



Akron, Ohio

## Chief Brand Officer (CBO)

The University of Akron seeks dynamic, experienced, visionary candidates for its inaugural Chief Brand Officer.

This position offers a unique opportunity for a forward-thinking leader to shape and elevate the university's brand, making a significant impact on its reputation and success in the higher education landscape. To propel institutional advancement, The University of Akron partnered with a leading marketing and PR agency to collaboratively define its contemporary identity and conceptualize its energetic brand. The CBO will lead University-wide efforts to implement marketing strategies, characterize the institution's revitalization and ultimately, facilitate comprehensive growth.

### Key Qualifications:

- Master's degree in marketing, communications, business, or a related field.
- Minimum of 10 years of progressive experience in brand management, marketing, communications, or a related field, with at least 6 years in a senior leadership role.
- Proven success in managing comprehensive brand and communications strategies, preferably within higher education or a similarly complex organization.
- Strong understanding of digital marketing and data analytics.
- Exceptional leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills, with a demonstrated ability to influence and build consensus at all levels.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

The University of Akron, located in Akron, Ohio, is a vital urban research university inspired by its people, its promise and its place. We are firmly anchored in a great American city, and driven by collaboration, partnership and a steadfast determination to provide opportunity and success to all learners. True to its vision and mission, the university is dedicated to providing opportunities for all types of learners that pursue excellence in undergraduate education and distinction in selected areas of



graduate instruction, inquiry and creative activity. The University of Akron strives to be a leading public research university with an unsurpassed commitment to community engagement with a great American legacy city, Akron. The University boasts strong job outcomes, with high percentage of graduates finding employment or continuing their education shortly after graduation. A significant 89% also participate in experiential learning opportunities like internships and research.

An intelligently managed organization with a new team of talented leaders, The University of Akron embodies its mission to transform students' lives and make a significant impact on the community it serves. Within six months of graduation, a substantial 94% of spring 2023 undergraduate degree recipients were either employed full-or part-time, participating in a program of voluntary services, serving in the program of voluntary services, serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, or continuing their education.

## The History of the University of Akron

The institution now known as The University of Akron was founded as Buchtel College in 1870 by the Ohio Universalist Convention, which was strongly influenced by the efforts, energy and financial support of Akronites, particularly industrialist John R. Buchtel. By 1907, Buchtel College's emphasis on local rather than denominational interests led it to become a private, nondenominational school.

From the outset, the college and the surrounding community were closely tied, with the college addressing the needs of the region as well as those of the Universalist Church and local entrepreneurs assisting the fledgling institution time and again. The college's strong ties to the community and its challenging financial situation prompted Buchtel College trustees to transfer the institution and its assets to the city of Akron in 1913. For the next 50 years, the municipal University of Akron, assisted by

city tax funds, brought college education within the reach of many more young people. During those years, enrollment swelled from 198 to about 10,000.

## **THE ROLE OF THE CHIEF BRAND OFFICER (CBO)**

The CBO will join The University of Akron at a critical and exciting juncture as the University examines and makes manifest its commitment to academic excellence and the centrality of its academic mission. The Chief Brand Officer (CBO) is a key member of the executive leadership team, reporting directly to the University President. This role is responsible for developing and executing a comprehensive brand strategy that elevates and maintains the university's reputation, aligns with its mission and values, and enhances visibility and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

The CBO collaborates across the university to ensure cohesive messaging and to amplify the University's brand through various channels, ensuring the university's distinct identity is conveyed with consistency and impact. The CBO leads, manages, and oversees university strategic communications, marketing, and digital marketing; college marketing and communications; and athletics marketing and communications.

The CBO oversees a team responsible for internal and external communications for the University. The CBO's duties include:

- Developing and implementing the University's brand strategy to align with its mission, vision, and strategic goals, enhancing reputation, recognition, and engagement at local, national, and global levels.
- Utilizing data-driven insights to make informed brand decisions. Curating brand experiences across all touchpoints, online and in-person, considering all internal and external constituents.
- Overseeing the creation, execution and enforcement of branding standards and style guidelines across the institution, including license and trademark.
- Serving as a strategic advisor to the president and executive team on brand positioning, communication, and reputation management, championing the university's identity and goals.
- Directing the development of comprehensive communication strategies for both internal and external audiences, promoting the university's story and fostering a strong, unified voice.
- Managing the development of strategies to highlight and promote the university's achievements, rankings, and accolades to enhance its reputation and attract talent and resources.
- Overseeing the development of media relations and outreach strategy.

- Leading marketing, digital, and strategic communication teams to drive engagement across all university audiences, including prospective and current students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community partners.
- Overseeing athletics marketing and communication efforts, working closely with the athletics department to promote events, student-athletes, and achievements, amplifying school spirit and pride.
- Partnering with deans, departments, and senior leaders across the university to ensure aligned messaging and integrate brand initiatives into key academic, research, and community engagement areas.
- Supervising and managing relationships with outside vendors.
- Providing vision, mentorship, and leadership to teams across strategic communications, marketing, digital marketing, athletics marketing and communications, fostering innovation, collaboration, and a high standard of excellence.

## **LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

This inaugural position offers a unique opportunity for a forward-thinking leader to shape and elevate the university's brand, making a significant impact on its reputation and success in the higher education landscape. The CBO will lead University-wide efforts to implement a new brand and marketing strategies, characterize the institution's revitalization and ultimately, facilitate comprehensive growth.

The CBO should provide leadership for these specific efforts, striving to support The University in the effort to enhance branding in all aspects of the academic programs, and to enhance the academic standing of the University.

## **PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The ideal candidate will have the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

- Leadership: A collaborative leadership style that engages faculty and staff in continually improving the vision and plan for the University, and in working toward the implementation of that vision; the ability to build on the current strengths of the university brand while encouraging movement toward a stronger future; ability to be a partner with other institutional leaders in shaping the direction of the University; the ability to articulate a clear vision for the University's brand and drive its implementation.

- Strategic Planning: Experience in brand management; and developing and executing brand strategies that align with the University's overall goals;
- Management: Experience in an administrative role in higher education; the ability to steward resources and manage budgets responsibly; the ability to distinguish between leadership and management;
- Brand Management and Marketing Expertise: Experience with the critical decision-making with a comprehensive understanding of brand strategy, positioning, and building brand equity;
- Higher Education Environment: The CBO should have familiarity of the unique challenges and opportunities within higher education context; also have the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and quickly respond to new challenges;
- Customer Insights and Personalization: The CBO should understand the needs and preferences of different target audiences, which is crucial for effective brand engagement;
- Personal qualities: the CBO should possess strong leadership, superb communication, and relationship-building skills; the ability to engage and inspire others around the mission of the University and Colleges; the willingness to participate in resource communication development efforts; patience, and fortitude; the ability to both listen and hear; a sense of humor.

## APPENDIX A

### Vision, Mission, Core Values and Strategic Initiatives Statement

#### **Vision:**

The University of Akron will be a leading public research university with an unsurpassed commitment to community engagement with a great American legacy city, Akron.

#### **Mission:**

The University of Akron, a publicly assisted metropolitan institution, strives to develop enlightened members of society. It offers comprehensive programs of instruction from associate through doctoral levels; pursues a vigorous agenda of research in the arts, sciences and professions; and provides service to the community. The University pursues excellence in undergraduate education and distinction in selected areas of graduate instruction, inquiry and creative activity.

#### **Strategic Values:**

The University of Akron empowers our people to flourish by delivering an applied and community-connected educational experience and cultivating research excellence. Leveraging our passion and expertise, we create innovative academic opportunities, support the well-being of our students and employees, and prioritize community embeddedness and engagement to impact lives through transformative experience. Through this focus, UA aspires to be the leader in community-focused higher education.

- **Lifelong Learning** through transformative and creative academic experiences integrating traditional programming with industry certification and micro-credentialing.
- **Flourishing People** through growth and development, inclusivity and belonging, and meaningful experiences.
- **Social Impact** through community leadership, programming, learning, and reciprocity.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY**

Credential review will begin on May 15, 2025. A completed application, resume' with cover letter must be submitted to the University's career board at [Careers at UA](#).

Final candidates will be asked to provide three professional references.