

Clarkson University

Senior Director of Conference & Event Services



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Senior Director of Conference & Event Services

Clarkson University has retained
KULPER & COMPANY, LLC
to advise them in this search



Opportunity Summary

Clarkson University seeks a highly motivated and visionary team player to develop, market and successfully produce, support and execute conferences, concerts, workshops, meetings, events, summer camps and related programs that will help build Clarkson University's brand and reputation as well as gain new net revenue for the University and its priorities.

The Sr. Director of Conference & Event Services (CES) is a new position and presents an excellent opportunity for an experienced professional to create an exciting and sustainable vision for events and conference management at the University during a time of new investment and planned renovations to key facilities. As co-chairs of **Clarkson@125**: the University strategic plan for 2014-2021, the VP for External Relations and University Provost are committed to working together to upgrade the CES group and related opportunities that will build more robust and engaging programs for Clarkson's various constituencies. The shared goal working across the University is to generate significant additional net revenue to support student aid, research, and overall University growth and development.

Candidates with a solid knowledge or transferable skills of what it takes to successfully build and develop a university CES group will have a terrific opportunity to make a difference at an institution well poised for continued growth and development at a time when the fields of engineering, business



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and the sciences could not be more important. Clarkson is a well-known and highly respected University that each year, under the leadership of its board of trustees, president and senior administrators is focused on identifying new knowledge and imparting a spirit of entrepreneurship to all its constituencies, particularly to its students, faculty and alumni.

The successful candidate must possess the experience and innate style to understand and embrace the vision and mission of the University as it relates to the CES group. With the strong support and backing of the VP for External Relations who has a proven track record of strengthening campus departments, building effective partnerships and generating new resources, the Sr. Director will create the business plan and case for facility and equipment investments, staffing and other necessary elements to meet a targeted \$500,000 net revenue goal in the 2014/15 academic year while also working hard to achieve 70% utilization of available campus facilities during the non-academic season. CES can help the campus community firmly establish a key “gateway” for advancing academic and educational strategic objectives for the University including supporting/developing alumni, corporate and community relations.

From a day-to-day perspective, the Sr. Director of CES will be the lead University representative responsible for negotiating rates, coordinating the schedule for internal and external events and ensuring effective on-site management and full compliance with all University and applicable external guidelines for all CES related activities.

This is a 12 month, full-time position with the expectation that the individual will be actively promoting Clarkson as a venue for activities consistent with the University mission throughout the year.

About Clarkson University

Clarkson offers exceptional degree programs in business, engineering, health professions, liberal arts, science and environmental sciences. The University attracts enterprising students seeking a high-quality education that prepares them for leadership in organizations and entrepreneurial careers within a changing global environment.



Clarkson University's main campus is in the historic village of Potsdam, a community situated along the gentle north slope of the Adirondacks halfway between Lake Champlain and the Thousand Islands in northern New York State. Nestled among farms, quiet residences and small-business enterprises, Potsdam, and nearby Canton, bring classic college town amenities for faculty, staff and students at Clarkson, SUNY Potsdam, St. Lawrence University and SUNY Canton. Many residents and students take full advantage of the spectacular six million-acre Adirondack Park, an abundant source of summer and winter recreation, including sites maintained by Clarkson for educational activities. Ottawa and Montreal, Canada, are an easy drive. Clarkson also has an emerging campus at a new subsidiary, the Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, in Beacon, New York.

Visit <http://www.clarkson.edu/about> for more facts and figures.

Guidelines

This position reports to Kelly Chezum, the Vice President for External Relations in the Office of Marketing & External Relations. In addition to overseeing all of the University's marketing and external relations activities, Dr. Chezum is a long-time member of the president's cabinet, serves as the Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trustees and co-chaired the formulation of *Clarkson@125*, the University's strategic plan. *Clarkson@125* establishes strategic priorities to expand the world reach and diversity of the University, advance the prominence of research and scholarship, and build a continuum for lifetime alumni engagement. One key aspect of the vision for External Relations in support of *Clarkson@125* is to position Clarkson Conference and Events Services to help Clarkson community members achieve their goals and to develop new revenue streams for the University.

Please visit <http://www.clarkson.edu/clarkson125> to read more about the strategic vision of Clarkson University and engage in the overall Web at <http://www.clarkson.edu> and <https://www.facebook.com/ClarksonUniversity>.



General Purpose

Provide vision, solicit, plan and direct high quality events, camps and conference activities with specific emphasis on adding new outside groups and revenue generating activities to our portfolio consistent with the University's mission and goals. Oversee staff who execute University events and summer camp activities as well as collaborate with faculty and staff who are providing academic and educational content consistent with University mission and goals.

Position Responsibilities

- Responsible for the day-to-day operations as well as formulation and fulfillment of the vision statement for the events and conference services functions of the University.
- Supervise staff in University events and ensure appropriate recruitment, training and supervision of staff, including student employees.
- Assist the VP for External Relations in the day-to-day oversight and collaboration with Campus Dining Services, currently managed by Aramark.
- Collaboratively craft and establish a CES business plan to identify areas of investment and to meet return revenue generation targets with a starting goal of \$500,000 net revenue per year; coordinate on associated budgeting process and timely submission of expenses with the budget manager in the Office of Marketing & External Relations.
- Lead the development of a comprehensive marketing plan to attract external clientele and the generation of supporting materials (website, brochures, etc.) in concert with colleagues from the Office of the Marketing & External Relations.
- Develop conference/events business through relationships, networking and attendance at trade shows, community contacts, and convention and visitor bureaus.
- Work with the campus community and external clients to schedule and oversee all conference needs utilizing the appropriate campus facilities and residences based on data and type of projected program. This may also include the selection and contracting of meeting/conference space off campus for various events and functions.
- Serve as the chief liaison with audio/visual and IT team, financial billing services, risk management, service center room reservations and campus safety and security. Work closely with Facilities & Services management team to ensure appearance, cleanliness and care of spaces used for conferences and events, and the care and inventory of related equipment.
- Communicate and resolve problems effectively and in a timely manner with event organizers and clients.
- Generate contracts and insurance requirements, monitor compliance with University policies and government regulations consistent with templates and plans made with the director of Risk Management.
- Attend and participate in meetings and projects of the University, not limited to construction and renovation project meetings, and have a presence at all high-profile University events.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the VP for External Relations to whom the new Sr. Director CES will directly report.



Essential Skills/ Proven Abilities

- Bring creative direction to the mission and vision of the CES group and help achieve departmental and staff goals/aspirations.
- Work productively with all Clarkson colleagues who support the CES group including those for whom the Sr. Director CES does not have direct authority; particularly faculty, students and senior administrative leaders of the University. Develop and maintain effective, smooth and professional work relationships with students, faculty, staff, and the public.
- Provide administrative guidance within area of responsibility, offering direct training and supervision as needed.
- Apply effective budgetary and fiscal planning techniques to meet the CES business plan and operating budgets for University events.
- Conceptualize and prioritize all objectives while exercising independent judgment based on a clear understanding of University organizational policies and activities.
- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- Use personal computer software, enterprise software solutions and other office equipment to effectively complete tasks and manage projects.



Building a Foundation

One of the first action items of the job will be to build and expand upon the University's current vision for summer programs, events and conference services. As part of this goal, it will be important for the Sr. Director to review current information about fixed and variable operating and production costs in order to establish a clear picture of existing performance levels for each key revenue line item—meetings and conferences, camps and concerts, etc.—as well as to seek new revenue opportunities that can be identified and developed for the CES group. We would expect that the new Sr. Director would be able to complete this assessment/recommendation in the first four months on the job.

The Sr. Director of CES will meet with a representative sample of members of each key constituency supported by the CES group to obtain feedback, constructive critique and assess needs. We anticipate the plan will include projections for costs associated with upgrading facility amenities, hiring additional staff as well as increased revenue that will emanate from expansion of existing programs and the introduction of new offerings that will be designed to support research and educational initiatives of the University as well as outside groups. The plan should also incorporate the University's commitment to sustainability which includes utilization of space.

Once information about the present operation is gathered and analyzed, the hired candidate will be responsible for presenting a "go forward" investment

plan for the area covering the next three to five years. The goal is to build a plan with commensurate upfront investment to return \$500,000 in net revenue to the institution and then to keep growing it year by year. The plan will be reviewed with the VP for External Relations and other senior members of the Clarkson leadership team to form a solid basis for implementation under the direction of the new Sr. Director of CES.

This job is an extraordinary opportunity for the right person to come to Clarkson and make a very key impact on the growth and development of the University, including the role of conference and events in engaging constituencies. The career development and growth opportunities for the hired candidate are significant.

Example Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

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The below KPIs are designed to provide qualified candidates with a view of how we believe the job will need to be done in order to reach the financial and operational goals for the University. We expect to discuss and review the KPIs during the course of the interview process prior to settling on the final version with the hired candidate.

Qualitative goals:

Year 1

- Meet with all key CES constituencies and gain feedback/discuss “needs and wants”, suggestions and constructive critique.
- Attend professional industry meetings of University conference and events directors to help assure personal career growth and development as well as network new opportunities for Clarkson.
- Build trust and respect among key constituents supported.
- Working under the direction of the VP for External Relations and with other administrators and representatives of the key constituencies, structure, present and achieve approval of the business plan for the CES group that will become the blue print for achieving stated net revenue goals that will assist in the long term growth and development of the University.
- Begin implementation of the specific goals and objectives outlined in the approved business plan for the CES group. Depending on what is ultimately approved this may include: facility upgrades, specifically on venue amenities and layouts that will maximize student/guest satisfaction and build toward the approved revenue goals.
- Recommend reducing support for activities that are not meeting planned net revenue projections, are not well-aligned with the University mission/vision and/or are not contributing in a meaningful way to the growth and development of the University.

Year 2

- Continue implementation of the approved business plan for CES; make necessary calibrations to the plan but continue to focus on achieving stated goals. Begin producing new meetings, conferences, etc., that meet with the enthusiastic support and approval of key constituents.
- Implement constituency feedback mechanisms to measure perceived performance and effectiveness of Conferences & Meetings, Camps and Concerts.
- Continue to build trust and respect among key constituents supported. Use feedback mechanisms to fine tune and continually improve performance of the CES group.
- Continue to attend professional industry meetings to help benchmark performance of the CES group and obtain new ideas.

Year 3

- Continue implementation of the business plan for CES. Focus on smooth operation of current successful programs, identification of new programs and continual improvement of the satisfaction of constituents served.
- Attend professional industry meetings of University conference and events directors to help assure personal career growth and development.

Quantitative goals:

Years 1 & 2

- Ascertain/verify current baseline performance for each key revenue stream (meetings, conferences, camps, concerts, etc.) with the VP for External Relations.
- Achieve 70% utilization of facilities during summer FY 14.
- Implement plan to build revenue from conferences, events and summer programs to net \$500,000 for the University.

Year 3

- The CES Group is increasing annual revenue based on potential growth opportunities while effectively aligning and managing production and operating costs.



Education

Minimal Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in related/relevant field supplemented with five (5) or more years of related experience in marketing, sales or event management or hotel and resort management, or significant management and sales experience that demonstrate competence and understanding of the tasks required.

Preferred Qualifications: Master's degree in related/relevant field. In addition to the above, specific event planning/management training (ex. post-graduate course, certification).

Experience

Minimum of 5 years of event planning/management experience preferred, including administrative oversight responsibilities.

Business proficiency in Microsoft Office Word, Access and Excel, including the tabulation of budget figures, creation of scenario planning tools and merging files; experience in enterprise systems for event and scheduling management.

Demonstrated successful track record leading teams of people in the successful production of University meetings, conferences, events and camps.

Preferred Experience: In additional to the above, minimum of 2 years of professional experience in a collegiate environment. Candidates with 24 weeks of administrative or supervisory experience in camping or equivalent experience acceptable to the New York State Commissioner of Health for summer youth camp responsibilities are a plus.

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Special Requirements

This position requires flexibility in personal scheduling since the new Sr. Director CES will be on-call to assist in emergencies and staffing questions; availability to work evenings and weekends. Additionally because the Sr. Director is expected to be a key part directing summer activities on campus, personal vacation and scheduled days off will need to be minimized during this period.

On an annual basis, the Sr. Director CES must be cleared through the Department of Social Services State Central Register of Abuse and Maltreatment (i.e., no investigation reports) to act as the overseer of Camp Director/Operator for the summer youth camps. The Sr. Director CES is also subject to a comprehensive background screen pursuant with other New York State laws that define staff who work with children.



Physical Demands

The physical demands characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to monitor events and services from a standing or sitting position for long periods of time and to rapidly move from one event location to another for this purpose. In addition, when written material is generated it may require the employee to tolerate periods of sustained computer work.

**Interested
Candidates**

Please reply in confidence to SrDirCES@kulpercompany.com
Supply cover letter expressing interest in the position and your CV.



This position description adheres to all EEOC guidelines and is subject to change at the sole discretion of Clarkson University. An equal opportunity /affirmative action employer, Clarkson University actively seeks and encourages applications from minorities, women and people with disabilities.

KULPER & COMPANY, LLC

is providing executive search consulting service to
Clarkson University for this search assignment.