing, Comedic Arts, an Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) major, and many more.

Emerson's community is passionate and creative; its students are critical storytellers at a critical time. The College's new Vice President for Marketing and Communications has the opportunity to refine, amplify, and continue this remarkable story as the College embarks upon the process to develop a new strategic plan and undertakes a strategic brand refresh.

### The Position

Reporting to the President, the Vice President for Marketing and Communications serves as a member of the College's leadership team, interacts with the Board of Trustees and Emerson alums, and leads nearly 30 staff members. The new Vice President will be expected to develop, execute, measure, and maintain

a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy for the Emerson brand and the College's three campuses in support of institutional priorities, including core values, inclusive excellence, brand awareness, enrollment goals, fundraising targets, and issues management.

As the College's chief communications officer and spokesperson, the Vice President represents and promotes the College, increasing its visibility and advancing its mission, vision, and goals. The Vice President augments the Emerson community's many voices and distinctive innovation by creating compelling messaging and narratives that convey the work, teaching, learning, and creativity of its faculty, students, and alumni.

As a divisional leader, the Vice President is responsible for providing ongoing development and cultivating an inclusive and engaging work culture for a team that includes writers, editors, print and web designers, and social media and media-relations professionals.

The communications portfolio comprises media relations, marketing and brand promotion, college news and publications, social media, the official college websites, crisis communications, and support for public relations. This work is conducted in close partnership with other vice-presidential portfolios, including Institutional Advancement, Enrollment Management, Government and Community Relations, Equity & Social Justice, and, for internal communications, the President's Office.

The Vice President is expected to grow the marketing function for the College by both integrating and enhancing current marketing activities and defining modern strategies and tactics. To this extent, the Vice President will develop and implement a plan to position the Marketing and Communications division for success with human capital, systems, data, and outside expertise, and to maximize the impact of centralized and decentralized resources in a fiscally aware and sustainable way. The Vice President also will have the opportunity to lead a branding and market positioning study to support a brand refresh and campaign in 2024. This strategic and creative work will involve close collaboration with colleagues in enrollment, institutional advancement, equity and social justice, and other areas across the College.

The Vice President also serves as a strategic advisor and coordinator to academic and administrative units across Emerson's distributed organizational structure. The Vice President will meet regularly with the communications and marketing staff in advancement, enrollment, athletics, human resources, information technology, and Emerson's schools to encourage collaboration, ensure coordinated messaging and branding, and promote the strategic use of resources.

#### **Opportunities and priorities:**

- Create an integrated, strategically focused, and appropriately resourced marketing and communications function serving the Emerson College enterprise
- Elevate the work of marketing and communications groups housed in the College's academic divisions and administrative units
- Reduce silos, increase horizontal collaboration, foster shared vision and best practices, and model strategic ways of advancing excellence in marketing and communications
- Evolve the digital, data, and analytics operations of marketing and communications for the College that draw on industry best practices and embrace emerging tools and approaches

- Pursue alignment and innovation around reputation, brand, messaging, and visual identity standards, including leading a College-wide brand refresh campaign

**Key responsibilities include:**

- Lead the strategic marketing and communications functions to increase the College's visibility across key partner and constituent audiences and to broaden awareness of Emerson's programs and priorities
- Develop, inspire, and empower the division of Marketing and Communications staff to achieve a culture of excellence and recognition
- Provide strategic counsel to the President, Senior Leadership Team, and Board of Trustees on all aspects of marketing, communications, institutional positioning, emerging issues, and crisis communications
- Develop a marketing and communications strategy to plan for appropriate resources, conduct appropriate market research, and launch a brand refresh campaign to reposition Emerson in the context of new institutional priorities
- Work closely with the President, Senior Leadership Team, and Board of Trustees to ensure College communications are consistent with strategic priorities across academic and administrative units
- Partner with colleagues across the College involved in emergency management to develop and oversee crisis communications and provide key communications resources and training
- Participate and lead, when necessary, the planning of major College events and programs

Across all responsibilities, the Vice President will center Emerson's mission, vision, and goals, and make leadership decisions that are inclusive, equitable, and mission-oriented.

**Qualifications**

The Vice President for Marketing and Communications must be a strategic, collaborative, and inclusive leader who provides wise counsel, visionary direction, and creative solutions. They will be drawn to the College's mission and values and will understand and embrace its commitment to equity, access, and social justice.

The ideal candidate will bring experience across and/or understanding of institutional brand management, digital marketing, social media communications, recruitment marketing, fundraising communications, executive communications, issues/crisis management, and public relations. They will be exceptional at building collaborative relationships across the institution and have a sophisticated understanding of both Emerson's various internal and external constituents and the issues facing higher education today. The Vice President will be a resourceful, persistent, and creative manager of change.

In addition, Emerson seeks candidates with the following qualifications:

- A demonstrated record of advancing equity, access, and social justice in organizations they have led or been part of and a record of infusing these values into the work of a marketing and/or communications programs they have led or been part of
- Significant and progressively responsible experience in strategic communications or external affairs

- Proven experience managing brand research and campaigns, ideally within a higher-education context
- Excellent oral and written communication skills that demonstrate versatility, speed, and accuracy; the ability identify, create, and articulate messages clearly, compellingly, and quickly; and the capability to condense complex messages into consistent, concise, and easy to understand communications for different audiences as appropriate
- High level of discretion, judgment, and professionalism
- Ability to respond to a crisis with calm, empathy, and intelligence
- Excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to collaborate, build consensus, and effectively engage with a variety of constituents including senior leadership, faculty, administrators, students, alumni, parents, community members, and government officials
- Demonstrated success managing teams, multiple projects, and competing priorities
- Proven track record of effectively and equitably managing staff including in developing and empowering talent, providing direction and execution, and inspiring an inclusive team-oriented, can-do attitude
- Demonstrated ability to create, implement, and evaluate successful, large-scale public relations campaigns, lead integrated communications, and sustain effective media relations
- Experience establishing metrics to measure effectiveness of communications efforts and proven ability to interpret analytics and data to build or adapt communications strategies
- The ability to discern and enhance impactful stories and compelling visuals
- Fiscal acumen and experience in budget development and oversight
- Robust understanding of key issues in higher education
- Keen interest in local, national, and world news coverage of major events and issues; comprehensive understanding of print, digital, and social news cycles
- An undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university

Emerson invites candidates who may bring measurable expertise in some but not all of the functional areas of the portfolio and will be eager to learn more about how the candidate would approach leading the full portfolio.

### **To Apply**

Emerson College has retained Opus Partners ([www.opuspartners.net](http://www.opuspartners.net)) to support this recruitment. Craig Smith, Partner, and Abigail Maynard, Senior Associate are leading the search. Inquiries, applications, and nominations should be sent to [abigail.maynard@opuspartners.net](mailto:abigail.maynard@opuspartners.net). The search process will unfold with the greatest possible attention to candidate confidentiality. Required application materials include a resume and cover letter. The cover letter should reflect how qualifications and experience match those described in this leadership profile. Emerson also invites candidates to include examples of their marketing and/or communications case histories or other work products as hyperlinks in their cover letters or as additional attachments (three attachments maximum).

Emerson College believes diversity enriches every experience by providing the opportunity to learn from individuals who may have different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of the College enhances the personal and intellectual growth of all members of our campus community. Emerson is committed to strengthening communities, including our workplace, by fostering the development of the intercultural competencies necessary for meaningful

citizenship in an increasingly complex, pluralistic society. Emerson College embraces and encourages differences in age, color, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and other characteristics that make each of us unique.