

# RITA FARLOW

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Communications professional with 25 years of experience and progressive levels of leadership in journalism, marketing and strategic communications. Leads of a team of 20+ to strategize, plan, execute and measure marketing and communications plans and initiatives for a large, suburban college of nearly 2,400 employees and 45,000 students across 11 learning sites.

## EXPERIENCE

**JULY 1, 2022 – PRESENT**

**ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE**

Leads the Marketing and Strategic Communications department and serves as the college's Public Information Officer. Supervises a team of 20+ and manages a budget of \$2.5+ million. Responsible for advancing the college's brand, and leading strategic marketing initiatives, as well as management of leadership and crisis communications, and public and media relations. Serves on the President's Cabinet.

- Oversees the planning, development, implementation and assessment of collegewide marketing and communication strategies, across multiple platforms.
- Directs marketing, communications, PR and public information staff to include assigning and prioritizing work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained and following College policies and procedures; maintaining a safe and healthy working environment; and making hiring, performance/disciplinary and termination decisions.
- Develops and oversees multiple budgets and grants; allocates resources as necessary; reviews and approves justifications for budget items; directs the monitoring and control of expenditures.
- Works with Executive Leadership and stakeholders throughout the College to determine goals and objectives; facilitates, leads, and participates in meetings, proceedings, and committees; represents the department and College at external functions; serves as a liaison between departments, external organizations, the general public, and other agencies.
- Prepares and/or reviews reports, contracts, proposals and studies; makes recommendations on a wide variety of administrative or management policies.

**JULY 1, 2018 – JUNE 30, 2022**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE**

Led the Marketing and Strategic Communications department and served as the college's Public Information Officer. Supervised a team of 20+ and maintained a budget of \$2.5+ million. Responsible for advancing the college's brand, and leading strategic marketing initiatives, as well as management of leadership and crisis communications, and public and media relations. Served on the President's Cabinet.

- Oversaw the planning, development, implementation and assessment of collegewide marketing and communication strategies, across multiple platforms.

- Directed marketing, communications, PR and public information staff to include assigning and prioritizing work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained and following College policies and procedures; maintaining a safe and healthy working environment; and making hiring, performance/disciplinary and termination decisions.
- Developed and oversaw multiple budgets and grants; allocated resources as necessary; reviewed and approved justifications for budget items; directed the monitoring and control of expenditures.
- Prepared and/or reviewed reports, contracts, proposals and studies; made recommendations on a wide variety of administrative or management policies.

**SEPTEMBER 2014 – JUNE 2018**

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE**

Led strategic communications projects and initiatives for the college, including oversight of all content development. Supervised a team of five employees. Served as the college’s Public Information Officer. Responsible for all marketing and collegewide strategic communication content, including management of leadership and crisis communications, and public and media relations. (Served as interim Executive Director, August 2017-June 2018.)

- Worked with internal stakeholders to determine communications goals to support projects, initiatives, events, etc.
- Developed and led the implementation of communications plans to assist faculty and staff in achieving established project goals.
- Oversaw all public and media relations, and emergency/crisis communications as the College’s Public Information Officer.
- Oversaw content creation for strategic communication and marketing, including the College’s enrollment funnel.
- Wrote, edited and published content across multiple platforms.
- Created content, including letters, talking points and remarks, for College leadership.

**FEBRUARY 2012 – SEPTEMBER 2014**

**COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS**

Led multimedia content creation for the district’s Communications Department.

- Created and executed communications plans for schools and departments.
- Wrote, edited and published written, digital and video content on multiple traditional and digital platforms.
- Assisted with leadership communications for the Superintendent, Director of Communications and Public Information Officer.
- Wrote the district’s newsletter and weekly updates for the School Board.
- Ran the district’s newsroom website.
- Led multiple high-profile communications projects including: the new K-13 teacher evaluation system, the Pinellas County Schools Referendum, and a rebranding of Pinellas Virtual School.
- Served on various committees, including a website task force that led to the creation of a new site (became certified in the district’s content management system).

**DECEMBER 1998 – FEBRUARY 2012**

**REPORTER AND EDITORIAL ASSISTANT, TAMPA BAY TIMES**

Conducted research and interviews, wrote and edited articles, and took photos for daily stories for publication in print and online.

- Covered multiple subject areas, including municipalities, education, general assignment and public safety (more than a dozen agencies from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office in Largo to Tarpon Springs Police and Fire departments in North Pinellas).
- Searched and analyzed court records, police reports, medical records and a variety of additional documentation.
- Cultivated relationships with sources.
- Conducted research and interviews; verified sources and facts; gathered information first-hand.
- Generated story ideas.
- Reviewed articles for accuracy, proper grammar and AP style.
- Synthesized complex information.
- Covered breaking news stories.
- Wrote multiple stories per day on deadline.

## EDUCATION

MAY 2007

**MASTER OF ARTS, MASS COMMUNICATIONS**, USF ST. PETERSBURG

DECEMBER 2001

**BACHELOR OF ARTS, ENGLISH**, VIRGINIA TECH

## SKILLS

- Marketing theory and strategy
- Budget planning and management
- Internal and external communications
- Brand management
- Strategic planning
- Crisis communications
- Public and media relations
- Journalism