

Ellen Forderhase de Graffenreid

Education

University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences

University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health

Graduate courses in public health including Health Behavior and Health Education, Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Community Organization and Policy Advocacy, and Health Risk Communications.

The University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler Business School • Chapel Hill, NC

Master of Business Administration

The University of North Carolina College of Arts & Sciences • Chapel Hill, NC

Master of Arts, Russian & Soviet History

Indiana University • Bloomington, IN

Bachelor of Arts, History, magna cum laude • Phi Beta Kappa • Mortarboard

Executive Experience in Higher Education and Academic Medicine

Grinnell College • Grinnell, IA (top fifteen ranked national liberal arts college)

Vice President of Communications and Marketing

(June 2022-Present)

- Transformed a 15-person communications and marketing team from a transactional organization to a strategic partner, improving the collaboration and culture of the team, emphasizing relational communication, and enhancing service levels to college partners.
- After 8 years with one agency, collaborated with two other Vice Presidents to unify strategy across brand, enrollment, and a \$250M fundraising campaign through a competitive selection process for an agency of record. Conducted integrated market research, efficiently deploying resources for market insights and audience segmentation.
- Selected an external licensing partner to license branded items for the first time in College history.
- Led integrated communications efforts through bargaining leading to an historic three-year collective bargaining agreement with the Union of Grinnell Student Dining Workers.
- As a member of the steering committee, researched, edited, and created the dissemination plan for the College's strategic plan, *Knowledge into Action*, currently in its third year.
- Launched a quarterly parent and family newsletter, managing editorial and content strategy, resulting in a 70% open rate and increased parent and family giving.
- Created the college's first rich content events calendar, integrating of the public calendar with the room reservation system, process governance, and user training in support of enrollment and community relations goals.
- Partnered with development and alumni relations to lead naming, construction milestone celebrations and dedication of Renfrow Hall, named for Grinnell's first Black woman graduate, Edith Renfrow Smith '37.
- Led the development of a searchable online newsroom, tagged by audience, theme, and topic and enabling featured content to replace a twelve-year backlog of uncategorized blog-post style news items.
- Created collateral and public communication strategy in support of Grinnell's advocacy for endowment tax exemption, demonstrating the magnitude of the college's support for high need and very high need students.
- Partnered with enrollment management to recruit three consecutive classes, while addressing process changes to comply with the U.S. Supreme Court decision. Spearheaded the development of enhanced student-athlete recruitment materials and led the creation of innovative yield marketing collateral and strategies, driving exceptional enrollment outcomes.

Syracuse University • Syracuse, NY (top private national research university)

Senior Associate Vice President for Academic and Executive Communications

Primary academic communications leader, supporting the Office of the Provost, Academic Operations, Faculty

Affairs, Syracuse University Abroad, Office of Research and the Graduate School.

(July 2020-May 2022)

- Facilitated media relations and provided crisis/issues management counsel to academic leadership on topics including personnel issues, academic freedom, free speech, academic integrity, classroom misconduct, leadership transitions, and change management efforts.
- Led research communications strategy including publicity for major grants, high-impact papers and unique multidisciplinary research initiatives. Publicized grants and high-impact research and facilitated public and government outreach for strategically important research programs.
- Collaborated with academic and faculty leadership to provide communications counsel and support for Centers and Institutes, particularly those intersecting with identified strategic research clusters. Supported the public launch of the Lender Center for Social Justice and the BioInspired Institute. Collaborated with the Vice President for Research to facilitate university-wide awards programs, from calls for nominations to award announcements.
- Led a team of writers and digital strategists preparing public speeches, talking points, and visuals for the Chancellor, Senior Leadership and the Office of the Board of Trustees for a broad range of internal and external meetings and events. Created of executive platforms and messaging frameworks, anticipated scheduled events, major speeches and op ed opportunities.
- Increased service levels for the Office of the Chancellor by achieving ten-day lead times for more than 100 speeches each semester. Secured multiple deskside media visits for Chancellor Kent Syverud with top-tier higher education reporters and publications.
- Served a central role on the pandemic response communications team, including overseeing the University's COVID-19 website and dashboard, supporting study abroad program suspension, and responding to (sometimes daily) changes in New York State regulations and reporting.
- Oversaw multimedia campaigns for key change management initiatives including changes to undergraduate registration and a shift to a shared competencies model for institutional learning goals and accreditation.

Senior Associate Vice President for Content Strategy

(August 2018-July 2020)

- Hired eight new staff members to build a team of 15+ professionals responsible for executive communications, social media, content strategy, digital content, and flagship publications including Syracuse Magazine.
- Provided strategic leadership for messaging, brand storytelling, multimedia content, and social media engagement mapped to enrollment goals and academic strategy.
- Created a digital strategy roadmap, focused on building the necessary infrastructure for digital marketing and institutional content strategy through implementation of a marketing technology stack and strategic hiring.
- Built a content strategy for the flagship Syracuse.edu website that resulted in a 17% increase in audience engagement year over year.
- Relunched the Syracuse Alumni magazine after a hiatus, establishing an editorial process and committee and several award-winning issues including recognition of major milestones such as the S.I. Newhouse Foundation \$50 million transformational gift to the Newhouse School of Public Communications, and the opening of the National Veterans Resource Center.
- Created points of pride collateral materials for distribution to the Board of Trustees, other volunteer boards and university advocates, providing them with updated facts, figures, and success stories.

Duke University • Durham, NC and Washington, DC

Director of Communications, Robert J. Margolis, MD, Center for Health Policy (May 2016-August 2018)

- Led integrated marketing communications strategy and tactics for a start-up interdisciplinary research center focused on health policy analysis, dissemination, and implementation. Established consistent

visual branding, content strategy, and web presence within 60 days of hire, resulting in top five Google search ranking within two months of web site launch.

- Partnered with COO and faculty to create a collaborative strategic plan and research roadmap.
- Created communications plans for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years including an annual editorial calendar, internal and external newsletters, social media presence, and audience outreach strategy that built year over year national awareness and reputation as measured by increases in unaided awareness (11 percent), familiarity (25 percent) and key thought leadership areas.
- Managed media relations for high profile experts including former FDA commissioners Mark McClellan and Robert Califf. Screened inbound opportunities, proactively built relationships with national health policy reporters, placed three or more op eds each month in top-tier outlets, facilitated data journalism on behalf of the Center's key analysts and promoted white papers on behalf of Center researchers and strategic partners.
- Led planning and execution of the Center's public launch event in Washington, DC and of an annual public event (over two years) jointly sponsored with McKinsey & Co. focused on state-level healthcare reform and healthcare consumerism.
- Served on the Duke University Vice President of Communications and Government Relations senior staff and as a subject matter leader for strategic projects spanning Duke University and Duke Health. Supervised events strategy and execution.

University of Missouri • Columbia, MO (AAU public, land-grant university)

Vice Chancellor for Marketing & Communications (September 2014-March 2016)

- Charged with serving as a change agent, assessing institutional communications and implementing an integrated marketing strategy.
- Created issues management and crisis communications plans and provided counsel to senior leaders.
- Reorganized communications and marketing team, including trademarks and licensing and visitor relations, to enhance collaboration, focus on content strategy, reduce duplication and improve service levels. Implemented annual work planning cycle and professional development planning for all staff, including meaningful goals to increase cultural competency and commitment to serving all Missourians.
- Led review and update of graphic identity standards to improve consistency and compliance, including academic medical center and veterinary health center clinical identity structure.
- Spearheaded a university-wide editorial calendar process to increase coverage of research, faculty achievements, student-led initiatives and student-focused stories, and integration of Athletics and MU Health Care content.
- Negotiated higher standard royalty rates with all licensed vendors. Oversaw negotiation of product category management contracts with licensees. Collaborated with Intercollegiate Athletics to promote licensed merchandise, contributing more than \$18.5 million in revenue to university operations.
- Transitioned unit from rollover budget model to activity-based budgeting for operational expenses and salaries, mapping expenditures to annual goals and institutional strategy. Decreased budget complexity, improved forecasting and accuracy.
- Developed messages in support of legislative strategy, prepared legislative testimony for university officers, created points of pride and focused communications strategies for key constituencies. Regularly interacted with curators, legislators, university advocacy groups, external boards and advisory committees.

Brandeis University • Waltham, MA (internationally ranked, AAU private research university with a distinctive commitment to liberal arts education and the principles of social justice)

Senior Vice President for Communications (January 2013-August 2014)

- Led communications, branding, marketing and inaugural government relations program.
- Led and managed a research-based, institutional graphic identity and brand positioning project including selection and management of a nationally recognized consulting partner.
- Served as principal brand strategist including setting graphic identity standards, establishing and monitoring trademarks, and providing leadership for an integrated messaging and visual presentation platform.

- Led all crisis and issues-related communications, including controversial executive compensation issues, re-establishment of the Rose Art Museum, and crisis messaging during the police search for the Boston Marathon Bombing suspect over 20 hours.
- Brought admissions communications in-house and oversaw creation of an integrated campaign, contributing to a record number of applications despite declining applications and enrollments at private institutions and challenges related to the Common Application.
- Increased use of video in content strategy by 300%, mentored digital team members and content team, resulting in more than 20% growth in social media engagement across platforms. Increased home page feature story turnover from once each semester to a weekly features and timely news stories.

**University of North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and
UNC Cancer Care • Chapel Hill, NC**

Director of Communications and Marketing (March 2009-January 2013)

- Led an award-winning integrated marketing communications program for a top-ranked National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center and multidisciplinary clinical oncology service line encompassing 17 subspecialties.
- Served as primary brand strategist and steward for UNC Lineberger and UNC Cancer Care including graphic identity standards, award-winning messaging, and strategy for advertising, publications, web, social media, print and electronic fundraising communications and donor stewardship.
- Managed communications for a research portfolio of more than \$230 million and a clinical entity exceeding 115,000 patient visits annually.
- Increased national media coverage by 40% year over year for three years in a row. Led the government relations communications program for the \$50 million University Cancer Research Fund including monthly legislative communication and annual report.
- Directed media relations and served as spokesperson for the cancer center, clinical oncology services and cancer-related basic and translational research.
- Contributed to fundraising totals through collaboration with the development team and a robust social media strategy supporting grateful patient, peer to peer and community fundraising.

University of Louisville Health Sciences Center • Louisville, KY

Director of Health Sciences Communications and Marketing (November 2004-March 2009)

- Led communications and marketing strategy and execution for University of Louisville's (UofL) urban health sciences campus, supporting the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs and the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, and Public Health and Information Sciences.
- Worked closely with the President, Provost, Executive Vice President for Health Affairs, Executive Vice President for Research and health sciences deans to provide strategic direction for marketing, public relations, advertising, publications, web, and emergency response and crisis communications.
- Collaborated with government relations staff and external consultants to plan and execute public advocacy and legislative relations programs.
- Oversaw major marketing communications efforts for Nucleus (biosciences incubator) and 17 research Centers and Institutes.
- Coordinated marketing communications across 65 private practice entities and three health care systems.
- Served as the University of Louisville's health crisis communications officer.

Washington State University Foundation • Pullman, WA

Vice President, Communications and Donor Relations (October 2002-October 2004)

Director, Communications and Planning (August 2001-October 2002)

- Led the planning, execution and assessment of communication activities supporting Washington State University's strategic priorities and private giving.
- Wrote and implemented the WSU Foundation's first integrated marketing plan.

- Created an Internet presence, e-commerce, and electronic communications strategies. Spearheaded strategic placement of the WSU Foundation's Annual Report in Washington State Magazine to maximize exposure and minimize cost per exposure.
- Consulted on and wrote proposals and presentations for special and transformational giving opportunities.
- Directed all donor relations and stewardship activities, events, gift acknowledgement, and donor recognition.
- Spearheaded creation of a scholarship database, increasing student scholarship thank you letter campaign participation by more than 20 percent.
- Collaborated with development officers to create and implement customized donor cultivation and stewardship strategies.

Additional Experience

Citigate Cunningham, Inc. (now Illuminas Global) • Austin, TX

Manager/Senior Manager, Momentum Research Group (April 2000-August 2001)

Hewlett Packard Corporation • Boise, ID

Product and Program Manager, Eliptica Products Group (May 1999 - April 2000)

Competitive Intelligence Manager, Imaging Supplies Division (May 1997 - May 1999)

Key Trainings and Certifications

- Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) in process.
- HIPAA privacy and security trained, FERPA trained. Excellent working knowledge of key federal regulations pertaining to higher education (FERPA, Title IX, research integrity, human subjects, animal care and use).
- Excellent working knowledge of higher education budget practices, fund accounting, purchasing best practices, and NACUBO guidelines.
- Participant, National Seminar and Tabletop Exercise for Institutions of Higher Education (2015) – Office of Academic Engagement, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- National Institute Management Systems emergency response training.
- Strong grasp of fundraising principles including campaign research, design and implementation, annual giving strategies, major and transformational gift strategies and donor stewardship at all levels.

Leadership in Service

- First Year Experience Course Facilitator, Grinnell College (2026).
- Board Member, Light Work, a non-profit photography organization supporting emerging artists.
- CASE District III Circle of Excellence Awards, committee chair: Recruitment Videos (2017).
- CASE National Circle of Excellence Awards: committee member Digital Communications (2017), committee chair Community College Magazines (2018), committee chair Digital Communications – individual sub-sites (2019), committee chair Marketing Program Improvement (2020), committee chair Digital Newsletters (2021).

Recent Publications and Speaking Engagements

- PRSA Counselors to Higher Education (2026), "All Politics are Local: A Case Study of Small College Public Advocacy".
- Co-presenter, PRSA Counselors to Higher Education (2025), "Building Organizational Trust from the Ground Up", with Melissa Farmer Richards.
- Panelist, Council of Independent Colleges annual joint meeting between Chief Academic Officers and Chief Marketing and Communications Officers (2023).
- Panelist, Simpson Scarborough, CMO Lab (2023).
- Speaker, BioInspired Syracuse professional development series (2020, 2021).
- Invited Speaker, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health: op ed training, controversial issues training, general media training for doctoral students and early career faculty (2018).
- Columnist, Inside Higher Ed (2017-18):

- "Getting Things Done in Higher Education", May 1, 2017 (*adopted with permission in 2023 by Harvard Graduate School of Education professional certificate program in higher education*).
- "Managing Up: A Brief Guide", May 29, 2017.
- "When Bad Things Happen, What Do You Tell Your Team?", July 19, 2017.
- "Dealing With Dysfunction", October 9, 2017.
- "The Russians (and Other Online Outlaws) Are Coming", Feb. 20, 2018.
- "Dealing With Workplace Incivility", March 5, 2018.
- "Difficult Conversations: Managing Staff Performance", April 2, 2018.
- "Avoiding Annual Review Stress," May 22, 2018.
- Co-presenter, CASE District III Annual Conference (February 2018), "One Message Doesn't Fit All: Conversations to Spark Donor Motivation," with Kelly Wesley Taylor, JD, Principal, Trek Advancement.
- Instructor, Duke Professional Communicators curriculum: Consulting, Influence, and Negotiation (2017).
- Daniel G, McClellan MB, Schneider M, Lavezarri G, Quian J, de Graffenreid E. Value-based strategies for encouraging new development of anti-microbial drugs (white paper). Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy (July 2017).
- Panelist, CASE Annual Summit for Leaders in Advancement (July 2016), "Fearless Leadership in Higher Ed."
- Faculty, CASE Annual Summit on Marketing and Branding (May 2015); presented sessions on reputation management and crisis communications, working across a large organization, development-marketing coordination and marketing leadership.
- Presenter, CASE District I (January 2014) "Reputation Rescue: Managing Town-Gown Relations."
- Presenter, National Cancer Institute Public Affairs Network (NCI-PAN) and National Association of Cancer Center Development Officers Conference (2010 and 2012).

Awards

- Editor, 2024 CASE District VI awards for Feature Writing (Anika Jane Beamer and Jacqueline Hartling Stolze) and 2023 Writing: Profile (Jacqueline Hartling Stolze).
- 2023 CASE District VI Award Video: Student Audience, "Student of the Game" athletic recruiting video and virtual campus tour.
- 2020 CASE National Circle of Excellence Awards, Silver – University Events Calendar and Social Campaign (leader); Be Orange Brand Campaign (content lead); Boost the 'Cuse Giving Day (content lead).
- 2010 AAMC Award of Excellence, "The New Face of Cancer Care" campaign in support of the N.C. Cancer Hospital (now Basnight Cancer Hospital) opening and UNC Cancer Care brand launch.