



THE WHEELER SCHOOL

Director of Strategic Communications

Start Date: July 1, 2021

Reports to: Head of School

Founded in 1889, The Wheeler School is a co-educational, independent day school for approximately 800 students from Nursery through Grade Twelve in beautiful and dynamic Providence, Rhode Island. The essence of our mission and vision comes down to a simple imperative reflected by Mary C. Wheeler's founding precept: "to learn our powers and be answerable for their use." Wheeler is a community through which we strive to make anything possible for students; where choice, inquiry, and interest are of primary import; where we know individuals well; and where we insist upon and nurture intellectual character, critical thinking, empathy, and creative spirit.



To promote awareness and understanding of Wheeler's distinctive programs, vision, and needs among its internal constituencies and within the wider community, **Wheeler seeks an experienced professional for the position of Director of Strategic Communications.** Reporting directly to the Head of School and in collaboration with an associate director, the director will have the opportunity to lead a comprehensive strategy that elevates the school's mission and reputation through multiple print and

digital channels. The director will be a critical partner on the ACE (Advancement, Communications, Enrollment) senior leadership team, which provides the Head of School with comprehensive advice on all external relations functions of the school. They will also work closely with the administration, faculty, parents, Board of Trustees, and outside community members.

The Director of Strategic Communications will advance the following **priorities**:

- Serve as the hands-on creative architect and implementer of communications that tell the stories of Wheeler’s innovative and ambitious faculty and students through all media channels.
- Develop and implement annual and multi-year strategic messaging plans in conjunction with specific enrollment or advancement objectives.
- Ensure clear and transparent communication to and among all Wheeler constituencies.
- Develop deep knowledge of and maintain the authenticity of Wheeler’s historic character while propelling its communications techniques in a forward-thinking, modern and strategic direction aligned with current best practices and trends.

Specific **responsibilities** to advance these priorities include the following:

- Oversee the production of all major print, digital, and video publications, including content, photography, and design, managing external vendors as needed.
- Edit, write, and manage the production of the twice-yearly school magazine, the *Now & Then at Wheeler*, and oversee writing and production of *This Week at Wheeler*, a weekly e-news blast for employees, trustees, and current parents.
- Manage and maintain all content for the school website.
- Direct the work of the associate director/storyteller, who manages Wheeler’s integrated social media presence.
- Seek out and capture events and stories and from daily school life for publication.
- Collaborate regularly with the ACE Team to align messaging and effort; to develop integrated communications plans for complex events such as open houses and community giving days; and to maintain shared awareness of trends and issues among the school’s constituencies.
- Collaborate with the Enrollment Office to develop and manage an enrollment-focused communication, advertising, and outreach strategy, including the production of admission viewbooks, promotional videos, and other collateral.
- Collaborate with the Advancement Office on electronic and print materials for donor education, solicitation, and stewardship; highlight donor stories and examples of the impact of philanthropy at Wheeler.
- Collaborate with the Office of Unity and Diversity on ongoing equity, diversity and inclusion efforts and communications.
- Collaborate with the Head of School on conceptualizing, drafting, and editing of core executive messages, such as speeches and letters.
- Manage media relations, including writing press releases and cultivating relations with local media.
- Participate on the Emergency Response Team and provide active and responsive crisis communications when necessary.
- Develops guidelines and streamlines divisional communications, and support initiatives for each such as online course catalogues or other brochures.
- Oversee the school’s brand identity and editorial standards.
- Serve as assistant secretary to the Board of Trustees, with responsibility for taking and posting minutes for each meeting and signing Board documents as needed.

- Co-lead the Enrollment, Recruitment, and Public Relations subcommittee of the Board of Trustees; participate in meetings of the Advancement subcommittee.
- Manage and plan the communications department budget, including all advertising expenses.
- Maintain the archives of the institution.
- Participate on the Administrative Leadership Team as a strategic partner in advancing Wheeler’s mission.
- Attend professional development opportunities to stay current with best practices and innovative communication tactics.
- Act as a member of the steering committee for all NEASC accreditations.

Successful candidates will have the following **qualifications**:

- 8-10 years of success in progressively responsible communication and PR roles.
- Experience working in a school environment is strongly preferred.
- Bachelor’s degree required; master’s degree or higher preferred.
- Outstanding writing and editorial skills.
- Demonstrated cultural competency and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion work individually and in schools in general.
- Proven knowledge and effective use of both established and emerging social media platforms.
- Facility with print and video communication trends that resonate with modern audiences.
- Facility with Google Suite, Adobe products, and Wordpress; experience with Blackbaud products preferred
- Excellent listening and interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrated leadership collaborative and management expertise.
- Willingness to work periodic evenings and weekends as necessary.



To apply, please submit a resume, two electronic samples of writing and content, and a cover letter to Allison Gaines Pell, Head of School, at allisongainespell@wheelerschool.org **before April 26**. Please include the “Director of Strategic Communications” in the subject line and cc: careers@wheelerschool.org. Learn more at these links about [The Wheeler School](#) and [careers in our community](#).

Statement on Diversity

At Wheeler, we actively seek students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds in the belief that a broad range of experiences and viewpoints enhances learning, enriches life on campus, and better prepares us all for full participation in a pluralistic, democratic society. The Wheeler School is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all employees and qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, or disability, and any other category protected by federal, state, or local law.