

CHIEF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Shape the story. Strengthen the brand. Advance the future of VSU.

Institution	Valdosta State University
FLSA Status	Exempt (Executive)
Job Type	Full Time
Posting Details	Posted: September 8, 2026 Application Due: Open Until Filled Apply: Click here

THE OPPORTUNITY

Valdosta State University seeks a visionary and collaborative Chief Marketing and Communications Officer (CMCO) to lead the University's integrated marketing and communications strategy. Reporting to the President and serving as a senior institutional leader, the CMCO will shape how VSU tells its story, strengthens its reputation, engages its communities, and supports enrollment and advancement priorities.

This is an opportunity for a strategic leader who enjoys turning insight into action, building strong teams, and bringing people together around a shared brand and purpose. The successful candidate will have the reach of an enterprise leader and the hands-on judgment to guide high-profile communications, digital experiences, creative services, media relations, and measurable campaigns.

WHY VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

At VSU, meaningful work is connected to student success and the vitality of the communities we serve. The CMCO will join a leadership team that values collaboration, thoughtful innovation, accountability, and service. VSU offers the successful candidate a visible platform to influence institutional strategy, develop talented professionals, build enduring partnerships, and create work that advances the University's mission.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership, direction, and supervision

- Provide executive leadership for the University's integrated marketing, communications, public relations, digital strategy, web, social media, creative services, and content functions.
- Define, protect, and evolve VSU's master brand identity and institutional voice, ensuring consistent and effective expression across colleges, departments, programs, and administrative units.
- Lead, mentor, and develop a multidisciplinary team of marketing, communications, design, web, social media, photography, video, and public relations professionals.
- Establish clear priorities, performance expectations, service standards, and measures of success that enable the department to deliver high-quality, responsive, and strategic work.
- Lead high-priority, cross-functional initiatives and change efforts that advance VSU's strategic objectives and reputation.

Administration

- Develop and execute a comprehensive, multi-year marketing and communications plan aligned with the University's strategic plan, enrollment goals, advancement priorities, and community engagement objectives.
- Create effective operating systems for intake, prioritization, project management, editorial planning, approvals, production, and assessment of work across the department.
- Partner with Enrollment Management and Admissions to design and execute multi-channel recruitment, yield, and student-engagement campaigns for undergraduate, graduate, transfer, online, and other priority audiences.

- Direct institutional content and editorial strategy, including news, digital publications, newsletters, video, photography, executive communications, and marketing collateral.
- Select and manage external agencies, consultants, vendors, technology platforms, and other resources when specialized expertise or additional capacity is needed.

Subject-matter expert

- Serve as the University's senior advisor on brand strategy, market positioning, public relations, media engagement, crisis communications, digital communications, audience strategy, and reputation management.
- Lead market research, audience segmentation, competitive analysis, and message testing to inform institutional positioning, student recruitment, program launches, and campaign strategy.
- Develop compelling core messages and value propositions that distinguish VSU and translate complex institutional priorities into clear, audience-centered communications.
- Establish key performance indicators and use analytics to assess reach, engagement, conversion, cost effectiveness, and return on marketing investment; provide actionable reporting to University leadership.
- Advise the President, executive leaders, deans, and other administrators on communications opportunities, emerging issues, and reputational considerations.

Department representative

- Serve as a primary institutional spokesperson, as designated, and prepare University leaders, faculty, staff, and subject-matter experts for media engagement.
- Build productive relationships with regional, state, national, and trade media and proactively elevate VSU's faculty expertise, student success, research, programs, partnerships, and community impact.
- Represent the University and the department with internal and external stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, community leaders, government partners, and professional organizations.
- Partner with Advancement and Alumni Relations on fundraising, alumni engagement, donor stewardship, and impact storytelling that demonstrates the value of philanthropy and institutional achievement.
- Collaborate with Human Resources and University leadership on timely, transparent, and engaging internal communications that strengthen connection, trust, and campus culture.

Manage budget

- Develop, administer, and monitor the department's operating and strategic budgets in alignment with institutional priorities and applicable requirements.
- Allocate resources effectively across personnel, technology, media placement, research, creative production, and external partnerships.
- Evaluate investments and vendor performance using defined outcomes, responsible stewardship, and demonstrated value to the University.

Compliance

- Ensure marketing and communications activities comply with applicable federal and state laws, University System of Georgia and VSU requirements, accessibility standards, records requirements, intellectual property and licensing obligations, privacy expectations, and contractual commitments.
- Partner with Legal Affairs, Public Safety, Information Technology, Enrollment Management, Human Resources, and other offices to develop, maintain, and execute crisis and emergency communication plans.
- Exercise exceptional judgment, discretion, diplomacy, and confidentiality when handling sensitive, privileged, or high-impact institutional matters.
- Complete required annual compliance training and satisfy all position-related screening requirements, including a criminal background check and credit check.

Policy and Procedure

- Develop, implement, interpret, and regularly review University marketing, communications, brand, web, social media, media relations, and crisis communication policies, standards, and procedures.
- Establish brand governance and approval processes that support consistency while enabling colleges, departments, and programs to meet their distinct communication needs.

- Direct governance and user-experience standards for the University's primary website, official social media channels, and other enterprise communication platforms.
- Monitor trends, emerging technologies, changing audience expectations, and evolving professional standards, and recommend improvements that keep VSU's practices effective and forward-looking.

COMPENSABLE FACTORS

- Work requires exceptionally well-developed leadership, communication, interpersonal, and influencing skills to address matters that are critical to University operations, reputation, enrollment, and strategic priorities.
- Actions and decisions may significantly enhance or jeopardize the University's public image and may require the attention of the President, executive leadership, or governing authorities.
- Work requires considerable judgment, initiative, creativity, and ingenuity in formulating and administering institution-wide strategies, policies, programs, and communications.
- The position regularly manages competing priorities, high-volume and time-sensitive work, sensitive issues, and communications involving distressed or concerned stakeholders.
- The position directs and evaluates the work of professional staff and may supervise managers or directors.
- The nature of the role may require work beyond 40 hours per week, including evenings and weekends, particularly during major events, emergencies, or emerging issues.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Master's degree in marketing, communications, public relations, journalism, business, higher education administration, or a related field.
- Seven years of progressively responsible professional experience in marketing, communications, public relations, brand management, or a related field, including at least seven years in a supervisory or leadership role.
- Demonstrated experience developing and executing enterprise-level marketing and communications strategy in a complex, multi-stakeholder organization.
- A record of leading integrated campaigns, managing reputational issues, advising senior executives, and developing high-performing teams.
- Equivalent combinations of education and experience may be considered in accordance with applicable University requirements.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience in higher education, a public-sector organization, or another mission-driven and highly visible institution.
- Experience supporting enrollment growth, fundraising or advancement, executive positioning, and crisis communications.
- Demonstrated success using market research, audience insights, and analytics to improve campaign performance and guide investment decisions.
- Experience overseeing web strategy, digital governance, user experience, creative services, and external agency partnerships.
- Relevant professional certification or designation in marketing, communications, public relations, project management, or a related discipline.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Strategic, enterprise-level thinking with the ability to translate vision into measurable plans and sustained execution.
- Exceptional writing, speaking, presentation, listening, and executive-advising skills.
- Ability to communicate sensitive information diplomatically and credibly to audiences at all levels.
- Sound judgment, political and organizational awareness, discretion, and the ability to remain effective under pressure.

- Strong project, portfolio, budget, and vendor-management skills, with the ability to manage interdependencies and competing priorities.
- Demonstrated ability to forge partnerships, build trust, navigate a multi-constituency environment, and gain support for shared priorities.
- Knowledge of contemporary marketing platforms, media practices, digital analytics, content strategy, web governance, accessibility, and emerging technologies.
- Ability to research and interpret complex information and communicate findings clearly through concise reports and recommendations.
- Commitment to developing people, strengthening collaboration, and creating an environment in which team members can do their best work.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is an accomplished strategist, trusted advisor, and generous team leader who understands that a strong university brand is built through authentic stories, consistent experiences, disciplined execution, and productive relationships. This leader will be equally comfortable advising the President, guiding a crisis response, reviewing campaign results, coaching a creative team, and collaborating with campus partners to turn institutional priorities into meaningful engagement. The successful candidate will be curious, decisive, service-minded, and ready to help VSU tell a bold and compelling story about its future.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants should submit all required application materials through the Careers portal. Questions regarding the search may be directed to Dr. Pierre-Richard Cornely via email at pcornely@valdosta.edu.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the age, sex, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation of the individual.”