



CENTRAL
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Vice President for University Communications and
Chief Marketing Officer

Position Description



The Opportunity

Central Michigan University (CMU) invites applications and nominations for the position of Vice President for University Communications and Chief Marketing Officer. Reporting directly to the president, the vice president is responsible for developing and maintaining excellent outreach and relationships with internal and external constituents and for significantly enhancing the university's visibility and increasing awareness and understanding of its mission, vision, and academic programs.

Central Michigan University is a nationally ranked research university that fosters the transformative power of advanced learning while embracing a sense of community among its students, faculty, staff, and more than 250,000 alumni around the world. From its roots as a teachers' college, CMU has grown to offer nationally acclaimed programs in areas ranging from the health professions and engineering to business and communications, visual and performing arts, and science and technology.

CMU's student and faculty researchers preserve the earth's resources, discover new ways to treat diseases, advance innovative ways to improve teaching and learning methods, and much more. Its alumni are physical therapists, physician assistants, and doctors. They are CEOs, lawyers, and policymakers. They are top broadcasters and journalists, fashion designers, and teachers.

Established in 1892, CMU has more than 14,000 students enrolled, including over 10,000 undergraduate students and over 4,000 graduate and doctoral students at 12 locations across North America. More than 20 percent of CMU's main campus students supplement their on-campus classes with online courses. The average high school GPA of entering students is 3.52. Among just seven percent of U.S. universities in the highest two Carnegie research classifications, CMU offers nearly 300 academic programs at the undergraduate, master's, specialist, and doctoral levels; as well as professional development courses and certificates. In addition, CMU has established the nation's 137th College of Medicine to address a growing shortage of primary care physicians in Michigan. The inaugural class of students graduated in May 2017, and the program achieved full LCME accreditation in 2018.

The Role of the Vice President

The Vice President for University Communications and Chief Marketing Officer strategically plans and leads the conceptualization, development, integration, and implementation of all marketing, branding, and communication strategies; executes a positioning strategy for the university; and develops and implements new marketing initiatives that strengthen the university's reputation locally, nationally and internationally among all key constituencies.

The position is also responsible for developing effective internal communications that cultivate awareness of key university issues and build an open, transparent, and collaborative culture across the campus community. Other responsibilities include supporting the president in reaching nationally focused goals; developing and implementing the overall university public relations and marketing strategies; leading a department of 34 full-time staff, and a student-run creative agency, Media Graphix; and developing and administering the department's budget, policies, procedures, and organizational changes to guide the evolution of the unit. Visit the CMU University Communications Department [here](#).

Duties and Responsibilities

- › Support the [Leadership Standards](#) of Central Michigan University and foster a culture that inspires excellence.
- › Serve as a member of the university's executive leadership team and maintain a strong working relationship with the president and key senior leaders.
- › Serve as the chief spokesperson for the university.
- › Develop evidence-based strategic communications and marketing programs focused on enhancing CMU's visibility and name and highlighting the accomplishments of CMU locally, nationally, and internationally.
- › Develop and implement the overall university marketing, branding, and communication strategies, including social media.
- › Enhance the university's reputation and increase the visibility and understanding of its mission, vision, and academic programs among external and internal constituents.
- › Lead CMU's branding strategy and manage associated marketing and communications.
- › Develop effective internal communications that cultivate awareness of key university

issues and build an open, transparent, and collaborative culture across the campus community.

- › Provide advice and counsel to campus leadership on effective communication strategies.
- › Educate internal constituents about marketing, branding, and communications to increase understanding of the role they play in creating and enhancing CMU's brand.
- › Develop, propose, and implement policies, procedures, and organization to drive the communications strategies and enable the growth and development of the department.
- › Lead a diverse department, including directors who provide community and marketing support for the various colleges and other operating units.
- › Develop planning documents for the department within the guidelines of the university.
- › Ensure that the material developed by the department is accurate, ethical, and meets the marketing and communication goals of the university.
- › Develop and manage the department budget.
- › Maintain a strong working relationship with local, regional, and state news media and other external constituents.
- › Provide strategic oversight and development support for key materials (i.e., speeches, testimony, and position papers) for the president and key administrators.
- › Assist the undergraduate and graduate admissions offices, Innovation and Online, and the academic colleges with their messaging needs and partner on division and departmental recruitment and yield communication to support the achievement of their long-term goals.
- › Review and assess digital and social media platforms, which have been and continue to be critical to building national and global brand recognition and continued enrollment success.
- › Assist in and ensure the adaptation and execution of the university's overall branding strategy on digital and social media platforms to further support the university's long-term strategic enrollment needs.
- › Be responsible for all promotional materials produced and distributed by the university.
- › Be responsible for visual imagery and the role it plays in the marketplace.
- › Serve on the university crisis management team, leading the university's crisis communications and issue management.

Education, Skills, Abilities, and Experience

Required

- › Bachelor's degree, preferably in marketing, public relations, or communication.
- › Administrative experience in marketing and communications positions with progressive leadership responsibilities in a complex organization.
- › Demonstrated success in marketing, public relations, and planning and implementing major external and internal communication plans for large organizations with complex issues.
- › Demonstrated success and expertise in social media.
- › Successful experience as a spokesperson to the media and ability to represent the university to the media.
- › Demonstrated ability to successfully lead, motivate, and manage professional staff.
- › Demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- › Proven record of collaborative leadership skills and ability to build positive relationships.
- › Ability to work collaboratively as a member of the executive leadership team.
- › Team player who is highly motivated, a self-starter, and a dedicated professional.
- › Effective verbal and written communication skills.
- › Effective organizational skills.
- › Demonstrated positive interpersonal skills.
- › Demonstrated ability to work on multiple tasks on deadline while directing a team of communications and marketing professionals toward clearly defined outcomes.

Preferred

- › Master's degree.
- › Experience working in a higher education environment.
- › Proven ability as a marketing strategist with a record of success in branding and positioning.

About Central Michigan University



Central Michigan University is a [nationally ranked institution](#) that fosters the transformative power of advanced learning while embracing a sense of community among our students, faculty, staff, and nearly 250,000 alumni around the world. CMU started as a normal school in 1892 for 31 students aspiring to be teachers and fill a void in Michigan's schoolhouses. Fast forward to May 2017, we graduated our first class of physicians from a medical school that was created because of a significant unmet need for doctors in rural and medically underserved urban communities. From its roots as a teachers' college, CMU has grown to offer nationally acclaimed programs in areas ranging from the health professions and engineering to business, communications, science, and technology.

CMU was a leader in distance education back in 1972, and that leadership continues today with inclusion on the *U.S. News and World Report* "Best Online Programs" lists. CMU students and faculty researchers help preserve the earth's resources, discover new ways to assess and treat diseases, and advance innovative ways to improve teaching and learning methods. Our alumni are physical therapists, physician assistants, and doctors. They are CEOs, military officers, engineers, neuroscientists, biochemists, forensic accountants, and entrepreneurs. They are top broadcasters and journalists, fashion designers, teachers, lawyers, and policymakers.



Each year, about 90 percent of our first-year students on campus hail from the Great Lakes state. About 80 percent choose to stay in Michigan upon graduation, contributing to the well-being of its businesses, communities, residents, environment, and unique and diverse culture. The other 20 percent are sought by employers across the Midwest and nation and are valued for their leadership, willingness to roll up their sleeves and work hard, and ability to focus on innovative solutions and work in teams.

At Central Michigan University, faculty and staff foster the transformative power of advanced learning while creating a sense of community. Students, parents, and alumni alike speak of the “feeling” they had the first time they stepped on campus — a sense that they mattered and that they would be supported in finding their unique path forward. CMU is among only seven percent of U.S. universities in the highest two Carnegie research classifications. Our research philosophy means even undergraduates, often starting their first year, work beside faculty, immersed in learning and discovery experiences that employers value.

At the same time, we uphold the belief that a foundation in the liberal arts allows students to achieve more success in their careers, contribute more to their employers, and lead more fulfilling lives in their communities. Through the combined efforts of our faculty, staff, alumni, and partners, Central Michigan University achieves its vision of being an inclusive community of scholars and a national leader in higher education, inspiring excellence and innovation. So, too, does it uphold its mission as a community committed to the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, discovery, and creativity. We provide student-centered education and foster personal and intellectual growth to prepare students for productive careers, meaningful lives, and responsible citizenship in a global society.

[Dr. Neil MacKinnon](#) was unanimously appointed as the 16th president of Central Michigan University on September 26, 2024, by the CMU Board of Trustees and officially began in the role on November 1, 2024. Dr. MacKinnon brings more than 25 years of higher education experience to his role as president, including experience as a faculty member, department chair, center director, dean, and provost. A copy of CMU’s organizational chart is available [here](#).



2023 – 2028 CMU Strategic Plan

In September of 2023, the CMU Board of Trustees approved a [2023–2028 strategic plan](#) to guide the university toward realizing its mission and vision. The strategic plan was developed with the involvement of multiple stakeholders, committees, and groups through a university-wide strategic planning process. Each of the plan’s four priorities is supported by stated objectives and measurable goals.

Priority One

- › Inspire Student and Scholarly Success — Prepare bold leaders and learners who innovate and adapt in a rapidly changing world.

Priority Two

- › Engage Communities — Cultivate and enrich reciprocal partnerships with university stakeholders to ensure a lasting impact in the communities we serve.

Priority Three

- › Enhance Organizational Culture — Raise our national profile as a vibrant and nurturing university community where all members feel valued, empowered to thrive and experience a strong sense of belonging.

Priority Four

- › Ensure Institutional Sustainability — Embrace sustainable campus operations that ensure wise stewardship of our resources.

A Portrait of Mount Pleasant

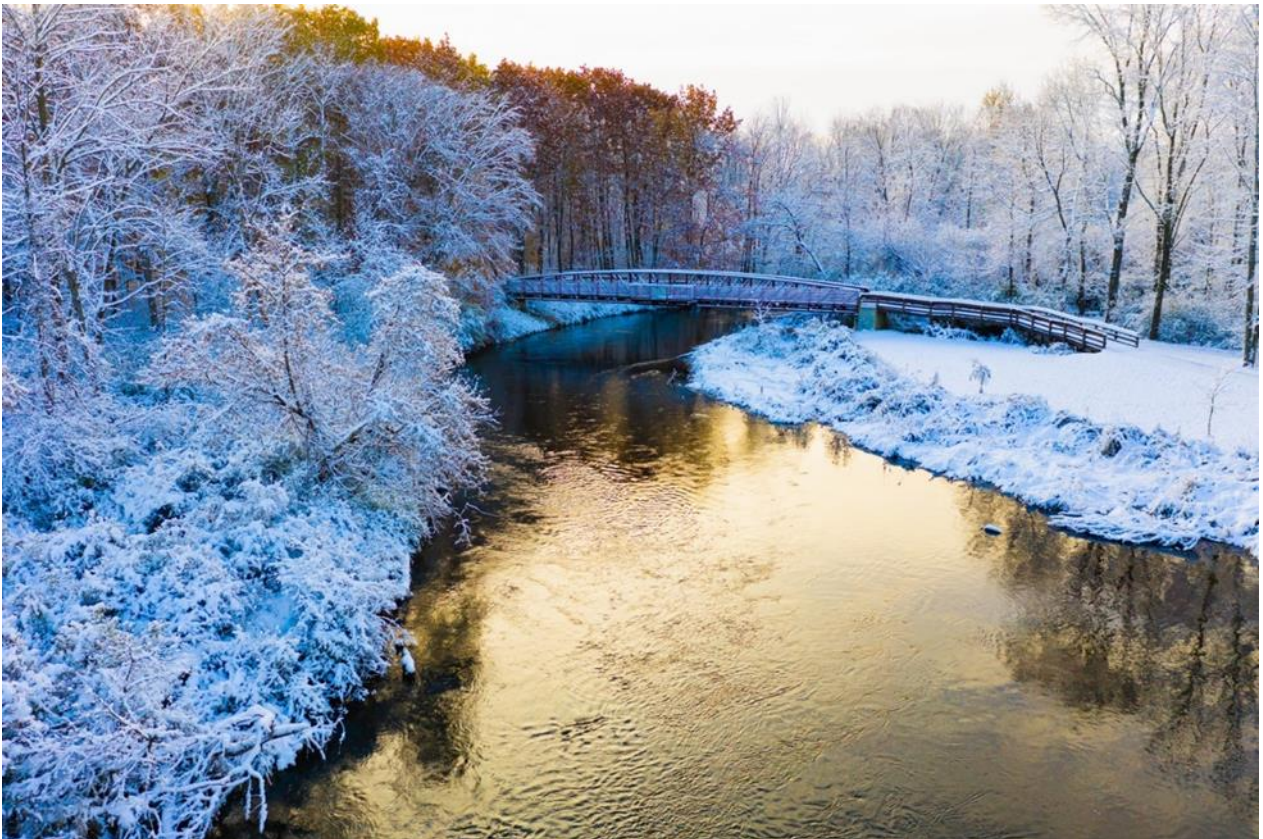
Centrally located in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, [Mount Pleasant](#) is a city of over 21,000 permanent residents and is the county seat of Isabella County (population 70,000). This region has a population of 400,000+ and includes nearby Bay, Midland, and Saginaw Counties. The area is easily accessible via US Highway 20 and Interstate 127 and is served by five major airports within a two-hour radius.

CMU is proud to have a strong, historic, and cooperative relationship with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Mount Pleasant has more than 3,000 enrolled members.

Historic downtown Mount Pleasant has more than 100 locally owned businesses. Enjoy specialty shops, art galleries, lively bars, fine dining, and events such as holiday parades, art installations, and movie and concert series.

More than 15 local parks provide opportunities for hiking, picnicking, kayaking, fishing, swimming, sledding, cross-country skiing, and creative outdoor play for children. Golfers have access to almost a dozen courses within a few miles of the city center. Isabella County is home to nearly 1,000 local farms. Purchase homegrown produce at the farmers market or visit one of several U-pick farms.

Enjoy performances from national touring comedians and musicians, try your hand at the gaming tables, or splash in the family-friendly waterpark at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort.



How to Apply

Greenwood Asher & Associates is assisting Central Michigan University in this search. Applications and nominations are now being accepted. For a full application package, please submit a cover letter and CV. Submission of materials as PDF attachments is strongly encouraged. The search will be conducted with a commitment to confidentiality for candidates until finalists are selected. Initial screening of applications will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made.

Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to Jim Johnsen and Ann Bailey with Greenwood Asher & Associates:

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CMU, an AA/EO institution, strongly and actively strives to increase diversity and provide equal opportunity within its community. CMU does not discriminate against persons based on age, color, disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, sex, sex-based stereotypes, sexual orientation, transgender status, veteran status or weight. (see <http://cmich.edu/ocrie>)

The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from Central Michigan University documents and personal interviews and is believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and faculty situations govern.