



Senior Director, Communications Health System Development

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Position Description



Office of the President
Executive Search Group

The Opportunity

The University of Virginia seeks a dynamic, collaborative, and experienced communications professional to serve as Senior Director, Communications for UVA Health. This is a remarkable opportunity to contribute to a best-in-class fundraising program as it works towards highly ambitious goals as part of the University of Virginia's \$5 billion *Honor the Future* [campaign](#).

Reporting to the Senior Associate Vice President for Health System Development, the Senior Director, Communications, will lead a three-person team charged with articulating UVA Health's campaign priorities and philanthropic opportunities through creative and innovative storytelling. In collaboration with executive leadership, the Senior Director will develop key messaging that communicates to donors and prospects UVA Health's exceptional patient care, its high-caliber faculty and their groundbreaking research initiatives, its world-class education of nursing and medical students, and its strong community outreach. Using the full spectrum of communications vehicles, including print, digital, social media, photography, and events, the Senior Director will craft multi-platform, integrated communications that are creative, strategic, and effective in sharing the mission and vision of UVA Health to inspire philanthropy.

Committed to attracting and retaining a diverse staff, Health System Development honors your experiences, perspectives, and unique identity. Together, we strive to create and maintain working environments that are inclusive, equitable and welcoming so we can best achieve our mission of supporting our broadly diverse partners, schools, and networks of engaged alumni, parents, and friends of the University.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership

- Work hand-in-hand with UVA Health and advancement leadership to develop and implement a robust, flexible, and comprehensive communications strategy that addresses the most current and highest campaign priorities.
- Partner with UVA Health Marketing and Communications to guide strategy and alignment of UVA Health Development stories, content, messaging, and tone with UVA Health leadership and the UVA Health strategic plan.
- Provide executive-level campaign communications that support the SAVP and advance UVA campaign objectives.

- Assess current state of UVA Health’s philanthropic communications channels and recommend improvements and opportunities.
- Direct the team’s creation of fresh, engaging content that appeals to all donor audiences.
- Oversee all editorial and design, integrating industry best practices in campaign communications.

Communications Management

- Lead, inspire, mentor, and supervise the Communications team to produce creative and engaging materials that advance UVA Health Development’s mission. Set success metrics and objectives for the team, and offer resources, knowledge, and guidance to help the team accomplish its goals.
- Serve as the primary communications liaison to key internal stakeholders, UVA Health Marketing & Communications, and University Advancement partners. Raise awareness and understanding of high priority initiatives and key constituencies. Continue to develop and refine campaign messaging in response to the UVA Health strategic plan and the vision of new leadership. Align branding through content targeted to diverse audiences.
- Manage all aspects of communications team to a higher level of excellence that meets and exceeds executive leadership expectations. Provide strategic guidance and direction for all UVA Health Communications-related projects and activities, and ensure that projects meet agreed-upon deadlines.
- Offer communications guidance to UVA Health’s fundraising teams as appropriate; serve as UVA Health Development’s point-of-contact for all philanthropic-related media requests.
- Work in partnership with UVA Health Donor Relations team to ensure that stewardship materials and event communications meet the highest standards and expectations of UVA Health Development and UVA Health leadership.

Inclusive Excellence

- Strong commitment to and record of advancing diversity. Recruit and retain a diverse team and develop a culture in which everyone feels valued and supported.

Honor the Future Campaign and UVA Leadership

The Senior Director, Communications, will join the University at an exciting time for UVA Health. UVA has embarked on a groundbreaking \$5 billion capital campaign, *Honor the Future*, that will advance the priorities of all UVA schools and units, support new and existing programs, and fund transformational capital projects.

UVA Health is responsible for \$1 billion of the campaign's goal, supporting initiatives in patient care, research, medical and nursing education, and community outreach. The campaign represents an investment in the ideas, people, and solutions that save lives and relieve suffering. UVA Health has raised more than \$450 million to date from individuals, foundations, and corporations. The Senior Director, Communications, will play a critical role in inspiring philanthropy to UVA Health by telling its most compelling and inspirational stories and highlighting its successes to a diverse audience.

In August 2018, UVA welcomed its ninth president, **James E. Ryan**, to Grounds. A gifted educator and UVA alumnus, [President Ryan](#) is a first generation college student, earning his bachelor's degree in American Studies summa cum laude from Yale University and his J.D. from the UVA School of Law, attending on a full scholarship and graduating first in his class. After clerking for the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals and for then-US Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, the president joined the faculty at the UVA School of Law. In 2013, he became dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he launched the Harvard Teacher Fellows program, began to reshape the master's degree curriculum, made significant faculty hires, and successfully led the school during Harvard's capital campaign, securing a landmark commitment for research in early-childhood education.

"To be both great and good, we must never forget that our ultimate purpose as a public university is to serve the public through an unending and fearless search for truth and through our teaching, our research, and our healthcare."

President James E. Ryan

In February 2020, [K. Craig Kent, MD](#), joined UVA Health as its Executive Vice President for Health Affairs and CEO, UVA Health. Reporting to President Ryan, Dr. Kent oversees all of UVA Health and its clinical enterprise, which spans the Commonwealth of Virginia. A researcher, educator, and physician, Dr. Kent is an internationally recognized leader in academic medicine. In October 2019, he was elected to the National Academy of Medicine, one of the highest honors in the fields of health and Medicine. He chairs the American Board of Surgery. He previously served as dean of The Ohio State University College of Medicine, vice president for health sciences and the Leslie H. and Abigail S. Wexner Dean's Chair in Medicine.

UVA Health Development operates as the fundraising arm of UVA Health System. Its mission is to support UVA Health's mission of enhancing patient care, medical and nursing education, research, and community outreach through philanthropy. The 44-person office is organized into teams of front-line fundraisers and staff who focus on medical alumni, nursing alumni, cancer programs, UVA Children's, and healthcare philanthropy (grateful patient giving). The office also has dedicated Communications and Advancement Services teams, who partner closely with fundraisers to support their efforts. UVA Health Development reports up through the University Advancement Office, which provides significant central services for the broader University development community.

UVA Health

The UVA Medical Center, a level I trauma center with over 600 beds and numerous specialty and outpatient clinics in Charlottesville and throughout Virginia, is stepping up to meet the needs of the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world as the #1 hospital in Virginia. With 15 specialties in the top 50 nationally and a \$2.3 billion annual operating budget, UVA Health leads the University in generating new areas of research and forging innovative affiliations.

[The University of Virginia School of Medicine's](#) cutting-edge educational and research programs are built on innovation and collaboration, bridging the academic and clinical environments to pioneer the treatments and cures of tomorrow. Campaign priorities will span the entire School, but also will focus on advancing biomedical research in cancer, transplant, and the neurosciences, among other areas.

[The University of Virginia School of Nursing](#), home to the #1 Clinical Nurse Leader program in the nation, is ranked #8 among public schools of nursing. With a focus on compassionate care, the School of Nursing is committed to training the next generation of resilient, innovative, and passionate nurse-leaders.

About the University

The [University of Virginia](#) was founded by Thomas Jefferson in 1819 to advance human knowledge, educate leaders and cultivate an informed citizenry. Today, *U.S. News & World Report* consistently ranks UVA in the top three public universities. The University of Virginia continues to place among the top 30 of the nation's public and private universities combined.

We are a thriving and diverse global community of nearly 54,000 students, faculty and staff. University students hail from virtually every state in the nation and 111 countries, and our 230,000 alumni around the world actively support our mission to serve the greater good.



The Opportunity

To learn more about UVA, [download this PDF](#), or visit <http://www.virginia.edu>



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Candidate Profile

Health System Development seeks an energetic and innovative communications professional with a strong affinity for the mission and values of the University of Virginia and UVA Health. Preferred candidates will have designed and implemented creative and impactful communications strategy. They will possess command of a wide range of specialty areas including writing and editing, multimedia, and creative design to lead a high-impact communications program. They will have the desire to establish a foundation of excellence and a proven record of exceeding goals and improving outcomes. They will also have effectively led, guided, or mentored team members and/or other stakeholders, and provided oversight to others on a wide variety of successful projects.

Professional Experience

- A minimum of 8 years of relevant experience.
- Experience leading teams that create content for a wide variety of mediums including but not limited to publications, electronic communications, websites, social media, and video.
- Proven track record of taking a creative and innovative approach to establishing a vision and strategy to achieve specific communications objectives and goals.
- Knowledgeable about content creation best practices, including multimedia, editorial, photography, websites, and project management.
- Experience prioritizing projects in a fast-paced environment, with ability to meet deadlines and pivot as needed.
- Proven track record creating high-impact content that yields results.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively with colleagues, vendors, organizational leadership, and other key constituents to coordinate and produce relevant and meaningful content.
- Experience with budgeting, strategic planning, and team leadership.
- Demonstrated success as a manager, mentor, project or team leader. Open, accessible, and transparent approach to management with the ability to coach others to success.

Interpersonal Characteristics

- Excellent communication and collaboration skills. Ability to address challenges with grace, wisdom, and presence.
- Intellectual curiosity and creativity, with an aptitude for learning unfamiliar subjects quickly and a proven ability to communicate across a broad range of audiences.

- Impeccable attention to detail, especially with written communications.
- Service-oriented leadership style and ability to build professional relationships with University Advancement leadership, UVA Health leadership, faculty, fundraisers, volunteers, donors, and colleagues.
- Excellent judgment and decision-making skills, including the ability to pivot quickly to capitalize on emerging communications opportunities and adapt to evolving organizational needs.
- Possess a command of cultural sensitivity and value cultural, political, and social differences. The Senior Director will contribute to an environment that encourages diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Education

- A bachelor's degree is required.

To Apply or Nominate:

To learn more about this opportunity, please visit <http://executivesearch.virginia.edu/searches>.

As a part of UVA Advancement, Health System Development offers a flexible and hybrid workplace. All team members must have access to and maintain a secure home office environment with high-speed internet service and work collaboratively with others using a variety of technologies and tools. Depending on the type of position and work performed, or as deemed by manager, some positions may be required to work intermittently in a shared office space located in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Applications should include a resume and letter of interest. The search will be carried out with full confidentiality; candidates will be notified before references are contacted. To be officially considered for this position, all applicants must apply through [UVA Workday](#).

For confidential inquiries or to nominate someone for this opportunity, please contact AJ Davidson, Senior Search Consultant, UVA Executive Search Group at ajh2d@virginia.edu.



The University of Virginia is fundamentally committed to the diversity of our faculty and staff. We believe diversity is excellence expressing itself through every person's perspectives and lived experiences. We are equal opportunity and affirmative action employers. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, marital status, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, veteran status, and family medical or genetic information.