

KEITH PIERCE, APR

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PORTFOLIO
KeithPierceAPR.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Executive communications/PR/media relations management and counsel
- Internal/employee communications
- Award-winning written/video storytelling
- Marketing/branding strategy
- Award-winning social media strategy
- Crisis/reputation management
- Staff leadership/training/development
- Organizational spokesperson
- Community partnerships and engagement
- Speechwriting
- Photography/video/video editing
- Computer competency: **MICROSOFT:** *WORD, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher and SharePoint.* **ADOBE:** *Creative Cloud: InDesign, Photoshop, Premiere.* **OTHER:** *WordPress, Wix, Constant Contact, YouTube channel design*
- **VETERAN:** Former US Army officer (Captain): Air Defense and Public Affairs

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Strategic Communications & Public Relations

Queens University of Charlotte – Charlotte, NC

Jan. 2021 – Present

Effectively direct external public and media relations and internal communications for a private university serving nearly 2,500 graduate and undergraduate students.

- Lead earned media strategies to advance enrolment and other university priorities
- Produce high-level communications for the president, senior leadership team and board including talking points, speeches and important messages for students, staff and faculty
- Set the tone for messaging in all communications including presidential messages, press releases, news articles, media statements, social media, etc.
- Craft key messages and build relationships with diverse audiences, including news media, internal and external stakeholders, key industries and the community-at-large
- Successfully led workshops for staff and senior leaders including: "thought leadership PR," "media relations 101" and "writing for the brand."
- Manage media tracking, monitoring and monthly analysis reporting
- Manage direct reports including social media/PR manager and digital/web manager
- Serve as editorial director of *Queens Magazine*

Director of Public Affairs & Media Relations

Old Dominion University (ODU) – Norfolk, VA

2019 – 2021

Effectively managed the university's reputation and image through public relations and media relations functions.

- Formulated strategies, crafted messages and built relationships with diverse audiences, including news media, internal and external stakeholders, key industry and government constituents and the community-at-large
- Led the operation of the news and media relations team, including the conception, development, creation and dissemination of news, research and/or strategic communications and public relations and reputation management initiatives
- Managed media tracking, monitoring and monthly analysis reporting
- Served as editor of *InsideODU*, *Monarch Mailer*, and the university's official news site

Director of Communications & Marketing

Batten College of Engineering and Technology – ODU – Norfolk, VA 2017 – 2019
Verifiably established and implemented breakthrough communications and marketing strategies that successfully boosted the regional, national and international brand of the Batten College of Engineering and Technology (BCET).

- Provided public relations, marketing, advertising and communications counsel and guidance to the dean, associate deans and department chairs
- Established marketing priorities for six departments as well as the college as a whole.
- Immediately revised the BCET [website](#) and established a previously non-existent social media presence to include, [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Created the **first college newsletter in more than 5 years** – "[Illuminator](#)," – including concept, name, design, layout and interactive content. (*Monthly distribution reached more than 12 thousand*)
- Generated nearly **two dozen significant news stories** in the first 12 months – more than triple the previous year – for University channels as well as local and regional news media
- Provided extensive writing support to include news articles, news releases, ads, brochures, web content, video scripts, speeches and more
- **Reason for leaving:** Sought after for university-level position more aligned with experience

Communications and PR Consultant/Contractor/Trainer

Pierce Communications – Philadelphia, PA/Charlotte, NC off/on from 2004 – 2020
Offered PR, marketing, branding and media relations counsel/training, as well as content and writing support, to corporate, government, education, health care and nonprofit clients.

- Contracted to work with the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce to implement PR strategies and counsel to boost local, regional and national image of the Myrtle Beach area
- Leveraged relationships with key media, bloggers and influencers to push key messages
- Provided crisis/reputation management/training; including media, staff and board conflicts
- Through a series of training, effectively transformed a dysfunctional school board into a cohesive team, resulting in radically improved board meetings and media turnaround
- Executed an image campaign and open house for an urban middle school with declining enrollment. Realized 30% enrollment increase the following school year

Public Relations & Marketing Manager

Virginia Tech, Outreach & International Affairs (OIA) – Blacksburg, VA 2013 – 2016
Through sound internal and external communications, marketing and branding counsel, successfully developed and implemented strategic PR and marketing strategies to support the vice president in building unit awareness and executing the OIA mission.

- Prepared news releases and responded to news media inquiries.
- Prepared speeches/presentations for internal/external audiences and events for the VP
- Supported unit directors in developing communications plans for various centers/institutes
- Led workshops for communicators, writers, graphic designers, as well as managers and directors including: "*trends in communications and marketing*" and "*writing for the brand*"
- Served as co-creator, host, webmaster and writer for VT internet video series, [Save Our Towns](#), (winner of two national awards: *PR Daily's* – "*best community affairs*" and *Bulldog Award's* – "*best use of digital/social communications*" and "*best use of video*" for cause/advocacy)
- Traveled to India, Nepal and Ethiopia to cover USAID-funded projects managed by Virginia Tech. This included filming/editing video news stories, as well as taking photographs and writing stories for various publications, (i.e. [Invasive plant conference in Ethiopia](#))
- Successfully filmed, produced, and edited video news releases for [OIA YouTube Channel](#)
- **Redesigned, edited and managed OIA website** and monthly newsletter (to include layout)
- **Reason for leaving:** Sought position more aligned with level of experience

Director, Communications — Director, College Readiness Campaign

New Visions for Public Schools – New York, NY

2009 – 2011

Launched and successfully led a youth-driven college-readiness campaign leveraging the power of social media and engaged over 30K students in 76 NYC high schools.

- Led a communications and government relations team of six, managing all communications, marketing, news media, publication design, and government relations issues.
- Managed youth leadership corps focused on college readiness in 30+ NYC public schools
- Developed marketing strategies that enhanced and facilitated relations with funders, sponsors, schools, community, corporate partners, and the NYC Department of Education
- Advised school leaders in media crises, communications issues and marketing strategy
- Worked with civic/legislative leaders to understand and support school change initiatives
- **Reason for leaving:** Economy-related downsizing/reorganization eliminated position

Senior Vice President, Communications & Marketing

MicroSociety, Inc. – Philadelphia, PA

2005 – 2009

Developed national marketing, PR, and fundraising strategies that resulted in over \$500K in new funding and nearly \$500K in new business within the first year of employment. **MicroSociety** is a nonprofit with a mission to connect classroom learning to real life.

- Managed all communications, marketing, fundraising, staff and client-related issues
- Developed marketing and outreach strategies that increased funding through enhanced relations with sponsors, donors, school districts and state education departments
- Managed the development of all marketing and fundraising materials and presentations
- Oversaw development of new website – to include video news and school spotlight sections
- **Reason for leaving:** took advantage of new opportunity after economy-related downsizing

Press Secretary and Director of Communications

Pennsylvania Department of Education – Harrisburg, PA

2003 – 2005

Served as a spokesperson for the Pennsylvania Governor's radical [education funding] "Plan for a New Pennsylvania," which yielded extraordinary levels of media placement and brand recognition, as well as widespread legislative, corporate, and staff buy-in.

- Provided public and media relations counsel to the Secretary of Education and senior leadership while managing press, communications and web teams
- Assisted the Secretary of Education in opening unprecedented statewide lines of communication through varied mediums, including statewide workshops never before done in Pennsylvania
- Managed the flow and response of all press inquiries and media briefings
- **Reason for leaving:** Change in administration/move to become an independent consultant

Director of Communications and Development

School District of Lancaster – Lancaster, PA

1998 – 2003

Introduced the concept of "branding urban public education" by executing innovative and highly visible PR, communications, marketing, and media strategies – actions that were rare for an urban school district – producing unprecedented levels of media attention, community support and brand recognition.

- Directed all communications, public/media relations and development strategies; providing sound PR counsel to the superintendent, school board, administrators, and directors
- Created the district's first-ever brand campaign to include the design of a new logo (*still in use today*) including image materials as well as advertising collateral
- Managed major crises such as budget and funding inequities, the closing of 5-year old high school including the relocation of 1,100 students, and teacher pay/union conflicts

- Leveraged out-of-the-box communications/marketing strategies to successfully boost fundraising efforts – yielding \$5-10M per year for four consecutive years
- Conceptualized, developed and managed the *first* school district website: lancaster.k12.pa.us
- Created the *first* Annual Report to the Community published annually in the leading local Sunday newspaper
- **Reason for leaving:** Followed superintendent to state-level communications position above

Assistant Vice President, Corporate Communications

CoreStates Bank, N.A. (now Wells Fargo) – Philadelphia, PA

1994 – 1997

Successfully supported internal and external media/ communications/public relations.

- Effectively worked to boost earned media by pitching newsworthy activities, responding to media inquiries and prepping bank executives for media interviews.
- Supported three top-tier market presidents with image strategies, speech-writing, presentations, and PR/media coaching
- Developed and executed PR strategy for kick-off media event during the CoreStates USPRO Championship resulting in the creation of the infamous CoreStates/Manayunk Bike Race Mural – one of the largest murals in Philadelphia

EDUCATION

LA SALLE UNIVERSITY, Philadelphia, PA

- B.A., Communications

APR: ACCREDITED IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Universal Accreditation Board – Public Relations Society of America – since 2003

MEMBERSHIPS

- Public Relations Society of America – National School Public Relations Association

Portfolio with work samples available [here](#) and upon request