



Vice President for Communications and Marketing Leadership Profile

December 2025



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The [University of Louisville](#) seeks an experienced, visionary leader to serve as Vice President for Communications and Marketing. This is a pivotal role for a dynamic professional who will shape and elevate the University's brand, strengthen its reputation, and lead strategic communications that reflect its mission. The Vice President will develop and execute a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy to effectively tell the remarkable story of the University of Louisville – past, present, and into the future. This leader will champion collaboration across campus units, ensuring consistent messaging and brand alignment while leveraging data-driven insights. This is an extraordinary opportunity to join a highly collaborative leadership team united by optimism and a shared belief in UofL's future. The successful candidate will bring creativity, strategic thinking, and the ability to tell the story in compelling ways that resonate locally, nationally, and globally.

The University of Louisville is a nationally recognized research university and a proud member of the Atlantic Coast Conference. Classified as a Carnegie R1 institution, UofL is committed to advancing knowledge and fostering an inclusive environment that serves the city, the Commonwealth, and beyond. With more than 25,000 students across undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, UofL combines academic excellence with a deep commitment to community engagement.

Under the leadership of President Gerry Bradley, who became UofL's 20th president in March 2025 after serving as Provost and Executive Vice President, the University has prioritized enrollment growth, student success, and strategic innovation. This is a transformative moment for UofL, and the Vice President for Communications and Marketing will play a critical role in shaping the narrative of this next chapter.

The Vice President for Communications and Marketing will lead efforts to elevate the University of Louisville's brand and visibility, transforming perceptions beyond athletics to showcase its academic strengths and Carnegie-classified community engagement. This leader will drive innovative strategies for enrollment and digital marketing, leveraging multi-channel platforms to expand reach for undergraduate recruitment and online programs. A critical focus will be on strengthening internal and external communications to improve transparency, unify messaging, and proactively manage high-profile press issues. Additionally, the Vice President will address resource challenges by optimizing staffing and funding while standardizing brand identity across the institution.

Equally important, this role will oversee the completion and optimization of web development projects to enhance user experience and ensure brand consistency. The Vice President will also lead the development and implementation of robust emergency and crisis response plans, ensuring the University is prepared to navigate complex situations with clarity and confidence. Together, these priorities represent a transformative opportunity to position UofL as a leader in academic excellence, innovation, and community engagement.

The ideal candidate will be a proven leader in communications and marketing, preferably within higher education, with a strong vision for brand development and experience managing complex, multi-unit organizations. This individual will bring expertise in legislative, state, and federal communications needs, coupled with the ability to lead a proactive, strategic approach to marketing and communications. Success in this role requires a commitment to collaboration, transparency, and innovation, as well as the creativity and strategic thinking necessary to tell UofL's story in compelling ways that resonate locally, nationally, and globally.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a strategic, collaborative leader to join a forward-thinking institution and make a lasting impact. The Vice President for Communications and Marketing will help define how UofL tells its story of a university that champions academic excellence, community engagement, and inclusive innovation.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The Vice President for Communications and Marketing will prioritize initiatives that deliver visible progress: modernizing the brand, completing web improvements, implementing advanced digital strategies, and establishing a crisis communications framework. This leader will advocate for resources, set clear goals, and demonstrate how strategic communications drive enrollment, philanthropy, and reputation. The VPCM will champion professional development, introduce agile workflows, and cultivate a culture that values bold ideas and measurable impact. Elevating talent and creativity will position UofL as a leader in higher education marketing and communications.

Tell a Bold, Unified Story

The Vice President will lead an integrated approach that pairs a unifying brand framework with differentiated narratives for research, online programs, and community impact grounded in data, SEO, and emerging AI search practices. Working collaboratively across campus, this leader will elevate UofL's academic excellence, R1 research, community engagement, athletics, and student success locally, across the Commonwealth, and nationally. The VP will establish a compelling core message that reflects the University's mission and future vision.

Modernize the Brand and Visual Identity

The Vice President will lead a comprehensive modernization of UofL's brand, ensuring a fresh, distinctive look that resonates with diverse audiences. This includes completing and optimizing web development projects, introducing contemporary design standards, and creating accessible tools and templates that empower units to align with the brand. Success will require a collaborative approach so that every college and department sees branding as a resource, not a restriction.

Advance Digital Marketing and Technology

The Vice President will transform digital marketing by introducing efficiencies and best practices around multi-channel strategies, marketing automation, geofencing, SEO/SEM, and paid social campaigns. Leveraging analytics and insights, this leader will ensure measurable improvements in engagement, conversion, and reach, particularly for enrollment growth and online programs. Updating technology and software choices will be critical to building a modern, data-driven marketing ecosystem.

Unify and Elevate Communications Across Campus

The Vice President will lead a unit that helps improve transparency, strengthen internal messaging, and proactively manage high-profile press issues. By fostering collaboration, standardizing processes, and introducing operational efficiencies, this leader will create a culture of partnership and innovation that brings coherence to more than 400 practitioners across campus. The VPCM will help transform UCM from a service-oriented unit into a strategic driver of institutional priorities.

Strengthen Crisis Communications and Operational Readiness

Crisis communications must be proactive, coordinated, and clear. The Vice President will establish a robust crisis response framework, including defined roles, rapid-response protocols, and media training for key leaders. This leader will serve as the central point for crisis communications, ensuring consistency and confidence in messaging during complex situations. Moving from a reactive posture to a strategic, institution-wide approach will protect UofL's reputation and reinforce trust among stakeholders.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The Vice President for Communications and Marketing will oversee all aspects of marketing, branding, and communications to elevate UofL's reputation, strengthen engagement, and advance the University's mission and strategic priorities. The ideal candidate will possess the following characteristics:

Minimum Qualifications:

- A bachelor's degree is required.
- Ten years of successful leadership experience within a large, complex organization, including in higher education, public/private industry, and/or a nonprofit environment.
- Proven experience in strategic communications, brand management, marketing, or public relations across multiple media platforms.
- Demonstrated leadership in developing, executing, and communicating organizational strategies that align with university goals.
- Experience managing budgets, fiscal planning, and resource allocation, as well as supervising and developing personnel.
- Experience advising executives on sensitive, high-visibility, or crisis situations.
- Exceptional critical thinking, writing, speaking, interpersonal, and intercultural communication skills.

Preferred Qualifications:

- A master's degree in marketing, communications, public relations, higher education, or a related field is preferred.
- Proven ability to work effectively in a decentralized organizational structure, including collaboration in a shared governance environment.
- Demonstrated success in creating, implementing, and measuring multi-channel, integrated marketing campaigns that achieve strategic goals.
- Experience leading brand strategy, creative development, digital and social media initiatives, and programs to drive engagement.
- Technologically savvy and innovative, with a record of anticipating and embracing new trends and tools in media, marketing, and communications.
- Strong organizational, analytical, and problem-solving skills, including experience using data to drive decisions and measure impact.
- Experience fostering partnerships and collaborating with diverse internal and external stakeholders.
- Experience working with and serving diverse populations.
- Experience advising leaders on sensitive or high-visibility issues.

About the University of Louisville

Overview

Founded in 1798 as one of the nation's first city-owned public universities, the University of Louisville (UofL) is a thriving ecosystem committed to creating futures for students, our community, and society. Today, UofL is recognized nationally for excellence in research, innovation, and student success. It is one of only 102 universities in the U.S. to earn the Carnegie Foundation's dual designation as both a Research 1 and Community Engaged university, and one of just 21 institutions with both R1 and Opportunity College & University status. These distinctions underscore UofL's commitment to access, equity, and impact. UofL is uniquely positioned to impact lives in areas of student success and research and innovation, while the dynamic connection with local and global communities provides unparalleled opportunities for both students and citizens.

Spreading across three campuses, UofL is a state-supported research university that is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). With an enrollment of over 25,000 students, its academic programs attract students from every state in the U.S. and countries all over the world. UofL offers graduate, professional, baccalaureate, and associate degrees, as well as certificates in over 200 fields of study. UofL is especially well-known for excellence in teaching, research, health, and service to the Louisville community and the advancement of educational opportunities for its citizens. With more than 170,000 alumni residing in the US and around the world, UofL's reach extends far beyond the region in which it resides.

Facts & Figures

- **Established:** 1798
- **President:** T. Gerard (Gerry) Bradley, BDS, MS, Dr.Med.Dent
- **Student Body:** 25,005
- **Faculty & Staff:** 7,231 (including instruction/research assistants)
- **Alumni:** More than 172,857 residing in the United States and around the world
- **Operating Budget:** \$1.7 billion, including \$176.5 million from the commonwealth of Kentucky
- **Endowment:** \$1 billion (FY 2024)
- **Federal Funding:** \$113.5 million
- **Athletic Conference:** Atlantic Coast Conference
- **Mascot:** Cardinal
- **Carnegie Classifications:**
 - Community Engagement
 - Research 1 Doctoral University (Very High Research Activity)
- **Accreditation:** Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

Mission Statement

The University of Louisville pursues excellence and inclusiveness in its work to educate and serve its community through:

- teaching diverse undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in order to develop engaged citizens, leaders, and scholars,
- practicing and applying research, scholarship, and creative activity, and
- providing engaged service and outreach that improve the quality of life for local and global communities.

The University is committed to achieving preeminence as a nationally recognized metropolitan research university.

Vision Statement

The University of Louisville will be recognized as a great place to learn, discover, connect, and work because they celebrate diversity, foster equity, and strive for inclusion.

Strategic Plan 2026-2030

The University of Louisville's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan prioritizes UofL's efforts to be a great place to learn, where we redefine student success, and work, where we live our mission of creating thriving futures for our students, our community, and our society. Other priorities focus on efforts to make UofL a great place to discover, thanks to its high standing as a research and innovation powerhouse, and a great place to connect as a valuable resource to and partner with the community.

Academics

UofL offers more than 200 programs across 12 colleges and schools, including professional degrees in law, medicine, and dentistry. Students benefit from internships, co-ops, and research opportunities with faculty leading high-profile programs. The student-faculty ratio is 14:1, and 42% of UofL classes have fewer than 20 students, facilitating close relationships between students and faculty and enabling students to do advanced independent work. Of UofL's 2,650 faculty members, 47% are women, 53% are men, and 21% are persons of color.

Colleges & Schools

- [College of Arts & Sciences](#)
- [College of Business](#)
- [School of Dentistry](#)
- [College of Education & Human Development](#)
- [J.B. Speed School of Engineering](#)
- [Graduate School](#)
- [Louis D. Brandeis School of Law](#)
- [School of Medicine](#)
- [School of Music](#)
- [School of Nursing](#)
- [School of Public Health & Information Sciences](#)
- [Raymond A. Kent School of Social Work & Family Science](#)

Athletics

The University of Louisville Cardinals joined the Atlantic Coast Conference at the beginning of the 2014 season. Louisville competes in 23 intercollegiate varsity sports: Men's sports include baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, soccer, swimming & diving, tennis, and track & field; while women's sports include basketball, cross country, field hockey, golf, lacrosse, rowing, soccer, softball, swimming & diving, tennis, track & field, and volleyball.

Louisville Cardinal Athletics 2024-2025 Year in Review

- The Cardinals posted the highest combined winning percentage in football, men's basketball, women's basketball, and volleyball among Power 4 schools.
- Ten University of Louisville athletic teams recorded a perfect 1,000 APR score for the most recent 2023-24 data, including men's basketball, women's basketball, men's cross country, women's cross country, men's golf, women's golf, men's soccer, softball, women's track and field, and volleyball.

- Every UofL program ranked above the required 930 minimum score for the four-year, rolling APR, which measures academic eligibility, retention, and graduation for student-athletes. This year, the four-year APR score was a multi-year average of the 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 academic years.
- UofL also reached a department-record 96 percent Graduation Success Rate (GSR) in the latest report released by the NCAA in November. Eighteen programs achieved a GSR of 90 or higher, while nine programs recorded a perfect 100 mark. UofL finished the 2024-25 campaign with 10 different sport programs ranked in the top 25 at one point during their seasons, with 11 earning trips to the postseason.
- Louisville finished 37th in the nation in the Learfield Directors' Cup standings, the 15th consecutive season that the Cardinals have finished among the top 40 teams in the country.

Leadership

T. Gerard (Gerry) Bradley, BDS, MS, Dr.Med. Dent., President

Gerry Bradley is the 20th President of the University of Louisville. He previously was the Executive Vice President and University Provost for UofL, serving as the chief academic officer and overseeing all colleges, schools, and deans. He joined UofL as Dean of the School of Dentistry in August 2016 and served as Provost in both interim and permanent roles since 2022.

During Bradley's tenure as Provost, the University made a strong commitment to enrollment growth, student success, and academic excellence, and saw increases in the first-year student persistence rate, financial aid for university scholarships, and total university enrollment. He led several successful accreditation site visits, hired eight deans, and collaborated with senior administrators to develop a new university budget model and plans to increase enrollment and retention rates, as well as fostered the development and launch of several new academic programs.

Before coming to Louisville with his wife and five sons, Bradley was chair and professor of developmental sciences at Marquette University School of Dentistry and served as the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. He is a diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontics and a member of the American Dental Association, the American Board of Orthodontics, the American Dental Education Association, the International Association for Dental Research, and is a member of the Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontics.

Bradley received his BDS in Cork, Ireland, his orthodontic specialty training and MS degree at The Ohio State University, and a doctorate in dentistry at the University of Bern, Switzerland.





Louisville

Located in the heart of Kentucky's largest metropolitan area, the Greater Louisville Metropolitan area has a population of approximately 1.3 million, while the city of Louisville has a population of approximately 626,000. The perfect mix of Southern charm and big city culture, the thriving metropolitan city is a vibrant center of cultural activity, boasting great food, sports, concerts, a beautiful parks system, cultural events, and world-class attractions. Situated on the banks of the Ohio River, America's 17th-largest city boasts a cost of living that is substantially lower than the national average, with a broad range of affordable housing options from high-rise apartments and historic Victorian homes to suburban communities and rural farms.

Louisville by the numbers

#4 – Most Beautiful & Affordable Place to Live in the U.S., [Travel + Leisure 2023](#)

One of the "50 Best Places to Travel in 2024", Travel + Leisure (December 2023 recognition)

One of the Best Food Cities in the U.S., [Travel + Leisure 2024](#)

#14 - Best Cities for New College Graduates, recognized by [SmartAsset 2022](#)



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting the University of Louisville in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by February 11, 2026.

Application materials, nominations, and inquiries can be directed to:

Zachary A. Smith, Ph.D., Melissa Fincher, and Jenna Brumleve

UofL-VPMarCom@wittkieffer.com

The University of Louisville is committed to and will provide equality of educational and employment opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, diversity of thought, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, marital status, pregnancy, or veteran status – except where sex, age, or ability represent bona fide educational or employment qualifications or where marital or veteran status are statutorily defined eligibility criteria for Federal or State benefit programs. Further, the university seeks to promote campus diversity by enrolling and employing a larger number of minorities and women where these groups have historically been and continue to be under-represented within the university in relation to availability and may extend preference in initial employment to such individuals among substantially equally qualified candidates, as well as to veterans.

This affirmation is published in accordance with 41 CFR 60 and is in keeping with Title VII & Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Executive Order 11246; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974; the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988 and Kentucky Statutes. The university aims to achieve, within all areas of the university community, a diverse student body, faculty, and staff capable of providing for excellence in the education of its students and for the enrichment of the university community.

[President's Affirmative Action and EEO Policy Statement.](#)