Saint Michael's College
Job Description

Job Title: Staff Writer for PR and Communications
Department: Public Relations
Supervisor or Manager: Director of Public Relations and Communications

Date Created: 07/01/05 Last Revised: 07/01/05 FLSA Status: E

Our Mission: It is the mission of Saint Michael’s College to contribute through higher education to the enhancement of the human person and to the advancement of human culture in the light of the Catholic faith.

Major Objectives:
- Magazine stories and news releases are written that will advance fund-raising potential, student recruitment, and overall success of the College
- Stories and press releases are generated that show parents the achievement of their students and therefore encourage parent allegiance to the institution
- The Saint Michael’s connection is made paramount to any feature stories produced for the magazine, which inspires the reader to feel connected to Saint Michael’s College
- Donor support of the institution described and encouraged
- The College is marketed and promoted to its various publics
- Stories are discovered to tell about Saint Michael’s faculty and students
- IA website is managed for content and appropriate copy is written as needed
- The commitment to SMC’s mission is carried out, in all aspects of work, on a daily basis
- The mission of the College is effectively promoted and the Institutional Advancement mission is supported to build life-long relationships with alumni, parents and friends, and to engage alumni and friends of the College as active volunteers and benefactors
- IA policies are adhered to regarding confidentiality of prospect information and data base integrity

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:
- Writes copy for college and Institutional Advancement publications, major features and additional copy for each issue of the College magazine, and regularly updates the College web site as requested by Director of Marketing
- Participates in projects such as helping to gather information by contacting faculty and students or conducting research
- Shares (with Director of Public Relations and work-study students) writing and clerical duties associated with distribution of press releases regarding faculty and student news to the general news media
- Helps oversee work-study students, assisting them in data entry, filing and other office tasks
- Conducts interviews with faculty, students and alumni, and also relevant research on-line, in print or in the college archives, to prepare for writing magazine features; then, edits and rewrites in consultation with the Director of Publications, Director of Public Relations/Communications and other IA managers
- Writes press releases about faculty and student news for local or students’ hometown newspapers and broadcast outlets, often using the Datatel system’s data base for batch-hometown news releases on such topics as: all students appearing in a play, all students singing in the chorale, all students being named to Who’s Who, student government election results and some 20 to 40 other areas, particularly special honors at graduation time
- Monitors the campus calendar and produce press releases on campus events that are open to the public
- Takes photographs of students, employees, alumni for news releases and magazine stories

Secondary Responsibilities:
- Helps ensure that Marketing and website personnel stay current with important news generated in PR office
- Maintains current mailing lists of media representatives at Vermont papers, TV and radio stations
- Updates mailing lists with media contact preferences: mail, fax, or e-mail
- Proofreads material from other employees in office for accuracy, style, typos
- Performs other duties as assigned by Director for Public Relations and Communications
Positions Supervised:
- Work-study students

Major Contacts:
- Director of Public Relations/Communications, Director of Publications, all Institutional Advancement managers and staff, Director of Marketing and assistants in that department, Director of Web Site Development
- Faculty and administration for in-depth interviews
- Staff in all other departments (particularly the President’s Office, Admissions, Archives, Student Life, Campus Ministry, Information Technology, Journalism)
- Saint Michael's students
- Alumni supporters of the college, particularly prominent ones, plus interesting or newsworthy alumni
- Members of local, regional and occasionally national media; public officials and outside experts on academic issues
- The general public
- Parents of Saint Michael’s students

Demonstrates Excellence:
- Possesses superior writing skills and ability to target writing to appropriate audiences and to promote Saint Michael’s mission in all stories and press releases; excellent communication and organizational skills and the ability to discover new possibilities
- Produces features and news reports that market the College and promote its mission while holding the interest of readers
- Demonstrates proficiency with PC platform computer systems, Microsoft Office products and web-based computer applications
- Has thorough understanding of and commitment to the mission of a liberal arts residential Catholic college, and overall understanding of the higher education environment
- Exudes an easy manner interacting with and extracting interesting information from people of every variety found in a college community
- Is a very good listener, someone who is curious and outgoing, who enjoys meeting others and puts them at ease by showing a genuine interest in their work and lives
- Types quickly and accurately, and displays enough practice and experience writing news and features to accomplish the multiple tasks of this job with relative speed in order to meet frequent deadlines
- Has a good measure of mature judgment and solid social instincts for the job’s frequent personal interactions with a broad range of personalities
- Participates as a member of a fully integrated outreach and development team, but also operates independently

Education and Work Experience:
- Bachelor’s degree
- Extensive experience writing news and features stories and interviewing people on some regular basis
- Background and/ or a good feel for distinct aspects of magazine writing style, along with well-developed research skills
- Experience in higher education and development is desired

Analytic Skills:
- The ability to recognize several likely causes of events, analyze relationships among several parts of a problem or situation, and then formulate a multi-step response.

Language and Literacy Skills:
- Reads and interprets a wide range of information. May interpret documents to others. Regularly writes reports and correspondence. Able to shift writing style as needed for different audiences. Regularly explains policies, listens to questions, responds, and problem solves. Speaks to individuals and small groups effectively.
Computer/Technology Skills:

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Licenses, Certifications and Other Requirements:

- None required

Physical Demands:

Work is often performed in a typical office environment requiring:
- Sitting in a normal seated position for extended periods of time
- Reaching by extending hand(s) or arm(s) in any direction
- Dexterity sufficient to manipulate objects with fingers, for example operating a computer keyboard
- Communication skills using the spoken word
- Vision sufficient to see within normal parameters
- Hearing sufficient to hear within normal range
- No or very limited physical effort
- No or very limited exposure to physical risk

While performing the duties of Staff Writer for PR and Communications, the employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 10 pounds.

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with a disability to perform the essential functions.

Additional Requirements for the Job:

- Availability to work nights or weekend work occasionally necessary to cover college events or work at outside alumni/fund-raising activities or public-service outreaches (i.e., history fair, business expo booth, golf tournament etc.)
- Capability to assist in staffing Reunion and Homecoming weekends and participate in Commencement, convocations and other College events as defined by supervisor

The above job description in no way states or implies that these duties are the only duties performed by this employee. The incumbent is expected to perform other related duties necessary for the effective operation of the College.