THE SEARCH

The University of Rochester seeks a strategic, collaborative, and innovative executive as its first Vice President for Marketing and Communications to elevate its reputation as one of the nation’s leading research universities.

Founded in 1850, the University of Rochester is the cultural, artistic, and educational leader for the region. The University’s motto, Meliora, embodies the goals of the University, which are to “learn, discover, heal, create – and make the world ever better.” It is noted among top research universities as being exceptionally collaborative, offering both the intellectual excitement of a major research University with a top medical center and the intimacy and opportunities of a great liberal arts college.

This is a particularly exciting moment and an inflection point for the University. Sarah Mangelsdorf, a nationally recognized psychologist, and higher education leader assumed the presidency in July 2019. President Mangelsdorf’s vision for Rochester builds on the University’s distinctive strengths and broad excellence while encouraging greater collaboration across schools and promoting key values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. David Figlio, a leading economist specializing in K-12 and higher education research, became Provost in July 2022 and is collaborating with President Mangelsdorf and other University leaders to launch an ambitious and distinctive strategic plan in spring 2023.

Reporting to President Mangelsdorf and serving as a member of her leadership team, the Vice President for Marketing and Communications (VPMC) will play a critical role in helping Rochester convey its academic and research strengths, commitments to excellence and access, importance in national and global dialogues, and contributions to local, national, and international communities. This is an exceptional opportunity for a dynamic and accomplished marketing and communications executive to partner with a president whose university is part of the prestigious Association of American Universities, working with senior University leaders and key stakeholders alike, to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy.

This is a redefined role for the University of Rochester, created to ensure that marketing and communications efforts across the University are consistent with an overarching brand, institutional values, and the new strategic plan while also allowing for distinct sub-brands and messages for each of
the schools and units. Therefore, the VPMC will oversee and influence marketing and communications efforts across the University, creating a comprehensive, strategic platform that unifies messaging and positioning for Rochester, broadcasts the President’s goals and priorities, supports and furthers the goals of the entire University and its individuals schools and units, and engages internal and external constituents.

The VPMC will have a clear record of accomplishments as an innovative and collaborative leader in a large, mission-driven organization—ideally, a complex university setting—with substantial experience developing and implementing multifaceted marketing and communications efforts that position and elevate the awareness and understanding of an institution with multiple audiences. This person will possess exceptional diplomacy, judgment, and integrity; a full understanding of the marketing, branding, and communications process from creative conceptualization to implementation; expert knowledge of traditional, digital, video, and emerging media; experience in crisis communications; and demonstrated success fostering an inclusive team culture and building an efficient, cohesive, and collaborative team. The VPMC must be able to articulate a vision for marketing and communications that advances Rochester’s reputation, nationally and internationally, and inspires internal communications partners across the organization. Equally important are a collaborative, collegial orientation and the flexibility to navigate a large and complex University community. A bachelor’s degree and at least 10 years of demonstrated senior leadership are required.

The University of Rochester has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in this important recruitment. Please direct all inquiries and applications as indicated at the end of this document.

**University of Rochester**

Founded in 1850, the University of Rochester is one of the nation’s leading research universities and is the cultural, artistic, health care, and educational leader for the region. The University is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities and is a founding member of the Consortium of Financing Higher Education (COFHE), a group of 35 leading private colleges and universities in the United States. The University is home to nearly 12,000 students and 3,900 full- and part-time faculty, who serve the University’s teaching, research, and clinical missions in eight schools and colleges and its renowned medical center. The faculty currently includes 16 members of the National Academies, and the University boasts 13 Nobel laureates among its alumni and faculty.

Rochester is ranked 36th among national universities according to *US News & World Report* and is the fifth largest private employer in New York State. The University’s academic units include: the School of Arts and Sciences, the Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the Eastman School of Music, the Simon Business School, the Warner School of Education, the School of Medicine and Dentistry, the School of Nursing, and the Eastman Institute of Oral Health. Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Business, and Education are collocated on the River Campus, immediately adjacent to the Medical Center. The Eastman School of Music, Memorial Art Gallery, and NextCorps, a University-affiliated business incubator, are
located in downtown Rochester, a short shuttle ride away, while the Laboratory for Laser Energetics, the world’s largest university-based laser facility, is a short drive from central campus. Taken together, the University has major areas of excellence in the arts, music, and the humanities; social sciences; natural science and engineering; and medical research, and this physical proximity works to foster interdisciplinary collaborations across schools.

**University Faculty, Staff, and Students**

The University of Rochester’s 3,900 outstanding full- and part-time faculty are active scholars, researchers, healers, and creators who have made significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge and culture for the betterment of society. Many are distinguished by their efforts to combine research and teaching with community engagement. The current faculty boasts numerous members of the National Academies of Sciences, Medicine, Engineering, and Education and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Rochester alumni and faculty have to date received a total of 13 Nobel Prizes, across a range of categories that includes physics, medicine or physiology, and economics. In addition to the faculty, over 26,000 staff work to support the University of Rochester and contribute to its mission.

The University of Rochester’s nearly 12,000 students hail from all 50 states and from over 141 countries around the world. With over 6,500 undergraduate students and nearly 5,000 graduate students, 12% of Rochester’s students identify as underrepresented students of color, and 30% are international students. Undergraduate student enrollment has increased by 7% over the last five years, and roughly 18% of Rochester’s undergraduate students are Pell-eligible.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

As a top priority for President Mangelsdorf’s tenure, the University of Rochester works toward being a community in which all who work, teach, create, and provide care are welcome and respected, and where all can pursue and achieve their highest objectives for themselves, their communities, and the world. Steeped in the city of Rochester’s rich history of social justice, the University strives to be an inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and responsive organization at every level.

The University believes that a diverse workforce and an equitable, respectful, and inclusive workplace culture enhance the performance of the organization and is the responsibility of every leader. The University’s Vice President for Equity and Inclusion is a key partner to the entire leadership team in ensuring equity across the institution; fostering a culture of respect and inclusion for all; and advocating for the role that diversity and equity initiatives play in achieving institutional excellence.

The University of Rochester is committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and to supporting employees regardless of their race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, marital status, age, physical abilities, political affiliation, religious
beliefs, and any other factors irrelevant to a person’s ability to successfully perform the responsibilities of the office, so that all employees feel valued and supported.

LEADERSHIP

**Sarah C. Mangelsdorf, President**

Sarah C. Mangelsdorf became the 11th president of the University of Rochester on July 1, 2019. An experienced academic leader, she has earned wide recognition for developing important strategic initiatives tailored to the goals of each institution and for taking a leading role in building both financial and institutional support for those goals. She is known for her work on issues of academic quality, educational access, sustainability, and diversity and inclusion at some of the nation’s leading public and private institutions. Before taking the helm at the University of Rochester, Mangelsdorf served as Provost at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is a professor of psychology who is internationally known for her research on emotional and personality development.

As chief operating officer at Wisconsin, Mangelsdorf oversaw all academic programs and budget planning for 12 schools and colleges, including Education, Business, Engineering, and Graduate Studies, as well as the Schools of Medicine and Public Health and of Nursing, which are affiliated with UW Health, the integrated health system of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She earlier served as dean of the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern University before becoming Provost at Wisconsin in 2014. She began her academic career at the University of Michigan and in 1991 moved to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she was later named dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

In her first year in office, Mangelsdorf made a priority of a “listen and learn” tour, hearing voices representative of students, staff, faculty, alumni, parents, and community members, to help inform the University’s strategic vision for the next chapter. In her inaugural address, she underscored commitments to strengthening the University’s research prominence, fostering equity and inclusion, and engaging with the community.

More information about President Mangelsdorf, including videos and her Instagram account, may be found [here](#).

**Board of Trustees**

The University of Rochester is ably guided by a Board of Trustees currently consisting of 39 members who represent a wide variety of industries and professional backgrounds including several with notable careers in marketing and communications. The current chair of the board is Richard Handler ’83, CEO and director of the Jefferies Financial Group.
THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Reporting to President Mangelsdorf, the inaugural Vice President for Marketing and Communications will serve as the chief marketing and communications officer for Rochester, leading and managing internal and external marketing and communications strategies, execution, and evaluation. In creating this role, the President underscores the criticality of marketing and communications and branding in elevating the University’s reputation and resources locally, nationally, and globally.

The VPMC will creating the vision for and leading the implementation of a proactive, innovative, and comprehensive marketing, communications, and branding strategy that highlights the University’s academic strengths and research, demonstrates its commitment to an environment in which students are able to flourish, and fosters relationships with University constituents, both internally (e.g., prospective and current students and families, faculty and staff, employee groups, alumni, donors, University supporters, and affinity groups) and externally (e.g., media, the communities in the Rochester area and across the state, peer institutions, associations, influencers, and thought leaders). To this end, the VPMC will oversee a central operation that assumes responsibility for University marketing in addition to existing competencies in communications, creative, brand, and digital strategy and consists of an initial staff of 40.

The VPMC will serve as a critical member of the President’s cabinet and work closely with her and senior leadership across Rochester to set priorities and devise communications and marketing strategies for University-wide objectives. This individual will also work closely with unit-based staff to create a holistic communications and marketing program that serves the needs of the overarching University and the specific schools, programs, and units. The VPMC will need to conduct a thorough review of current marketing, branding, and communications efforts; websites; publications; digital and print vehicles; advertising; and other outreach across all channels in order to create a deliberately designed, state-of-the-art, and unified marketing and communications platform for the University. In addition, this professional will solicit feedback and input from senior leadership, deans, faculty, students, alumni, and trustees alike to ensure that the University’s communications and marketing efforts effectively and accurately reflect Rochester’s achievements and ambitions.

Following are the responsibilities and duties of the Vice President for Marketing and Communications:

• Conceive of and implement an overarching strategic marketing and communications plan that is innovative, progressive, and proactive, resulting in cohesive messaging and a brand identity that extends across all media and vehicles in ways that appropriately support and reflect the goals and objectives of the University.

• Act as senior counselor to the President, the Provost, and other University leaders on all communication matters and messaging, internal and external, as well as broader strategic and operations issues affecting the University.

• Build and manage an outstanding strategic marketing and communications program that incorporates all traditional and digital channels and media, and that can be considered best-in-class
compared to its peers across higher education. Evaluate the effectiveness and success of communications vehicles with different internal and external audiences on an ongoing basis.

- Establish a unified digital ecosystem that reflects the University’s brand, creates a cohesive strategy across platforms, and emphasizes compliance with accessibility and user experience standards.

- Provide campus-wide leadership to anticipate and respond to crises that threaten the health, safety, and reputation of Rochester or its community members, including establishing crisis communications policies and procedures. Provide real-time crisis management, counsel, and support to University leadership.

- Partner with UR Medicine counterparts to ensure that the communication needs of the health care system and University are addressed, working toward a framework that both maintains UR Medicine’s discrete missions and goals and also elevates the synergies and connection points with the University, particularly the research enterprise.

- Intentionally work with colleagues to develop marketing and communication strategies that reach out to and connect with traditionally underrepresented and underserved communities to support and enhance diversity in the University community.

- Build relationships with and leverage the expertise of key University stakeholders, including those within the Offices of the President, Provost, Advancement, Equity and Inclusion, Administration and Finance, Research, Government and Community Relations, Human Resources, and the General Counsel, and with all academic and administrative deans.

- Convene, support, and inspire collaboration and coordination among communications professionals across Rochester. Build strong, collaborative, and collegial relationships with all unit-based marketing and communications teams, understanding their specific priorities and how those integrate with the University’s strategic communications and goals. Provide appropriate levels of support and service to those individuals and teams.

- Ensure that the office of University marketing and communications is a collaborative, responsive partner that can address both opportunities and concerns from diverse stakeholders, and that staff are sought out as respected thought leaders. Foster excellence with respect to client collaboration and partnership, customer service, and problem solving.

- Thoroughly evaluate current marketing and branding efforts across the University. Strategically invest time and resources in market research, competitive landscape analysis, brand and marketing refinement, and creative execution. Working with direct reports and other key stakeholders, assess how best to leverage internal resources, external counsel, agencies, and services.

- Design, build, and maintain an organizational structure that will increase integration and cohesion across the University and support its mission and goals. Continually assess staff strengths; recruit and retain a high-quality, diverse communications and marketing team.

- Maintain a fair and inclusive work environment by promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Similarly, promote a professional workplace culture of mutual respect and collegiality for all members of the institution.

- Inspire and motivate staff through transparency and direction, placing staff members’ work within the context of Rochester’s strategic priorities and goals. Provide professional development opportunities as appropriate and encourage staff to set and reach personal growth targets.
• Have a leadership style that is open and empowers staff through active communication, delegation, and accountability. Manage expectations and resources to ensure that overall marketing goals and activities are challenging and realistic.

• Foster an environment that rewards new ideas, creativity, and risk taking; builds confidence; and encourages teamwork and collaboration within the office and across the University. Celebrate achievements and set clear expectations for future success.

The Vice President for Marketing and Communications will bring many of the following professional qualities and experiences:

• At least 10 years of experience leading, envisioning, and implementing a strategic marketing, branding, and communications program that was successfully leveraged across an enterprise with multiple constituencies and a wide variety of audiences, ideally in higher education.

• Unwavering focus on diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging, and how this work is amplified in the language, images, and channels that are used by an institution. Commitment to and experience with promoting and enhancing diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging.

• A record of success as an innovative and collaborative leader in a large, complex, mission-driven organization with numerous and distributed stakeholders, shared decision making, and often rapidly shifting priorities.

• Advanced knowledge of the strategies and industry best practices for all aspects of communications, marketing, positioning, and messaging, including sophisticated and creative use of brand journalism, social media, analytics, and other forms of digital communications.

• Substantial experience evaluating the strengths of existing marketing and communications programs and identifying opportunities for improvement. An aptitude for using data and metrics in decision making and evaluating success of programs and campaigns.

• Broad experience in strategic communications, crisis and issues management, communications planning, media relations, public relations, perception management, and internal communications. Ideally, proven effectiveness engaging national and international media.

• The ability to intuit the unspoken and perceive what others do not understand. Exceptional diplomacy, discretion, and judgment as well as political savvy.

• Engaging and persuasive in written and oral communications, clearly able to serve as a professional and trusted representative of the University.

• Collaborative and collegial orientation, eager and skillful in engaging diverse stakeholders and building strong professional relationships. Demonstrated experience serving as a resource to others and obtaining their input, thereby able to synthesize many ideas and produce work products that address a variety of goals and objectives.

• Able to communicate, relate, and work effectively with people at all levels of the organization and diverse backgrounds and cultures.

• Experience managing and inspiring teams in a complex organization, leading by influence and unifying the work of communications professionals across the enterprise. The ability to encourage change and growth in both people and programs. Persuasive, persistent, and determined.
• A strong commitment to personal and professional development and the ability to build, lead, mentor, motivate, and retain high-performing, diverse professional teams to create a robust and collaborative marketing and communications ecosystem.

• Outstanding management, operational, and planning skills, including the ability to handle multiple projects simultaneously in a decentralized environment.

• High degree of integrity, character, and emotional maturity, demonstrating respect for individuals at every level of an organization; humility, a sense of humor and life balance; an outgoing, optimistic personality.

• Sharp eye for operational efficiency and optimal use of resources; deep understanding of budgets and proven success managing them.

• A desire to deeply engage in the local and University communities; keen understanding of the role diversity and intercultural understanding play in achieving excellence.

• Bachelor’s degree is required; an advanced degree is preferred.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search, which can be found here. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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Elizabeth Neustaedter, Principal
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The University of Rochester is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to providing equal employment opportunities to you without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, age, veteran status, medical condition or disability, genetic information, gender identity, or any other protected status under federal, state, or local law.

Please note that the University of Rochester requires all employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of employment. Accordingly, successful candidates must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and submit proof of vaccination prior to the commencement of employment, unless they qualify for a reasonable accommodation for bona fide medical or religious reasons.