At Luther, we equip students to learn actively, live purposefully, and lead courageously for a lifetime of impact.

Senior Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications

Prospectus

Search for the Senior Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications

Luther College invites applications, expressions of interest, and nominations of candidates in its search for the Senior Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications.

The Senior Director will serve as the institution’s chief communications officer, leading marketing and communications efforts for Luther at an exciting and pivotal time in the institution’s history. Joining newly appointed President Jenifer K. Ward, an engaged and supportive Board of Regents, and an experienced and committed team, the Senior Director will be a key partner in advancing the Luther brand.
About the College

Ranked among the nation’s top 100 liberal arts colleges, Luther is a Phi Beta Kappa campus nationally recognized for its engaging Paideia program, the number of students awarded prestigious Rhodes and Fulbright scholarships, and the percentage of students who study abroad.

Luther’s music program enjoys international distinction, and Luther is a leader in environmental sustainability. Within months of graduation, nearly 100 percent of Luther graduates are employed, engaged in graduate or professional study, or involved in volunteer service. Luther’s graduates push the frontiers of science; build thriving businesses; educate and nurture children; address disease, poverty, and injustice; develop new technologies; protect the earth and promote sustainability; strengthen faith; and create art and music that elevate the spirit and nourish humanity.

Luther’s identity as a college in the Lutheran tradition (ELCA) and its membership in the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU) mark it as a community that is both rooted and open. Neither sectarian nor secular, Luther College shapes lives of meaning and purpose in service to the neighbor. Its community members seek excellence informed by a tradition that couples freedom of inquiry with intellectual humility and holistically educates mind, body, and spirit to promote the well-being of individuals so that communities may flourish. Luther community members identify oppression and seek justice to heal divisions and practice radical hospitality, welcoming all so that they may learn from all.

History

Luther College was founded in 1861 by immigrants with a vision for a more just society and named for a reformer compelled by conscience. For both, education was the key. Luther’s history is based upon principled stands. Its namesake, Martin Luther, proclaimed the dignity of every human person and the inherent freedom promised by the Christian faith. The immigrant founders staked their future on an opposition to a theological justification of slavery. Today, Luther College’s model of education, based on these principles, remains powerful.
Mission

In the reforming spirit of Martin Luther, Luther College affirms the liberating power of faith and learning. As people of all backgrounds, its community members embrace diversity and challenge one another to learn in community, to discern their callings, and to serve with distinction for the common good.

As a college of the church, Luther is rooted in an understanding of grace and freedom that emboldens them in worship, study, and service to seek truth, examine faith, and care for all God’s people.

As a liberal arts college, Luther is committed to a way of learning that moves beyond immediate interests and present knowledge into a larger world—an education that disciplines minds and develops whole persons equipped to understand and confront a changing society.

As a residential college, Luther is a place of intersection. Founded where river, woodland, and prairie meet, community members practice joyful stewardship of the resources that surround the college, and strive to be a place where students, faculty, and staff are enlivened and transformed by encounters with one another, by the exchange of ideas, and by the life of faith and learning.

Vision

Luther College’s vision of a comprehensive student experience that develops whole persons guides its goals, objectives, and activities, ensuring that all students are inspired, empowered, and engaged to thrive, serve, and lead in an ever-changing world. Students are led through self-exploration, reflection, engagement, and service experiences, a progression of inward to outward discoveries that expand upon place and community during each of their four years at Luther College. Students will learn about themselves and others through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes intersections. New perspectives and awareness will be shaped and refined into direction and purpose through intentional reflection and advising pathways. Internships and study away experiences will expand students’ sense of community and engage them with others. Finally, leadership development through service will teach students how to use their strengths to work across differences in order to build community. Supporting each aspect of the experience is an emphasis on well-being that will teach students how to integrate their values and goals into lives and careers as servant leaders who are centered and resilient, empowered to serve the common good in an ever-changing world.

BACKGROUND

During the 2016–17 academic year, the Luther College community engaged in a comprehensive process to reflect on the current state of the college and to discern together the priorities and vision for the future. The 2018–23 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Regents in February 2018.
Campus

Luther College’s central campus, situated on nearly 200 acres of limestone bluff country, comprises eight major academic buildings, seven residence halls, one village of townhouses, a state-of-the-art athletic complex, and a bustling student union. The college owns nearly 800 additional acres of natural areas that include woodlands, floodplains, prairies, marshes, and the Upper Iowa River. These areas, tied together by a five-mile hiking trail, not only offer recreation but also provide students with outdoor laboratories.

Decorah, population 8,000, is a warm and vibrant town that offers plentiful recreation; a charming downtown with numerous restaurants, coffeehouses, an independent bookstore, and a nationally recognized museum of Norwegian-American culture; natural beauty; and a close-knit community—all while providing the conveniences of a city many times its size. Recently, U.S. News & World Report named Decorah High School a top high school in Iowa. Decorah was also featured in Smithsonian Magazine’s annual list of the 20 best small towns to visit in America, as well as being named on Forbes’ “America’s Prettiest Towns” list and the 2015 Best Choice Reviews list of the 50 best small towns in America. Traveliowa.com has Decorah appearing on 10 different “top location” lists.

Luther College is committed to the sustainability of its resources and has reduced its CO2 output by more than 50 percent since 2005. It has set a carbon neutrality target date of 2030. In order to achieve this, the community is aiming for a 70 percent reduction in emissions by 2020.

“Luther is a perfect example of how colleges and universities can help drive America’s clean energy economy and win the jobs of the future. I congratulate Luther and its students on completing Iowa’s largest photovoltaic solar array—powering your campus with clean, renewable energy for years to come.”

—Steven Chu, former U.S. secretary of energy

1.1 MW solar PV generating capacity

1.6 MW wind turbine

2030 target year for carbon neutrality

50,000 pounds of food have been packaged and donated to the local food pantry since 2013
Students find that it is easy to become involved in life at Luther and make lasting friendships. Ninety percent of students live on campus in welcoming, renovated residences, and 95 percent of professors live within five miles. Luther is home to students from 74 countries and 39 states who create an engaged student body and a deep sense of community. A constant stream of performances, lectures, films, music recitals, athletic games, and other events ensures that there is always something to do on campus.

Luther is home to one of the most spectacular athletics settings in the Midwest. Highlights include the football field—Legacy Field—with its distinctive new “Norse blue” turf, outstanding softball and baseball stadiums, and newly renovated outdoor tennis courts. There is also a 17,700-square-foot aquatic center, a soccer pitch with lights for night games, and miles of beautiful cross-country trails. More than a quarter of Luther students participate in intercollegiate athletics and discover the power of championship-caliber teamwork. Luther’s 19 intercollegiate teams regularly compete for championships in the American Rivers Conference. The college has won 246 conference championships (166 men, 80 women) and has enjoyed 114 national tournament appearances and 28 individual national champions.

More than 800 student musicians—of all majors—participate in large ensembles, faculty-coached chamber groups, private lessons, and master classes. More than 50 music faculty teach 275 music majors music theory/ear training, history, education, composition, church music, jazz, and performance. Luther features more than 14 major ensembles, some of which tour nationally and internationally. Luther’s signature Christmas at Luther program is an Emmy Award–winning production performed by 600 musicians and seen live by 7,500 people each year.
Academic/Geographic/Multicultural Profile

Admissions Profile (new students, fall 2018)

- 4,419 applicants
- 2,764 admitted
- 557 enrolled

Geographic Distribution (new students, fall 2018)

- Minnesota: 190
- Iowa: 147
- Wisconsin: 63
- Illinois: 46
- Other states: 55
- International: 56

Multicultural Student Profile

- 75% American multicultural
- 15% International
- 10% Other multicultural
Campus Diversity

The 2018–23 strategic plan compels Luther College to explore ways to innovate for increased student engagement and academic success and move toward the goal of inclusive excellence. The following initiatives are part of the first-year effort to achieve the goals outlined in the strategic plan.

Luther College has reengaged with College Possible and launched the Catalyze program in fall 2018. Catalyze is a college access and completion program that utilizes recent college graduates as “near-peer” coaches to provide support to low-income students who also may be the first in their family to attend college. Luther joins a select cohort of six Catalyze partner institutions including Augsburg College, Coe College, the College of Saint Benedict, Saint John’s University, the University of Cincinnati College of Arts and Sciences, and St. Cloud University. As with all Catalyze partner schools, two recent graduates have been selected as “near-peer” coaches.

In 2017–18, the new Council for Equity and Inclusion, formerly known as the Diversity Council, dedicated significant time to reevaluating its structure and priorities. The strategic plan positions the Council for Equity and Inclusion to become a campus and regional resource for training and expertise regarding inclusive excellence over the next five years.

In fall 2018, after 15 years, the Diversity Center changed its name to the Center for Intercultural Engagement and Student Success to better reflect an increased focus on intercultural engagement among students by building meaningful relationships through the sharing of cultural ways of knowing. The center continues to provide programs and trainings, including Safe Zone and the Intercultural Development Inventory, as well as student programs like cultural and religious celebrations. It is also the home of the Catalyze program.
Alumni

There are close to 35,000 Luther alumni, and the connections they have with their alma mater, classmates, faculty, and friends are important and integral to the success of the institution. The Luther College Alumni Office, along with alumni volunteers, sponsors programs and events to bring Luther alumni together on campus, across the country, and around the world. They strive to keep alumni connected to one another and to the Luther community.

Homecoming is a special time at Luther College. In 2018, Homecoming attracted 2,500 who participated in 58 events over three days.

Alumni play a direct role in recruiting the next generation of Luther students through the Admissions Office’s Alumni Ambassador Program. Every student a Luther graduate refers receives a $1,000 scholarship each year, for four years, if they enroll at Luther.

Leadership

Following an extensive national search, Dr. Jenifer K. Ward was unanimously appointed Luther College’s 11th president and joined the campus community on July 1, 2019. Dr. Ward is a distinguished scholar who earned her Ph.D. in Germanic languages and literatures from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, and received her bachelor of arts degree with distinction from Hendrix College in her hometown of Conway, Arkansas.

Prior to becoming Luther’s president, Dr. Ward served as Provost and Dean of the College for Centenary College of Louisiana, where she was tasked with integrating a liberal arts curriculum with co-curricular programming that would shape an educational experience designed to promote the intentional intellectual, as well as the creative, personal, and professional growth of the whole student.

Her previous roles include Associate Provost, Interim Provost and Dean of the College at the Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, Washington, and faculty appointments at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, and the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio.

In 2010, Dr. Ward coedited the book *Reworking the German Past: Adaptation in Film, the Arts, and Popular Culture*. She has a long list of essays and book chapters in publication. She has presented papers and organized several sessions at conferences spanning the last three decades and has been an invited speaker for dozens of events over the same time period.
LUTHER STUDENTS

22% graduate with a double major
20% go directly into graduate school
99% receive some form of financial assistance
75% are employed on campus

SUCCESSFUL AND SATISFIED GRADUATES

97% of May 2017 graduates reported being employed, continuing their education, or not intentionally seeking employment within 8 months of graduating (95.8% survey response rate)
84% of our most recently polled graduates (class of 2017) reported they were very satisfied or satisfied with their primary activity after graduation

The President’s cabinet includes:
• Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College
• Vice President for Finance and Administration
• Vice President for Mission and Communication
• Vice President for Development
• Vice President and Dean for Student Life
• Vice President for Enrollment Management
• Vice President for Institutional Equity and Inclusion and Student Success

The Board of Regents

Luther College’s Board of Regents, comprising up to 31 members, represents a variety of professions. The Board of Regents meets three times a year. It provides fiduciary leadership of the college and conducts business through various committees.

Financial Overview

The operating budget for 2019–20 is $67 million net of financial aid. Luther’s endowment is $162 million, more than triple its value two decades ago. For the 2019–20 academic year, tuition is $43,500 for full-time undergraduates; basic room and board is $9,760 for double occupancy; and there is a $370 technology fee and a $200 health and well-being fee.

Regents’ Promise Scholarship Challenge

In August 2018, the Luther College Board of Regents announced the creation of a Regents’ Promise Scholarship Challenge to raise $1 million in current fund scholarship support and $10 million in endowed scholarship support that will be used as a one-to-one match for other Luther donors. The Regents’ Promise Scholarship Challenge will help close the gap in unmet financial need, allowing Luther College to attract and recruit the most talented students now and in the future.
The Division of Marketing and Communications

The Division of Marketing and Communications works to enhance and promote the Luther brand in close partnership with all campus constituencies. The division is tasked with communicating Luther’s key messages to prospective students, alumni and friends, current and prospective donors, the campus community, and the local and global communities.

THE POSITION: Senior Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications

Reporting to the Vice President for Mission and Communication and overseeing a team of 20, the Senior Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications will serve on the President’s extended cabinet and work across all divisions of the college. The Senior Director will be a valued participant in high-level conversations and will lead the division in driving institutional strategy. Among current initiatives, this fall, Luther will roll out the new branding initiatives resulting from a comprehensive brand study in partnership with the Additive Agency.

The ideal candidate will be a creative and innovative leader able to identify opportunities to move the Luther brand outward and forward. This individual will work closely with all leaders of the college to establish strategies that will effectively advance the institution and position Luther for the future challenges and opportunities facing higher education. The Senior Director will provide the communications and marketing support to move major initiatives forward. This individual will provide holistic leadership to a team comprising five departments, including Marketing and Public Relations, Marketing Operations, Creative Design, Music Marketing, and Sports Information.

A master’s degree in a relevant field is preferred, with a bachelor’s degree required. Competitive candidates will offer ten or more years of progressively responsible experience in communications, marketing, electronic/social media, external relations, and public relations. The ability to work creatively and collaboratively to build consensus in a diverse community will be essential.
Primary Responsibilities and Areas of Focus

• Develop and execute a strategic communications plan to improve connections among internal and external stakeholders, elevate the institution’s brand, and position the college in a competitive marketplace.

• Capitalize on the excitement and momentum surrounding the appointment of Luther’s new president and other key leadership positions to aggressively seek out communications and marketing opportunities that continue Luther’s position as a top 100 national liberal arts college.

• Partner with the President and leadership in Enrollment Management, Alumni and Development, Academics, Student Affairs, Student Success, and Athletics to define and advance the college’s objectives and priorities.

• Work proactively with the President and college leadership to position Luther in competitive contexts and create and circulate key messages about the college’s strengths, people, and priorities to a wide and varied audience.

• Partner with the Vice President for Enrollment Management to strengthen the communications and marketing strategy in support of student recruitment and enrollment.

• Partner with the President, the Alumni and Development team, and the Board of Regents to execute integrated communications strategies in support of alumni and donor relations, engagement, and increased giving.

• Lead the collective capacity and energy of a talented communications and marketing team in the work of advancing the priorities of the college and the repositioning of the office to be a driver of strategy for the institution.

• Ensure that a communications perspective is considered in important policy and strategy discussions and announcements, always working to create and capitalize on opportunities while minimizing risks to the institution.

• Identify opportunities for growth and development of the Marketing and Communications staff, individually and collectively, and encourage pursuit of those opportunities.

• Manage important relationships with leadership to ensure the Division of Marketing and Communications is responsive through regular interaction with faculty and staff throughout the college and able to receive and process feedback, respond strategically to requests, identify appropriate/available resources, and emphasize the office’s key role within the Luther community.

• Lead the creation of messaging that supports and shares the student experience.

• Lead the development of all digital marketing, college publications, and maintenance and enhancement of the college website, assuring they advance the new branding initiatives and provide a consistent message aligned with Luther's strategic priorities.

• Serve as a chief spokesperson for Luther and develop and execute proactive and reactive media strategies and relationships.
• Ensure effective communications and relations surrounding campus events and serve as an essential voice in crisis communication and management
• Manage key relationships with external vendors in support of advancing the Luther brand; current partnerships include the Additive Agency in brand initiatives, BTC Revolutions as a partner in social media, and local agency New Digital in support of division efforts

**Desired Qualifications and Characteristics**

• The ability to develop and lead the execution of a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy to support the priorities of Luther College
• Passion for the value of a liberal arts education and its ability to enhance the lives of individuals and society
• Capacity to lead strategically by utilizing market research, data analysis, and strategic planning abilities, combined with the creative ability and skill to resourcefully put strategy into action
• The ability to lead by action and example; influence and motivate the team and the larger campus community; recruit, mentor, motivate, and retain outstanding colleagues and empower them to achieve
• A positive, results-oriented, competitive desire to advance all the goals and priorities of Luther College
• Demonstrated experience in crisis communications, including the ability to serve as an effective spokesperson for the institution in challenging times
• The ability to engage stakeholders, build community, manage process, produce results, assess outcomes, and focus on continuous improvement
• Outstanding writing, editing, and public speaking skills
• A proven record of leading effective targeted messaging to a wide and varied audience and the ability to lead messaging that captures life at Luther, influences prospective students and families and engages alumni, faculty, staff, regents, students, and the larger community in advancing the mission and priorities of the institution
• The ability to provide advice to the President and leadership, and oversight of all communications and content of the institution, including public engagements, articles, letters, events, websites, and social media
• Creativity in using all communication platforms to engage stakeholders, build awareness, recruit students, and enhance the student experience
• The ability to work under pressure as part of a team to implement effective time-sensitive communications
• The ability to work collaboratively within a diverse community with multiple constituencies to build consensus.
• Experience developing and managing budgets and prioritizing resources in support of division efforts.

Nominations and Applications

Review of candidates will begin immediately. For best consideration, please send all confidential nominations, inquiries, and expressions of interest to:

Ms. Julie E. Tea, Partner
Ms. Beth McCarthy, Senior Associate
Storbeck/Pimentel & Associates, LPP
LutherSrDir@storbecksearch.com

Luther College seeks to build a culturally diverse community of faculty, staff, and students. Luther College is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.