



Rancho Santiago Community College District Services Administrative Unit Review

District Communications and Government Relations 2023-2025

I. **Department Mission Statement:** *(Please provide a mission statement for your unit.)*

District Communications & Government Relations provides leadership, planning, and implementation of strategic and creative communication tools to promote, elevate, and reinforce the Rancho Santiago Community College District's brand and reputation.

II. **Functions and services:** *(Please provide the basic functions and services for your unit.)*

Key Functions and Services:

- Elevating the RSCCD message to key constituents, including but not limited to:
 - Internal: Chancellor's Office, Board of Trustees, Faculty, Staff, Students
 - External: Elected Officials, Community Leaders, News Media, State and Regional Partners, Businesses
- Enhancing the RSCCD brand through creative and innovative storytelling through graphic design, photography, videos, social media, publications, and web content.
- Promoting the RSCCD core values with strategic public relations and marketing efforts through paid advertising, earned media (news media), social media and owned media.
- Protecting the RSCCD name and reputation through immediate and accurate communications amid uncertainties and crises.

III. Customers and recipients of services: (*Who are the customers/recipients of your unit?*)

The primary customers and recipients of District Communications services can be broken up into two groups:

External:

- Government and Elected Officials
- News Media
- Community Leaders and Members
- Local School Districts

Internal

- Faculty
- Staff
- District Employees
- College PIOs

IV. Staffing: *(Please summarize the status of your staffing since the last planning cycle and concerns you may have.)*

The District Communications Office returned with the hiring of a permanent Chief Communications Officer in mid-2023, with some calling it the first time that position was filled in 12 years. Since the last planning cycle, several staff members have left and or taken the Supplemental Retirement Plan (SRP) option, thus leaving the team thinner than before. These losses included **eight (8)** staff members and a **0.5** part time person.

- Manager of Publications and Electronic Media
- Two Desktop Publishing Technician
- One Administrative Clerk
- One Reprographic Technician
- Digital Media Specialist
- One Graphic Designer
- One and a half SAC Quick Copy Publications Assistant (added Fall 2024)

Since the last planning cycle, the team has worked valiantly to meet the needs and demands of the District and the two colleges. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed demand, but today, the jobs and requests match and surpass pre-COVID numbers.

As a comparison with our neighboring districts and their staffing needs in their communications office, we are one of the least resourced while sporting the largest enrollment and services in the county.

Communications Staffing Comparison with Neighboring Districts

RSCCD:

- Chief Communications Officer only

South Orange CCD

- Chief Communications Officer
- Communications Specialist/New Media Specialist

North Orange CCD

- District Director of Public and Governmental Affairs
- Communications Coordinator

Coast CCD

- District Director Public Affairs and Communications
- Public Affairs Coordinator

BUDGET REQUEST

For the 2024/25 cycle, only one (1) staff position is needed to meet growing demands and pivot the District Communications Office is moving from a reactive department to a proactive strategic force.:

Communications Specialist

This will be a key individual working with the CCO to manage communications projects and with our colleges to profile and promote our faculty and their respective programs. The focus of this position will be elevating the brand and reputation of the District and the Colleges to key external constituents such as the news media, elected officials, and key community leaders.

The Communications Specialist will work with district and college researchers to identify the collective perception and impression in our various communities and to drive it toward our desired reputation, as reflected in our strategic directions. This role will work with the CCO in providing content for our websites, propelling the work of our students and programs on social media, and integrating the work of our colleges to communicate a cohesive and unified brand to our external audiences.

V. Budgets: (Please summarize the status of your department budget and concerns you may have.)

District Communications (formerly Public Affairs and Publications) have always worked within a streamlined budget. The Covid years and SRP retirements further diminished the small staff, furthering the struggle to manage the growing demands for graphic and publication work orders.

The long-awaited hiring of the District's Chief Communications Officer has finally provided a vision for developing a strategic communications direction. With the addition of two temporary hires, there is evidence of greater and more collaborative communication efforts from the District and the two colleges. Regular communications from the Chancellor, news stories on the programs and accomplishments at the colleges, profiles of our faculty, and recognition from local and statewide leaders have seen a dramatic increase in the hires. Unfortunately, this momentum cannot be sustained without creating permanent positions to leverage what we're doing with strategic and timely communications.

Without a Communications Specialist, our communications efforts to expand the RSCCD Brand and the brand for SAC and SCC will be limited.

Examples of what we will be ***missing and/or limited*** without this position:

- Updated and fresh news stories for RSCCD.edu website and banners.
- Reviewing RSCCD.edu website for outdated and obsolete pages
- Ensuring data integrity on information about RSCCD on our websites.
- Tracking and promoting RSCCD activities on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram.
- Tracking and informing leadership of potential controversial and negative stories about RSCCD, SAC, and SCC
- Promoting SAC and SCC social media posts to RSCCD audiences
- Creating human interest stories for RSCCD homepage and news media.
- Profiling outstanding and unique programs for RSCCD homepage and local news media.
- Creating faculty profiles for SAC and SCC experts for news media and promotional materials.
- Aligning RSCCD stories with the Board of Trustees Strategic Directions.

VI. Department Assessment: Please provide internal assessment of your department (by all unit staff) and external assessment (from data provided by the District Services Satisfaction Survey, as well as other sources that your department would like to use). What recommendations would you like to bring to the District's attention?

a) **Internal Assessment:** Having observed our department over the past six months, here are the internal assessments.

- **Graphics:** This is a definite strength of the District, and the services provided to our college and centers are invaluable. Unfortunately, the demand for the service returned, if not surpassed, pre-Covid numbers while staffing decreased by 33%. Our Graphic Designers are not only asked to design flyers and brochures, schedules, and catalogs. They are also called to record and edit videos and serve as District photographers at key institutional events. Our unions are concerned with the workload demands and the well-being of staff members in meeting untenable deadlines and demands.
- **Reprographics:** The District currently operates with two individuals. We believe this is a reasonable number of staff to handle the workload. Even though some believe we are moving towards an electronic environment, the demand for printed materials has returned to pre-Covid levels with an increasing demand for banners and other services.
- **Web Content and Design:** The arrival of a new Content Management System (CMS) for all of District and College websites will be an enormous undertaking between ITS and District Communications. This multi-year process will require full integration of technology with institutional branding and communications. Our employees will soon be empowered to be their own content providers on their designated web pages, requiring consistent and timely support from both the ITS and Communications teams. One current member of the ITS team will transfer and work under District Communications to provide immediate support and expertise for non-technical web needs.
- **Social Media:** A renewed emphasis on social media began at the end of 2023 and the results were mind-boggling. The trajectory of interest on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram skyrocketed as interest and followers continued to be added. While the Colleges' social media targets student enrollment needs, the District's social media targets local and statewide leaders and influencers. State Chancellor Sonya Christian and other leaders have been engaging with RSCCD's content on social platforms, positioning RSCCD as a statewide leader in educating and training students. We were able to relaunch our social media accounts with the help of our two temporary hires and, as we grow in reach and influence, we will need

permanent people to sustain our growth and success in this area.

- **District Communications and Crisis Communications:** This department has spearheaded the Chancellor's desire to increase and enhance his vision and direction for the District. Since August, a regular "Message from the Chancellor" has been created by this office and sent from the Chancellor's office to all employees at the district and colleges. To not over-saturate the number of emails from his office, the Chancellor decided to adjust his weekly "Messages" to twice a month in February 2024. The CCO is the spokesperson and the news media's first point of contact for all crisis-related communications. The CCO works closely with the Chancellor, Campus Safety, the College Presidents, and Legal Counsel on issues that may jeopardize our reputation and/or place the district in a liable situation should it not be communicated accurately and effectively.
- **Government/Community Relations:** District Communications works closely with the RSCCD Board of Trustees, Chancellor, and Vice Chancellor Perez in advocating and elevating key bills and issues to our represented leaders. Attendance and involvement with businesses and leaders in Orange County build goodwill within our community. Additionally, our involvement in Sacramento and Washington DC increasingly heightens our access to much-needed earmarks and grants, especially during times when the State budget is impacted.

b) External Assessment:

Assessing District Communications and Government Relations takes into consideration services provided by three different areas and functions:

- Graphic Design
- Reprographics/Publications
- Chancellor and District Communications

Graphic Design and Reprographics/Publications:

Overall, external assessment is positive, with 50-60% of the District using services provided by these departments. The staff is helpful and works to provide graphics and printing needs quickly and accurately. Recent surveys have indicated strong support and recognition of the creative and progressive designs supporting the college's many initiatives. Over the past year, the challenge has been the lack of staff to meet the growing demand for graphics projects. Staffed by only one graphic designer last year to support

two colleges and the district was bound to cause delays and mistakes. The Graphics Manager had to step in and serve as a second graphic designer to meet ongoing demands. Not surprisingly, the surveys provided comments and feedback such as:

- Mary Law needs help!!! She should focus on her management role, but it seems she has taken on all classified responsibilities.
- Difficult to reach and non-responsive at times.
- Staff is kind, responsive, and respectful. The unit has been challenged with a reduced staff but serves RSCCD, SAC, and SCC well with what they have.
- Communication can be a little faulty but otherwise print orders are filled and information is conveyed as needed
- The department is talented in what it does, my concern is the turn-around time when requesting projects 6-8 weeks. This area needs support to meet the needs of both campuses and the district.

Our Reprographics Department, also known as Publications, provides printing and copying services for SAC, SCC, and the District. Staffed by two full-time and one part-time employee, they can effectively and efficiently serve the growing needs around them. The main challenge in Reprographics is the increasing cost of paper and ink. The prices charged-back to the department for reprographic services are often 50-75% below those found at Office Depot and Kinkos. There is a growing consensus on the need to update our pricing structure to reflect the growing cost of paper and ink.

Overall, the ratings for this area are positive with average to excellent ratings from 60% on up. Nevertheless, one in three respondents found our **Timeliness of Response** to be **Below Average to Poor**, indicating the need to improve upon this area in the upcoming year.

Chancellor and District Communications

The May 2023 survey did not include communications-related questions since it was distributed before the new Chief Communications Officer arrived. The survey results showed that staff helpfulness, knowledge, and services were very high. The one area that received nearly 25% below average to Poor scores was finding services not fitting the needs of respondents' areas.

The feedback and suggestions from respondents reinforced the message that staff service and knowledge were well received. There were, however, several comments on the lack of trust and low morale prevalent across the District.

I ascertain from these comments that a need exists for more and better communications from the Chancellor's office to mitigate some of these concerns.

c) Recommendations:

District Communications needs to be staffed to be a proactive voice for the Chancellor as we venture into a national and statewide model of excellence.

These staffing needs include but are not limited to:

- 1) Greater focus on branding and marketing the programs, faculty, and students across our District. We must market beyond enrollment and elevate our reputation and brand as a statewide and national leader to access state and federal support and funding.
- 2) Enhance our communications to keep up with today's audiences. We live in a visually-focused society where the preference lies more in watching than reading. To respond to this growing need, we want to establish video creation and development as a tool to reach today's audiences.
- 3) Increase productivity by creating greater efficiency. The surveys clearly communicated the need for better communication on projects submitted for graphics and reprographics services. Folks are generally happy with the work, but the time and the lack of project management and communication discourage many of our users.

Resource Type	Description	Resource Annual Cost Estimate	Reason for Request	Impact of Not Funding
			The district will continue to have a single dedicated resource for branding and communications on a district-wide basis which is not sufficient to meet our growing footprint of becoming not only a leader statewide but nationwide, as well. This is not a self-appointed recognition of leadership but demands a strategic plan of profiling and highlighting our excellence to local and national news media outlets and elected officials. There is a current gap at our colleges and at the district with promoting our faculty expertise and excellence beyond just to our internal staff and faculty. Additionally, as we grow as a district, information on our websites and marketing materials needs to be updated and factually accurate. The Communications Specialist will be tasked with reviewing our top-level and highest-profile pages to ensure that the information being disseminated to our students and community is accurate and updated.	
Classified	1. Communications Specialist	\$113,552.55	As the CCO continues to grow communications from the Chancellor and in the district, there is an ongoing opportunity to grow our brand and reputation by promoting our faculty and programs at our Colleges and Continuing Education Centers. Working alongside our PIOs, the Communications Specialist will meet with faculty to develop profile stories and develop a bank of experts to pitch to news media. The impact of this endeavor will further enhance our reputation as a statewide leader and establish our colleges as a destination workplace for future faculty members. Another reason for this position is to have a designated person at the district to review and update our websites to ensure information is factually updated and accurate especially as we begin the migration to a new Content Management System (CMS).	

RSCCD

2024-2025 Cost of Position

COST OF NEW POSITION - CLASSIFIED CONTRACT

POSITION TITLE	communication specialist		
GRADE & STEP	MONTHLY RATE	NO OF MONTHS	ANNUAL COST
	\$ 6,945.110	12	\$ 83,341.32

SALARY RELATED TAX/BENEFITS	BENEFIT RATE	BENEFIT COST	
PERS	27.050%	22,543.83	
SOCIAL SECURITY	6.200%	5,167.16	
MEDICARE	1.450%	1,208.45	
UNEMPLOYMENT	0.050%	41.67	
WORKERS COMP	1.500%	1,250.12	
ACTIVE RET. INS. COST	0.000%	-	
TOTAL TAX & BENEFIT COST	36.250%	\$ 30,211.23	\$ 30,211.23
TOTAL SALARY & BENEFIT COST			\$ 113,552.55

FRINGE BENEFITS COST	BENEFIT RATE	BENEFIT COST	
FRINGE BENEFITS (CSEA only)		1,500.00	
SOCIAL SECURITY	6.200%	93.00	
MEDICARE	1.450%	21.75	
UNEMPLOYMENT	0.050%	0.75	
WORKERS COMP	1.500%	22.50	
ACTIVE RET. INS. COST	0.000%	-	
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFIT COST	9.200%	\$ 1,638.00	\$ 1,638.00

INSURANCE BENEFITS			
LIFE INSURANCE (ANNUAL OR \$50,000 minimum)			
(Annual Life Insurance X \$0.075/1000 X 12 Months)	\$ 83,341.32	75.01	
MEDICAL INSURANCE (see below)			
TOTAL INSURANCE COST		75.01	\$ 75.01

TOTAL COST OF POSITION	\$ 115,265.56
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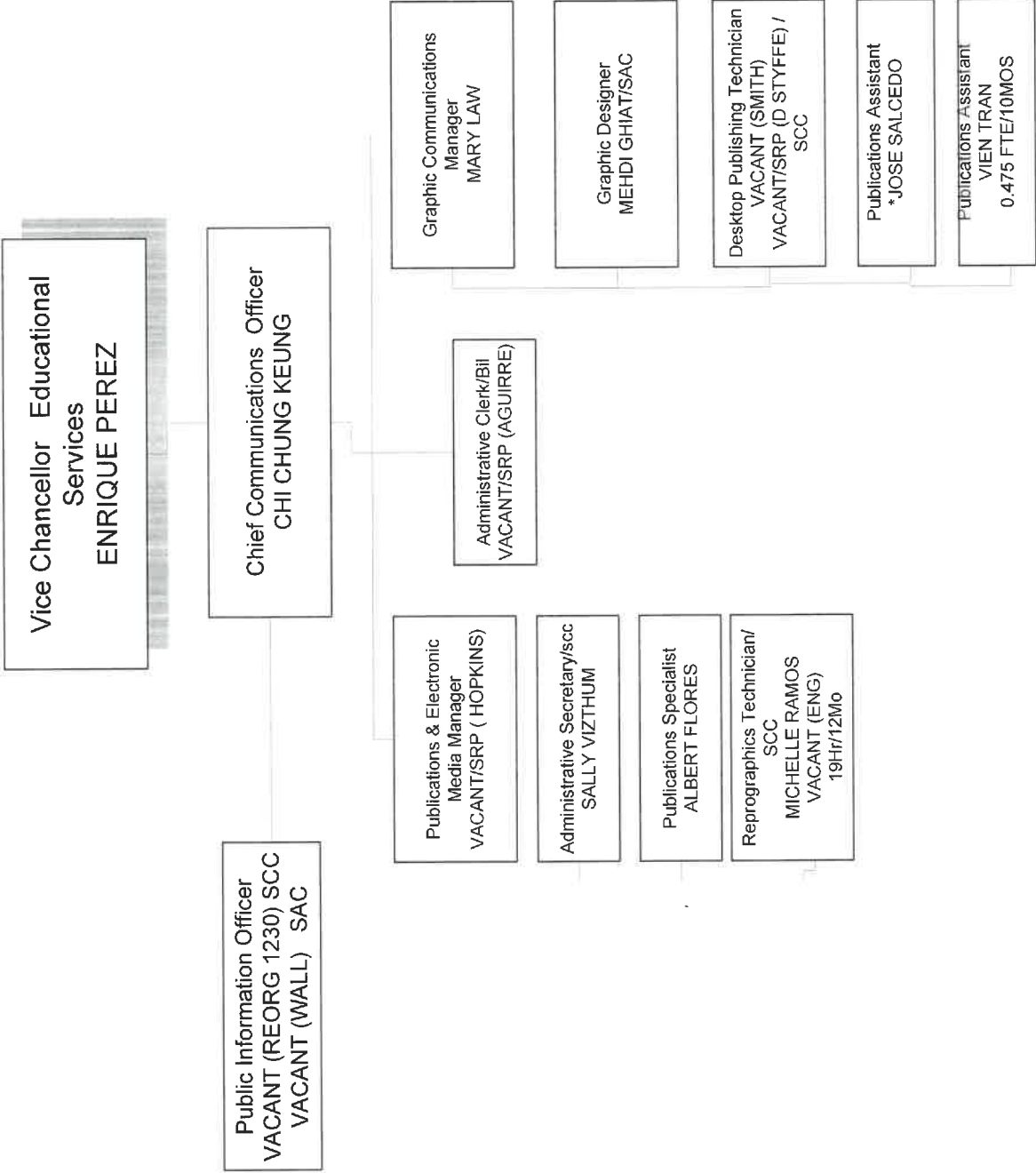
BENEFITS =	\$ 31,924.24
BENEFIT COST AS A PERCENT OF CONTRACT =	38.31%

CSEA	Max	39,153.71	23,467.26	AVERAGE
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NOTE: WHEN CALCULATING A VACANT POSITION PLEASE USE AVERAGE \$\$ FOR H&W

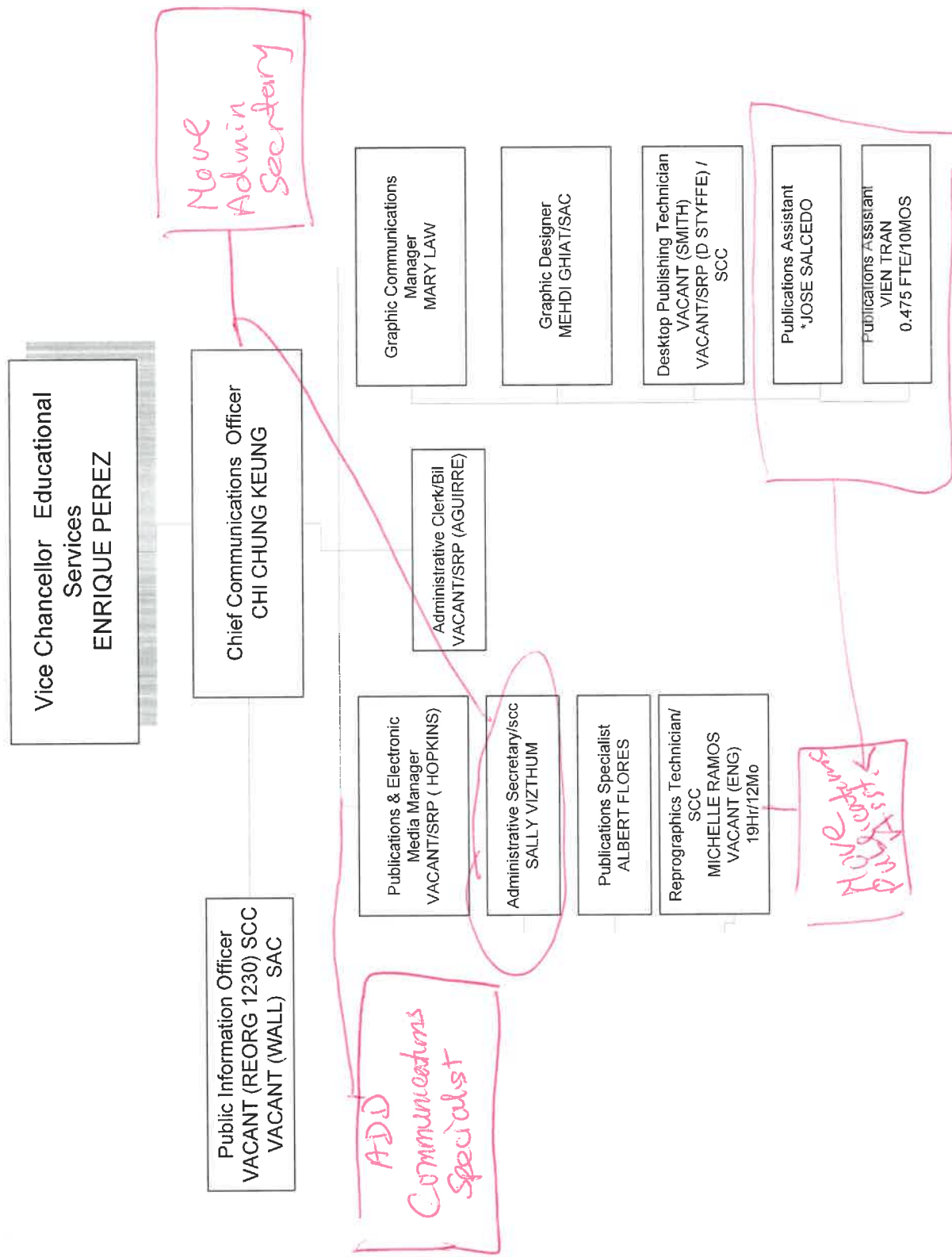
Current

Rancho Santiago Community College District
PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND PUBLICATIONS



~~Current~~
Proposed

Rancho Santiago Community College District PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND PUBLICATIONS



COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

CLASS SUMMARY

Under general direction, responsible for promoting and coordinating college communications strategies both internally and externally through effective communication and public relations strategies. Supports college's public relations and marketing efforts, providing counsel on strategies and tactics to the public affairs department director and college constituents.

REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES

Develop and implement public relations strategies/campaigns to promote the college on state and local levels; Research and analyze information through meetings and interviews for the development and distribution of various publications; write, edit and develop production timelines for brochures, newsletters and advertising; Prepare, write and distribute press materials concerning colleges to newspapers, radio and television outlets; interview faculty, staff, students and administrators as needed for publicity and promotional purposes; arrange for photography for publications and special events; write copy for brochures and speeches; coordinate the production and distribution of special publications and other communications vehicles; plan and direct promotional events designed to attract attention to the college or its services; responsible for coordination and oversight of college web content; coordinate information and photographs to create web pages and update existing ones; develop marketing and advertising strategies for specific programs and services on campus; cultivate and maintain effective working relationships with media representatives and community organizations to ensure positive coverage of the district; assist in the marketing planning process and with the production of specific marketing communications materials such as advertising or direct mail.

ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

This position reports to the designated manager of the public affairs and governmental relations department. In addition, the position has an informal reporting relationship with the college president.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATION GUIDE

Training and Experience

Bachelor's degree in communications, journalism or related field and three years writing/editorial experience. Experience in marketing is desirable.

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST CONT'D

Knowledge and Abilities

Knowledgeable in the tactics of media relations with strong written and verbal communication skills; familiar with principles of communications and media operations; English composition, Associated Press Style and editing; marketing strategy, audience segmentation and targeting techniques. Knowledge of word processing; desktop publishing, news-writing and editing.

Ability to research, interview, write and edit copy for informational and persuasive purposes; manage projects to produce various communication vehicles; work effectively with media representatives, employees and students; provide information to others within stated or implied bounds of district policy; function effectively under pressure and time constraints.

Skills: Computer literacy is essential as is the ability to manage multiple projects in a timely manner. Strong interpersonal skills.

License: A valid California Motor Vehicle Operator's license.