

February 29, 2024

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

This letter is in reference to the Vice Chancellor for Marketing and Communication position at Texas Christian University.

My career has leveraged marketing, communications, and branding in service of mission-driven organizations advancing the causes of higher education, global poverty, and the well-being of children. My current experience at UC Riverside, following my time at global nonprofit organizations and a leading research university, are closely aligned with the qualifications you are seeking in a candidate.

In my current role as Chief Communications and Marketing Officer at UC Riverside I lead the team responsible for brand and creative, public relations, enrollment marketing, advancement communications, content and publications, executive communications, digital marketing, video and photography, issues management, and university events.

In my prior role at World Vision, one of the largest humanitarian organizations in the world, I oversaw media relations, public relations campaigns and promotions, influencer relations, emergency communications, advocacy public relations, public service advertising, and celebrity relations. I traveled extensively in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East with high-profile influencers, journalists, donors, and partners.

At the University of Arizona, I led all institutional communications for one of the country's top public research universities. As Director of Media Relations and Assistant Vice President for Communications, I oversaw dramatic growth in the UA's presence online, in the media, and across all major communications platforms. I successfully managed university communications for nearly all of the UA's high-profile stories and events during my tenure, culminating in a nationally-televised visit by President Obama.

At Make-A-Wish America, one of the top charity brands in the United States, I led the external marketing and communications division, communicating the strategic messages of the organization to donors and prospects, corporate sponsors, volunteers, and service recipients. In addition, I managed the creative services team, handling in-house production of publications, marketing collateral, fundraising tools, and resources for Make-A-Wish chapters.

My experience in the higher education and nonprofit sectors – coupled with my proven track record leading branding, communications, and marketing teams – has provided me with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead marketing and communications at Texas Christian University.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss how I can help advance the TCU mission. Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

Johnny Cruz

Johnny Cruz

Riverside, CA 92506

520-780-1249

jandccruz@gmail.com

Work Experience:	University of California, Riverside <i>Associate Vice Chancellor & Chief Communications and Marketing Officer</i> <i>Assistant Vice Chancellor & Chief Communications Officer</i>	Riverside, CA 10/20-present 03/18-10/20
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serve as lead university marketing, communications, branding, and events administrator and manage department of 44 professional staff• Oversee brand and creative, enrollment marketing, news and content, executive communications, video/photography, digital, advancement communications, and events• Develop, implement, and assess university's marketing and communications strategy• Advise Chancellor and executive leadership on messaging and reputation management• Develop, deploy, and manage emergency communications strategies• Manage all of the university's mass communication channels• Engage in media and public relations and serve as a university spokesperson• Deepen university's understanding of all of its primary internal and external audiences• Partner with colleges and departments across university to deploy marketing and communications initiatives to achieve university goals• Oversee signature university events, including but not limited to Commencement, donor galas, faculty awards, major alumni gatherings, and themed experiences	
	<i>Major Accomplishments:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successfully led comprehensive rebranding initiative, including positioning, messaging, visual identity, creative concept, and athletics identity• Oversaw enrollment marketing campaign that yielded the largest percentage increase of non-resident applicants in the UC system• Positioned Chancellor as national leader in the student success and social mobility movement, resulting in national speaking engagements and media appearances• Launched university's first multi-state, multi-channel advertising campaign across search, social media, online video, streaming audio, out of home, and sponsored events• Leveraged a data-driven approach to establish and update university's mass communication channels, all of which have seen increases in reach and engagement• Helped manage transition of Commencement ceremonies to off-campus arena• Secured annual increases in coverage in major local, national, and trade news organizations as a result of the organization's top 100 media relations model• Received consistently high scores in annual Gallup employee engagement survey	
	<i>Interim Vice Chancellor for University Advancement</i>	01/22-07/22
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversaw development, alumni relations, university communications, and advancement administrative services• Led UC Riverside Foundation as its Interim President• Served on Chancellor's executive team	
	<i>Major Accomplishments:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Influenced the naming, messaging, launch, and volunteer leadership engagement of the Beyond Brilliant campaign, which reached its goal three years ahead of schedule• Worked with anonymous donor to secure a \$2M gift• Initiated a new approach to the university's Homecoming model, which prompted more registrations from alumni than in any year in the university's history	
	<i>Acting Associate Chancellor and Chief of Staff</i>	04/20-08/20
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Served as principal advisor to Chancellor and university leadership and assisted in executing university's strategic vision and goals• Managed Chancellor's office staff and budget	

- Served on Chancellor's executive team
- Worked on leadership team for university's COVID-19 emergency response

Major Accomplishments:

- Assisted in coordinating the university's successful pivot to extended remote operations as a result of COVID-19

World Vision

Federal Way, WA

National Director, Public Relations

04/13-02/18

- Led team responsible for organization's media relations, influencer relations, advocacy communications, emergency communications, celebrity relations, and PR campaigns
- Managed public service advertising (television, radio, online/print, and out-of-home)
- Led national public relations and media campaigns to support brand advancement, fundraising, advocacy, and disaster relief priorities
- Served as organizational media spokesperson
- Managed communications response to disasters and humanitarian crises in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, U.S.-Mexico border, East Africa, Haiti, Philippines, and Sierra Leone
- Directed organization's national influencer relations program
- Managed CEO's presence in national media through interviews, op-eds, and media trips
- Oversaw organization's relationships with celebrities

Major Accomplishments:

- Produced an 86 percent increase in news coverage during holiday PR campaign, along with a 103 percent increase in social reach and \$2.4M in online gifts.
- Established World Vision's Celebrity Ambassador Network and organization's first comprehensive influencer strategy
- Organized World Vision's first national multi-channel public service advertising campaign, which earned more than \$6M in free ad placements
- Led refugee PR campaign that helped to generate increases in fundraising, supported advocacy objectives, and generated partnerships to support Syrian refugees
- Generated more than 4,000 news stories and more placements in how-to-help pages/boxes than any other organization following Typhoon Haiyan
- Took journalists, influencers, and celebrities to report on World Vision's humanitarian work in Chad, Lebanon, Jordan, Cambodia, Kenya, Somalia, Iraq, and the Philippines
- Secured news coverage in outlets including the NY Times, Associated Press, FOX News, NBC News, USA Today, CNN, Wall Street Journal, NPR, and Washington Post
- Developed concept for holiday promotion that helped to generate a nearly 400 percent year-over-year increase in revenue

World Vision

Federal Way, WA

Acting Senior Executive Director, Public Relations

03/15-10/15

- Led team responsible for managing media relations, reputation and issues management, social media, speakers bureau, blogger relations, and campaigns
- Oversaw transition from media relations team to a comprehensive public relations division, advancing brand by integrating earned, owned, and social media
- Oversaw issues management and crisis communications
- Retained all other responsibilities from permanent position while in interim role

Major Accomplishments:

- Implemented organization's public engagement strategy, designed to boost engagement with core audiences between awareness and conversion
- Managed public relations response to relief efforts in Nepal following earthquake, contributing toward raising more than \$10M in private donations
- Expanded organization's social media team, more than doubling staff and adding social advertising, listening, and content functions
- Initiated and managed CEO trip to South Sudan with the Washington Post

The University of Arizona

Assistant Vice President for Communications

Tucson, AZ

01/10-04/13

- Served as chief communications officer and leader of central communications team
- Oversaw centralized communications functions, including media relations, external and internal communications, multimedia, social media, content production and distribution, crisis communications, executive communications, and digital publications
- Provided leadership on institutional messaging for all internal and external audiences
- Developed institutional communications plan to increase awareness and affinity
- Implemented strategies to increase exposure and influence of UA president
- Provided communications and marketing consultation to university personnel and affiliated organizations such as the UA Foundation and Alumni Association
- Delivered media training to staff and faculty throughout the university

Major Accomplishments:

- Managed communications and media relations for presidential campus visit, an event attended by more than 600 credentialed media and seen by an audience of 30 million
- Doubled the university's news coverage in two years
- Increased digital follower base by approximately 150,000 over a two-year period
- Created and implemented communications and media strategy for presidential transition
- Expanded the UA's social media presence and increased followers and engagement
- Generated national coverage for several major announcements, such as NASA's awarding of an \$800-million space mission to the UA
- Contributed toward the development of the university's first mobile app
- Provided media training to more than 100 administrators, staff, and faculty

The University of Arizona

Director of Media Relations

Tucson, AZ

10/05-01/10

- Executed university's external communications and media relations strategy locally, statewide, regionally, nationally, and internationally
- Served as university's lead spokesperson
- Coordinated development of content for university channels and distribution to media
- Supervised media relations, content production, and multimedia staff
- Strengthened relationships with campus units to identify and publicize university news
- Provided crisis communications support to university departments and personnel
- Established relationships with statewide and national media that increased UA's visibility

Major Accomplishments:

- Over a three-year period, increased news coverage by more than 26 percent
- Implemented transition from a traditional news and media relations office to one that produced and aggregated content for direct distribution to key constituents
- Created new electronic publication sent to more than 110,000 subscribers
- Managed UA media relations responsibilities for NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander, hosting more than 200 representatives from major news organizations around the world
- Significantly expanded university's media contacts and coverage in the Phoenix market
- Launched successful initiative to boost news coverage in Spanish-language media
- Generated more than 1,500 news stories/videos, and 2.6 million pageviews annually

Kyrene School District

Communications Supervisor

Tempe, AZ

01/04-10/05

- Directed district's marketing, internal communications, media relations, advertising, and issues management activities
- Managed relationships with education reporters and served as district's spokesperson
- Provided communications counsel and training to district staff and board members
- Supervised communications staff, including graphic artists, receptionist, and interns
- Served as editor of district's print and online publications and marketing materials
- Oversaw market research, focus groups, and public opinion surveys
- Developed campaigns to increase enrollment in schools and tuition-based programs

- Led promotional efforts for Kyrene Schools Community Foundation

Major Accomplishments:

- Orchestrated campaign that doubled out-of-district enrollment in one year
- Developed tax credit donation campaign, which generated more than \$1 million in 2004
- Generated significant increase in print and broadcast coverage
- Received individual and team awards for outstanding public relations
- Relaunched Kyrene Schools Community Foundation's fundraising and grants programs

Make-A-Wish America

Phoenix, AZ

Marketing and Outreach Manager

08/01-01/04

- Managed external marketing and creative team, supervising designers and staff writer
- Provided marketing and communications support to all fundraising units
- Served as editor for all external marketing collateral and national website
- Provided editorial oversight for national email and print newsletter
- Managed multicultural marketing initiative, focusing on the Hispanic market
- Produced all signature programs at organization's national conferences
- Helped chapters build capacity in communications, branding, and marketing

Major Accomplishments:

- Raised nearly \$200,000 in individual gifts exclusively through print newsletter
- Generated a 250 percent increase in click-throughs from national electronic newsletter
- Helped to generate a nearly 300 percent increase in web traffic
- Upgraded process of receiving incoming work assignments from departments
- Brought numerous creative projects in-house, including the development of promotional products such as holiday cards, calendars, and catalogs

Make-A-Wish America

Phoenix, AZ

Promotions Manager

08/00-08/01

- Provided promotional, content, and marketing support for national cause-marketing initiatives and corporate partnerships
- Developed national organization's first national Hispanic marketing and PSA program
- Coordinated special events, galas, and corporate sponsor activations

Major Accomplishments Available Upon Request

Make-A-Wish America

Phoenix, AZ

Communications Assistant

6/99-08/00

Position details available upon request

Associations:

Public Relations Society of America

2017-present

Counselors to Higher Education

CASE

2018-present

Member; Conference Speaker

Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities

2020-present

Council on Strategic Communications Executive Committee; Conference Speaker

Leadership Riverside

2022-present

Class of 2023

Education:

Marietta College

Marietta, OH

Bachelor of Arts, Radio/Television

UC Berkeley Center for Studies in Higher Education

Berkeley, CA

Executive Leadership Academy

Johnny Cruz DEI Statement

Upholding and advancing the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion has been a priority throughout my professional career – even before DEI become a commonly-used term.

Nearly 25 years ago, I led what was then called multicultural marketing initiatives at Make-A-Wish America. The guiding principles behind this work was making the organization's services more accessible to individuals of all cultural backgrounds. Make-A-Wish could not achieve its mission if particular communities did not know or believe that the organization's services were available to them as well. Our multicultural marketing efforts had a direct impact on increasing the number of Spanish-speaking families whose children received wishes from the organization.

World Vision is one of the largest and most consequential humanitarian organizations in the world, with a national presence in approximately 100 countries. My charge – along with that of many others in marketing, communications, and fundraising – was to get America to care about the world. I participated in and led several efforts to grow awareness of and compassion for humanitarian crises around the world, including but not limited to the Syrian refugee crisis. These successful initiatives led to advocacy, increased financial support, and more balanced perspectives on contentious national dialogues.

UC Riverside is known nationwide as a pace setter for equity, student success, social mobility, and diverse leadership. As the university's Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, I have embraced the opportunity to establish a national identity that embraces diversity as a measure of quality and to challenge assertions that universities have to choose between diversity and prestige.

As I have advanced into more senior leadership positions I discovered that doing my part to advance DEI values now involves mentoring emerging leaders from underrepresented backgrounds, bringing new perspectives to cabinet-level discussions, and using inclusive marketing and communications practices to increase access to and participation in mission-driven organizations.

Leadership in diversity, equity, and inclusion cannot solely be the domain of the university's Chief Diversity Officer or DEI office. The University Relations organization that I lead has been a DEI leader on campus for many years. We developed and distributed an inclusive style guide for the university community, represented the university in national higher education DEI discussions, elevated the visibility of our junior faculty, and built a brand platform that centers the diverse people of the university.

If given the opportunity to serve at Texas Christian University, I would bring my values, experience, and personal commitment to DEI work as a leader within my organization, on the campus, and as an external voice for the university.