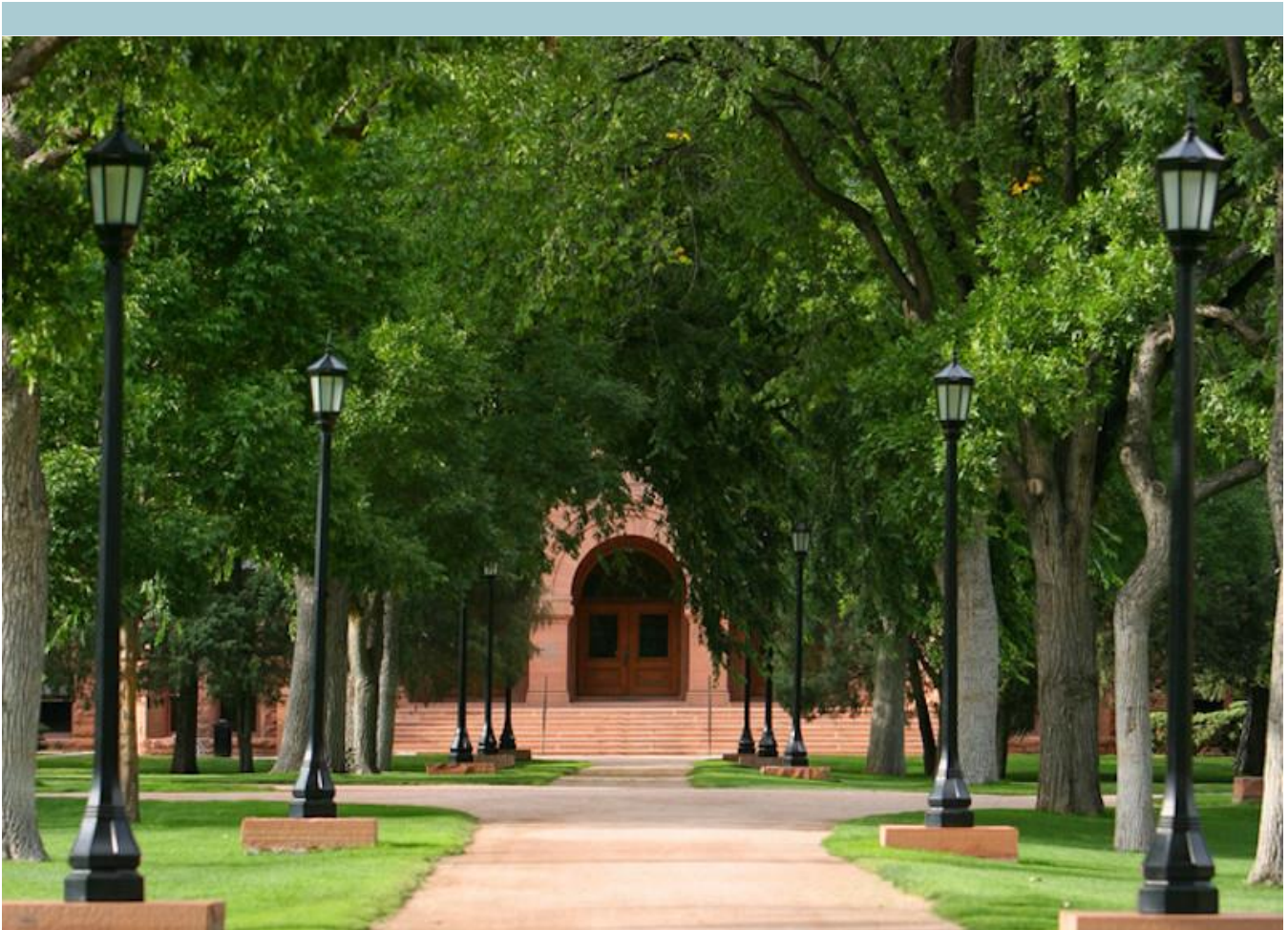




Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing

Leadership Profile

Summer 2024



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

[Colorado College](#), one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges, seeks a Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing to serve as the next chief marketing and communications officer who will develop and lead an innovative, research-based multichannel messaging, marketing, and brand management plan for the College. The Vice President joins Colorado College (CC) at an exciting time as the campus celebrates the College's Sesquicentennial ([150th anniversary](#)) and continues work on high-level strategic planning focused on the student experience and on capital projects that will transform the academic experience. The Vice President will bolster this historic period by capturing the story of CC through the collective voice of its complex communities, both internal and external, helping to ensure that at its Tercentenary (300th anniversary), the College will boast an exceptional chronicle to reflect upon.

Colorado College is a private, four-year liberal arts college of about 2,300 undergraduates and located on a beautiful 99-acre campus in downtown Colorado Springs. The only institution of its kind in the Rocky Mountain region, CC is known as a community of forward-thinking innovators and pioneers. It was the first college in the country to make a public commitment to antiracism in 2019 and is renowned for its Block Plan, a unique and intensive academic structure wherein students take one class per 3.5-week block. Established in the late 1960s, the Block Plan provides students with a vast array of experiential and immersive learning opportunities.

An integral member of the [President's Cabinet](#), the Vice President will lead the Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing alongside [Interim President Manya Whitaker](#), whose interim presidency will continue through June 2026. Since joining the College in 2011, Dr. Whitaker has served CC through multiple critical roles that have given her a broad and deep understanding of CC and its mission. In addition to serving as an esteemed member of the CC faculty and as Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff to President L. Song Richardson, she has held the positions of Crown Faculty Center Director, Director of Graduate Studies, Chair of the Education Department, and Interim Director of the Butler Center. Dr. Whitaker is deeply committed to the College, its future, and the strategic impact of communications and marketing on the institution's success.

The Vice President leads a team of 17 talented and committed centralized staff responsible for telling the CC story with a rich and authentic voice and representing the CC brand. In addition, the Vice President collaborates closely with the Vice Presidents for Advancement and Enrollment, in addition to other divisional and departmental leaders, and oversees the management of multiple contracted agencies. The Vice President will serve as a culture carrier and ensure a unified vision for communications and marketing that delivers powerful, cohesive, and integrated messaging and storytelling, enhances the CC brand, and furthers the goals of the entire College by leveraging partnerships and resources.

The Vice President will serve as a thought partner with colleagues across campus, collaborating to forecast, set short and long-term strategic priorities, and to ensure outcomes and deliverables meet shared expectations. In addition, the leader will optimize earned media, proactively address reputational risk management, and lead a collaborative and coordinated team that will increase Colorado College's brand stature and global awareness.

Candidates must have at least ten years of progressive leadership experience in marketing and/or communications in an education, not-for-profit, government, corporate, and/or industry environment and at least five years of supervisory responsibility. A bachelor's degree in marketing, journalism, communications, or related field is required. Master's degree and prior experience in a private liberal arts institution is preferred.

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

The Role of the Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing

The Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing oversees all communications, research-based messaging, marketing, and brand management for Colorado College and works closely with the President's Office and the President's Cabinet to oversee and execute long-term and annual divisional strategic planning aligned with the President's vision. Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Strategic Leadership

- Collaborate with the President's Cabinet to create long-term divisional strategic plans and yearly updates aligned with the President's vision.
- Actively support the College's commitment to being an antiracist institution by understanding, engaging with, and promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity in the College community.



Communications and Marketing

- Provide strategic leadership for integrated marketing and communications, overseeing staff and cross-campus departmental collaboration and coordination.
- Create an authentic public relations strategy to build upon and enhance the College's brand and reputation, attract prospective students, and build relationships with alumni, prospective donors, and other key constituencies.
- Develop and execute comprehensive branding strategies, crisis communication plans, and media relations activities.
- Utilize data-driven decision-making for consistent, unified messaging in support of the College's brand.
- Demonstrate commitment to antiracism and environmental sustainability in all activities.
- Manage department plans, budgets, and resource allocation to support operations.

Opportunities and Expectations

The Vice President will be responsible for advancing marketing and communication efforts to increase institutional visibility by executing a brand strategy and public relations campaigns. In addition, the Vice President will be expected to prioritize the following agenda items:

Provide vision and leadership.

The Vice President is responsible for ongoing staffing and operational evaluation that ensures departmental effectiveness and for addressing developmental opportunities through appropriate channels. Additionally, the Vice President will engage in data-driven marketing analysis to measure the efficacy of messaging and segmentation efforts to support the most efficient and effective use of financial resources.

The Vice President will lead by example, encouraging meaningful collaboration with campus partners who have communications and marketing duties within their academic and administrative departments. This includes key staff within the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College and CC Athletics.

In addition, the Vice President will have the opportunity to inspire and develop department staff, creating pathways for professional growth and career advancement. This team is particularly interested in a leader who will foster a culture of collaboration, including strategic planning. Concurrently, the Vice President will set clear goals, objectives, and metrics for performance conversations. The Vice President will model the highest standards of collegiality, transparency, ethics, discretion, integrity, and partnership in their leadership of the unit.

Strengthen the College's brand position.

The incoming Vice President will create and implement a persuasive and unified narrative of Colorado College's impact across all segments of the CC community, including prospective and current students and families, alums, faculty, and staff. The Vice President must ensure a coherent, focused, and aligned brand narrative with consistent and clear messaging across the entire institution. This cohesive messaging will guide internal communications, marketing, media, and public relations. In addition, the Vice President will be a skilled leader who uses influence and goodwill to ensure the entire campus is dedicated to following campus-wide marketing and communications policies, procedures, and guidelines in an effort to unify brand messaging and visual alignment.

The Vice President will join a team of institutional leaders on an in-progress branding project to strengthen Colorado College's differentiated value proposition and develop a strategic marketing plan to align the brand position and effectively connect to target audiences. The leader will bring guidance and insight to this multi-year partnership with a higher education branding agency and will lead the implementation phases of this work.

The next Vice President will work to cultivate a deeper awareness and appreciation for the College's academic and athletic excellence, service orientation, and deep engagement with the arts. This leader will also play a key role in managing the public perception of the College, elevating the institution's reputation, and deploying the resources, staff, and creative energy of the team to highlight the College's accomplishments and pride points.

Manage media issues and inquiries.

The Vice President will build trusting relationships with local and national media contacts, anticipate and pursue opportunities to respond to challenges and capitalize on earned media to highlight the College's accomplishments. As higher education continues to operate at the center of a wide range of sometimes controversial or difficult public policy, equity, and free speech issues, the Vice President will play a central role in crisis and issues management and leading responses to unanticipated and often very public issues.

Moreover, the Vice President should bring deep experience and strategic perspective to provide sound advice to the President and College leaders on managing sensitive public issues in ways that protect the integrity and reputation of the institution. The Vice President must exercise discretion and good judgment in these high-pressure situations, develop and maintain crisis communications plans, and conduct training and exercise those plans regularly as part of proactive response preparation.

Advance an institutional culture of antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Colorado College is committed to becoming an antiracist institution. The new Vice President will work across the College to ensure relationships and communications that integrate multiple voices and life perspectives that respect all persons.

This new leader will support processes for hiring, developing, and retaining staff who reflect the diversity of Colorado College's students and faculty. They will contribute significantly to Colorado College's efforts to be an inclusive antiracist community and foster further integration and collaboration in support of diversity and inclusivity across the division and the College. In doing so, the leader will help to fulfill Colorado College's mission and will infuse these values into all aspects of the Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing planning and decision making.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing will be a forward-thinking marketing strategist who believes in storytelling to build engagement across audiences. Utilizing superior communications and interpersonal and relationship-building skills, the Vice President will ensure a unified vision for communications and marketing that delivers powerful and cohesive integrated messaging to enhance the brand and further the goals of the entire College.

No aspect of the successful Vice President's qualities is more important than a deeply felt, highly personal attachment to Colorado College's core values and mission. Institutional affinity should be combined with the requisite leadership attributes, particularly creativity, diplomacy, discretion, decisiveness, courage of convictions, a high level of emotional intelligence, and a sense of humor. Above all, the Vice President will share the College's determination to pursue excellence, always and in all things.



Education

- Bachelor's degree with a background in marketing, journalism, communications, or related field. Master's degree is preferred.

Knowledge and Experience

- At least ten years of progressive leadership experience in brand marketing and/or communications in education, not-for profit, government, business, and/or industry with a minimum of five years of supervisory responsibilities. Prior higher education marketing and communications preferred with an understanding of current issues/challenges, or from a values-driven, non-profit organization.
- A strong background in utilizing market analysis, quantitative and qualitative research, and complex data-set analysis to inform the development of successful integrated marketing strategies.
- Demonstrated successful track record of driving integrated marketing strategies and programs that utilize digital and direct marketing, SEO/SEM, social media, content marketing, web presence, mobile, channel selection and optimization, creative direction, PR, and earned and paid media.

- Demonstrated acquisition and audience engagement experience with an excellent understanding of how to build relationships between an organization and targeted constituents.
- Experience in digital marketing and technology and the ability to develop and implement strategic communications and research-based marketing plans.
- Successful record of accomplishment leading a collaborative process to implement and realize the potential of a strategic brand platform.
- Expertise in making presentations, public speaking, and negotiating with all key constituents and a commitment to an understanding and awareness of national dialogue and sensitivities are required.
- A demonstrable commitment to and record of vigorous leadership in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion and a proven exceptional ability to establish and maintain positive working relationships with diverse constituents from different cultural backgrounds.
- A history removing barriers in support of inclusive policies and practices, success in hiring and developing diverse talent, demonstrated results in fostering an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual uniqueness are valued and leveraged to achieve organizational goals.
- Demonstrated experience leading others toward shared vision and goals, from forming a team that possesses balanced capabilities to setting its mission, values, and norms by holding colleagues accountable individually and as a group for results. Demonstrated experience executing strategic marketing and communications plans with positive, measurable results.
- Prior experience with and managing agency relationships to advance strategic initiatives.
- Deep knowledge and understanding of tools and platforms available to deliver digital segmented marketing communications.

Skills and Abilities

- Skills that demonstrate success in achieving company goals/metrics, leading and building relationships with cross-functional teams, marketing and communications campaigns, leading a team that exhibits core values of customer service, user-experience, and metrics, staff development, budgeting, research, and customer service is required. Experience in digital marketing and technology and the ability to develop and implement strategic communications and research-based marketing plans.
- Relentlessness in the pursuit of success, tenacity in overcoming barriers and obstacles to that success, and the judgment necessary to balance success against its various costs.
- Inclusive decision-making, transparent communications, and ability to build trusting, collegial working relationships with constituents with diverse needs and interests; a relationship-based leadership style that values teamwork and collaboration.
- The ability to inclusively manage, motivate, and develop synergies and a sense of team among dedicated and diverse professional staff.
- A mentoring mindset to effectively nurture and support staff while holding high standards, modeling accountability, and valuing all contributions.



Institutional Overview

A private, four-year liberal arts College with roughly 2,300 undergraduates, Colorado College is located on a 99-acre campus in downtown Colorado Springs. Best known for its innovative Block Plan, where students take, and professors teach, only one class at a time, Colorado College offers a new perspective on core classes and standard curriculum. The College creates small and supportive learning communities with every block and gives students the time to participate fully, without distractions.

Colorado College students are scholars, poets, inventors, musicians, and performers. They come from every state in the nation and more than 25 countries. They come from a wide range of ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and their interests are as diverse as their backgrounds. Much like the pioneering individuals who formed Colorado Springs, Colorado College students are independent-minded adventurers who love a challenge.

Colorado College Undergraduate Community

- 2,300 students from 49 states (including DC)
- 42% men
- 55.4% women
- Other: 2.5%
- 25.9% American ethnic minorities
- 5.2% international (non-U.S. citizens)

Vision and Mission

"At Colorado College, our goal is to provide the finest liberal arts education in the country. Drawing upon the adventurous spirit of the Rocky Mountain West, we challenge students, one course at a time, to develop those habits of intellect and imagination that will prepare them for learning and leadership throughout their lives."

Scientia et Disciplina: "Learning Through Hard Work"

At Colorado College, we are a thriving community of learners who embrace the hard work it takes to think, teach, and do differently. We challenge our own perspectives and the status quo. We aspire to identify and enroll a diverse group of talented students through a highly selective and unique process that does not rely on traditional metrics. We measure student success not by who students are when they enroll but by who they are when they graduate. Welcome to a place that produces leaders with the courage to forge their own paths.

Academics

CC's breadth of educational options distinguishes it from other schools. With 42 majors, 30 departmental minors, and 24 thematic minors, a liberal arts education at Colorado College is a complex conversation among people who care about what it means to learn. More information can be found [here](#).

The Block Plan

The [Block Plan](#) allows students to focus their energies solely on what they want to do. Award-winning professors can give their full attention to that one course and are creative in the ways they encourage student learning and provide more immersive experiences. Additionally, the Block Plan allows world-renowned industry leaders to come to campus and teach.

By taking one class at a time for three and a half weeks, typically meeting each morning from 9 a.m. until noon, students' time is spent learning deeply. One block at Colorado College is equivalent to one semester's worth of material at another school. The singular academic focus of the Block Plan allows students to create flexibility in their schedule, pursuing their own course of study as well as traditional ones, leaving ample time each day for their passions outside of class.

Faculty

Colorado College's 10:1 student-to-faculty ratio ensures that professors and pupils have the privilege of face-to-face interaction and in-class discussion. Of Colorado College's 190 full-time professors, 98.8% hold the highest degree in their field. Additional information about Colorado College faculty can be found [here](#).

Athletics

Colorado College has a long and proud tradition of intercollegiate athletics. Its goal is to maintain an athletics program on a level consistent with its standing as one of the top private liberal arts colleges in the country. Student athletes make up 20% of the student population.

Colorado College is a member of the NCAA and is one of only a handful of colleges in the nation to offer both Division I and Division III sports. Colorado College has 17 intercollegiate teams – 15 Division III programs and two Division I programs.

Men's ice hockey competes as a member of the National Collegiate Hockey Conference (NCHC). Women's soccer competes as a member of the Mountain West Conference. Women's lacrosse is a member of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. All other Division III programs are members of the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC).

Leadership

Dr. Manya Whitaker, Interim President



Dr. Manya Whitaker is Interim President-Elect at Colorado College, where she will assume the Presidency on July 1, 2024, for two years. She previously served as Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff, serving as an extension of and principal aide to the President. In that role, she assisted the President in managing sensitive and confidential issues, oversaw a variety of cross-divisional and executive initiatives, and provided critical direction and leadership to optimize strategic priorities such as the College's antiracism commitment.

Dr. Whitaker is also an Associate Professor of Education at Colorado College, and prior to moving into administration, she taught classes on social and political issues in education. She is a developmental educational psychologist with expertise in adolescent identity formation and motivation. She has authored four books and more than 20 book chapters and articles focused on her research, including "[Public School Equity: Educational Leadership for Justice](#)," "[Schooling Multicultural Teachers: A Guide for Program Assessment and Professional Development](#),"

["Learning from the Inside-Out: Child Development and School Choice,"](#) and "[Counternarratives from Women of Color Academics: Bravery, Vulnerability, and Resistance](#)" (co-editor).

Over 13 years at Colorado College, her roles have also included Interim Director of the Butler Center, Director of the Crown Faculty Center, and Director of Graduate Studies and Chair of Education.

Dr. Whitaker received her doctorate in developmental psychology from Vanderbilt University and her B.A. in educational psychology from Dartmouth College. In addition to her position at Colorado College, she has worked as an independent educational consultant since 2009. She established Blueprint Educational Strategies in 2013, working with minoritized and marginalized families on educational advocacy and partnering with school districts and state departments of education to support teachers and administrators in delivering high quality experiences to all learners and their families.

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Colorado College is located just blocks from downtown Colorado Springs, in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Life at Colorado College is busy and fast-paced, but it is just a slice of the vibrant community that comprises the Pikes Peak Region.



"The Springs" in a Nutshell

- Elevation 6,035 feet
- Population 498,879
- Founded 1871 by General William J. Palmer
- Averages 300 days of sunshine per year
- 444 miles of biking and hiking trails, including the Pikes Peak trailhead
- 75 miles from Denver and within three hours of several national parks and several ski resorts
- Located at the foot of 14,115-foot Pikes Peak, which inspired Katharine Lee Bates to write "*America the Beautiful*"

Within 15 minutes of campus:

- Garden of the Gods Park
- Shopping and hiking in Manitou Springs
- Division 1 Colorado College hockey games at the new Ed Robson Arena on campus
- U.S. Olympic Training Center and the Olympic and Paralympic Museum
- The Pikes Peak Trailhead
- Restaurants, coffee shops, art galleries, and shopping downtown
- Professional soccer and other events at the new Switchback Stadium downtown

Within an hour or more of campus:

- Concerts at the nation's best natural venue, Red Rocks Amphitheatre
- Boutique shopping in Cherry Creek, Larimer Square, or 16th Street Mall in Denver
- Professional sports (Colorado Rockies, Denver Nuggets, Denver Broncos, Colorado Avalanche, Colorado Rapids)
- Gold-medal fly fishing on the South Platte River
- Denver museums and galleries



Procedure for Candidacy

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

WittKieffer is assisting Colorado College in this search. This search will remain open until an appointment is made. Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Sarah Palmer and Melissa Fincher
ColoradoCollegeVPSCM@wittkieffer.com

Compensation Range: \$215,000 - \$230,000

Benefits: <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/humanresources/benefits/index.html>

At Colorado College, we are dedicated to dismantling systemic and institutional discrimination. We embrace diversity and support a community where all individuals, without exception, feel valued, empowered, and treated equitably. Guided by the College's Antiracism Plan, we work to foster an equitable and inclusive environment for all who teach, learn, work, and live in our community.

Colorado College aims to provide the finest liberal arts education in the country. As a leading institution in higher education, we strive for inclusive excellence in access to, and development and delivery of, outstanding learning opportunities and success for our diverse community of individuals who teach, learn, and work at the College. We pursue the equal opportunity of individuals to fully participate in our mission.

Colorado College is committed to equal opportunity for all employees and applicants in all aspects of the employment relationship—including (but not limited to) recruiting, hiring, promotions, compensation, benefits, and access to training—without regard to race, creed, color, caste, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity or gender expression, perceived gender, sexual preferences, and sexual orientation), disability, marital status, veteran status, age, genetic information, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law.