

June 10, 2026

Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL

Re: Vice President for Marketing and Communications opportunity at Florida State University

Dear Chair and Members of the Search Committee:

For nearly eight years, I have served as the chief marketing and communications officer at two public flagship universities – leading large central teams and providing strategic direction to a distributed network of communicators across colleges and units. I am writing to express my interest in Florida State’s inaugural VPMC role and the opportunity it presents at a time of great momentum for FSU.

At The University of Texas at Austin, I led the rebuilding of a downsized central team, championed a new brand narrative to align the storytelling of 250+ marcomm professionals, built an issues management function with enhanced crisis preparedness, and delivered a multi-faceted content marketing initiative to support the public phase of a campaign to renovate the iconic UT Tower.

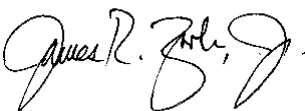
At the University of Mississippi, I spearheaded an overhaul of admissions marketing to turn a multi-year enrollment decline into 30% growth over four years and recurring enrollment records, and led the development of a new university website that included adoption of a new content management system and stronger web governance. In addition, I partnered with University Development to shape the marketing of the “Now & Ever” comprehensive campaign, the most successful campaign in state history.

Before pivoting to higher ed, I served in progressively senior communications roles at Deloitte, including CEO Communications Lead and US Crisis Communications Lead, advising business unit leaders and managing communications for a workforce of 70,000 professionals. In addition, my consulting work prior to Deloitte focused on the workforce impact of major organizational changes like M&A activity. Those experiences gave me depth in areas that are less common among higher ed marcomm leaders and relevant to FSU’s goal of elevating internal communications as a strategic function.

I am drawn to this opportunity for several reasons. FSU’s investments in healthcare, sustained growth in its research enterprise, and preparations for a new capital campaign all create compelling brand-building opportunities. The university’s strategic plan outlines critical objectives that the central Marketing and Communications team needs to help deliver. Building an integrated marcomm function in service of the ambitions of a university like FSU is the kind of challenge I find most meaningful.

Thank you for considering me for this important position. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you and look forward to the conversation.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James R. Zook, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

James R. Zook, Jr. (Jim)