# University of Maine Job Description

**TITLE:** Chief of Staff **DEPARTMENT:** Office of the President **DATE:** March 2024

**REPORTS TO:** President

**Purpose:** Chief of Staff serves overall as a high-level trusted advisor, supporter and deputy to the President/Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation (VCRI).

The institution has strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence, and Chief of Staff will collaborate with the President to further this commitment in all activities of the University.

Chief of Staff collaborates with the President to execute and advance the President’s vision and strategic priorities. The Chief of Staff engages with internal and external constituencies to represent the President and to and to collect input and information, serves on committees, and participates in meetings as assigned. Chief of Staff serves as liaison for the President/VCRI with the Chancellor, other Vice Chancellors, the University of Maine System Office, and the UMS Board of Trustees; the University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias Boards of Visitors (BOV); leaders of federal and state government; federal and state legislators; business leaders; and internal and external constituencies, where appropriate. Chief of Staff also represents the President as needed at the state, regional,

national and international levels, depending on the President’s roles and responsibilities in

organizations beyond the University.

At the request of the President/VCRI, Chief of Staff provides advice and counsel in institutional policy development; University and System communication; administration; shared governance; faculty, staff, and student welfare; and research and economic development to further the mission and success of the University in its role as a land, sea, and space grant, R1 and D1 institution. The incumbent will have strategic leadership engagement in such President’s Office areas as office management, budget oversight, personnel, and planning.

Chief of Staff serves as a key member of the President’s Cabinet and, in consultation with the President, sets agendas and facilitates the activities of this group. Chief of Staff also assists with the management of other senior personnel who report directly to the President.

Chief of Staff assists in the development and implementation of the communication strategy for the President/VCRI, for both internal and external constituencies. That communication strategy reflects the Strategic Vision and Values framework; the University’s core value of diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence; and other major University and System initiatives, such as unified accreditation and UMS TRANSFORMS. Chief of Staff provides assistance and outreach to key stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, members of the community, and state and federal officials and staff. The incumbent anticipates and manages priorities for the President/VCRI, attends events with the President/VCRI, and may be involved in supporting university-wide events. Chief of Staff acts as the point person on behalf of the President for crisis management. On behalf of the President, Chief of Staff will take on specific responsibilities related to current and future institutional initiatives, including presidential committees and commissions. Chief of Staff helps to facilitate the relationship and

operating model with UMaine’s regional campus, the University of Maine at Machias, and provides support as needed to the President’s role as Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation.

# Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

In consultation with the President;

* Proactively interact with administrators, faculty, professional staff, and student groups to affect two-way communication between and among the President and all campus constituencies, including drafting of key communications.
* Understand and review the President’s activities, commitments, schedule, and materials to support, visibility as appropriate, and high-level assistance and advice.
* Assist in establishing the University’s reputation and relationship with the external community in alignment with the President’s vision and priorities.
* Guide and support the leaders of university strategic initiatives as appropriate and handle a wide range of matters of institutional importance on behalf of the President.
* Provide strategic advice and support to the President/VCRI and help to enact President’s

initiatives; provide coordination and oversight in the development of defined core initiatives

for the President’s Office, facilitate alignment among key stakeholders, and ensure timely and successful completion by all staff and administrators.

* Work with the President and senior leadership on the best ways to advance the institution’s goals and aspirations with civic and business leadership, alumni, and all levels of elected representatives, as well as the University of Maine System, so that the University’s core initiatives have a direct strategic, and measurable impact.
* Work with the President and Cabinet on process for regularly reviewing, identifying and prioritizing strategic initiatives, engaging the cabinet and other senior leaders, and prepare reports and updates as requested.
* Prepare briefings for the President’s meetings in a timely manner, ensure timely follow-up from those meetings, and keep the President informed of important issues as they arise, and advance the President’s expectations for communications executive initiatives.
* Collaborate with the President’s Office staff to oversee and manage the President’s priorities

and schedule, with special emphasis on those that risk falling between organizational lines.

* Ensure compliance with University and System policies and procedures so that appropriate decision-making protocols are followed, and advise President of issues, and identify needed areas of change and clarification in policies and procedures.
* In conjunction with other Cabinet members, assist in the coordination of crisis management in response to pandemics and other campus emergencies, including sexual harassment and assault, crimes against students, suicides, and weather events; oversee coordination in all areas of risk, including research compliance, financial challenges, and more.
* Seek and verify accurate information for the President on issues of importance and sensitivity.
* Serve as the steward of highly confidential information.
* Serve as the Freedom of Access officer for the institution.
* Supervise organizational units and personnel as assigned.
* Participate in major University policy and administrative decision discussions through regular meetings and special sessions of the President with senior administration.
* Develop and maintain professional relationships that reflect courtesy, civility, and mutual

respect, and represent the President’s Office/VCRI appropriately.

* Suggest and advise on coaching, facilitation, and mentoring methods that help create an

environment in the President’s Office, and with the Cabinet and BOVs, that is anticipatory and

supportive, and provides constructive feedback on performance.

* Provide leadership in identifying and developing priorities and agendas for Cabinet and similar meetings that involve the President. Work with the Senior Administrative Coordinator to finalize and communicate such agendas.
* Perform other reasonably related duties as assigned.

# Required Knowledge and Skill Qualifications:

* Master’s degree or equivalent combination of education and experience.
* Exceptional communication skills (written and oral), clear record of effective writing and editorial experience along with experience in direct strategic, tactical and crisis communication; experience working with the press.
* Effective, resourceful, and independent problem solver and ability to identify issues that can escalate to problems in advance.
* Significant experience in higher education administration, public policy or within large, complex organizations, and working with senior executives.
* Ability to convey alternative opinions and perspectives to leaders with confidence and rationale.
* Highly intuitive, strong network builder, comfortable supporting the CEO and a busy, dynamic

President’s Office.

* Highly resourceful, and possess strong emotional intelligence and organizational savvy, and sensitivity to political challenges.
* Demonstrated commitment to maintaining collegial relationships with a diverse group of constituencies.
* Ability to interact and influence at the most senior levels of an organization and to work collaboratively across functions, levels and departments toward shared objectives.
* Sound management skills, ability to think strategically and prioritize while balancing several complex agendas, and strong results orientation.
* Adaptability, flexibility, diplomacy, and resourcefulness.
* Demonstrated ability to function independently, prioritize work, and manage multiple and competing priorities, along with unexpected situations, while meeting deadlines. Possess a system and process approach.
* Solid understanding of budget preparation and fiscal management.
* Appreciation and respect for the roles and responsibilities of a university president/chief administrative officer and an understanding of the level of support required.

# Preferred Qualifications:

* Broad knowledge and understanding of university policies and procedures.
* Extensive executive-level experience and relationships with government bodies.
* Experience in public higher education.

**Supervisory Responsibility:** This position directly supervises, if/as assigned, staff associated with the Office of the President.

**Work Environment:** Work is conducted in a fast-paced, in-person office environment and across campus, at other UMaine facilities, and across the University of Maine System. Some travel is required, including to the regional campus in Machias.

**Work Year:** Full-time, fiscal year.

**Work Schedule:** Normal University of Maine business hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Due to the nature of the position, frequent work beyond regular hours (to include evenings and weekends) will be necessary to meet the requirements of the position.

**Position Type:** On-going, full-time, base budgeted.

**Schedule for Evaluation:** Appointments to the Management Group are at-will and may be

terminated with or without cause. A written agreement at the time of initial appointment to

positions in the Management Group shall include the duration of the appointment, which shall not

exceed 3 years, and shall include a specified probationary period, which will normally be at least

12 months. After the initial term, subsequent appointments will be at-will and may be indefinite or

for a term appointment of up to 3 years for purposes of reappointments and major performance

reviews.

Appropriate background checks required.

All UMS employees are required to comply with applicable policies and procedures, as well as to complete applicable workplace related screenings, and required employee trainings, such as Information Security, Safety Training, Workplace Violence and Sexual Harassment.