



Position Profile
Executive Director
Society of Professional Journalists,
Sigma Delta Chi Foundation
Indianapolis, Indiana

The Organization

The Society of Professional Journalists, founded in 1909, is a professional association that is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code representing approximately 7,500 members. Through its activities, SPJ serves its members and the public interest as the independent voice of journalism and press freedom in the United States. The Association has an annual budget of approximately \$1.2M and a current staff of 13.

It is supported by the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation, a 501(c)(3) supporting organization, with assets of about \$13M.

SPJ's purpose is to support the professional interests of members; advance the profession of journalism; promote positive legislative reforms; support initiatives that foster and enhance diversity and inclusion in journalism; and encourage excellence in education for both the journalism student and the professional. It also strives to promote the public understanding of journalism and its role in democracy as outlined by the United States Constitution. It endeavors to make membership in SPJ indispensable and relevant to all working and aspiring journalists.

SPJ is currently governed by an elected 23-member Board of Directors based on representation from across the country. However, the organization's board will shrink to 9 members over the next two years, seven of whom will be elected and two of whom will be appointed.

The Foundation furthers the educational purposes of SPJ and is governed by a 29-member board, nominated and elected by current board members. As is common, there is some overlap with the SPJ Board of Directors.

More information about SPJ and the Foundation can be found at: www.spj.org.

The Position

Location

The position is located at SPJ headquarters at 3909 N. Meridian, St, Indianapolis, IN 46208.

Reporting Relationships

The Executive Director reports to SPJ's Board of Directors. Although the Foundation does not retain hiring/firing authority, the Executive Director also reports to the Board of the Foundation. (S)he oversees a current staff of 13 employees, including an Associate Executive Director; Staff Accountant; Education Manager; Development Manager; Communications Strategist; Creative Director; Program Manager; Office Manager; Web Administrator; Program Coordinator; Membership Coordinator; Communications Coordinator; and a part-time Communications Coordinator. This executive will maintain and promote important interactions and working relationships with SPJ members; leaders of other journalism associations; the public; and members of the media.

Position Charter

The Executive Director serves as the chief executive officer of SPJ and the Foundation under the direction of their respective Boards. The Executive Director is responsible for the effective conduct of the affairs of SPJ and the Foundation. This person assists the officers and the Boards in the formulation of the organization's mission, goals and objectives and related policies of SPJ and the Foundation. Within that framework and in frequent consultation with the Presidents, the Executive Director plans, organizes, coordinates, and directs the staff, programs and activities of SPJ and the Foundation. He/she is responsible for budget and fiscal management as well as appropriate staffing.

Major Duties and Responsibilities

The Executive Director has the following responsibilities:

Board Interactions

The Executive Director provides Boards and officers of SPJ and the Foundation with the necessary resources and innovative ideas to sustain the growth and development of the organizations. Working closely with the Presidents, he/she is responsible for developing Board meeting schedules and agendas, maintaining Board minutes and records, carrying out plans and programs of the Boards, serving as representative of the Boards for all contacts with the staff, initiating programs for consideration by the Boards, and advising the Boards on matters under consideration. Responsibilities include:

- Providing supportive leadership and working closely with the Boards in establishing strategic, operational and tactical plans and priorities for the organizations.
- Understanding the changing nature of journalism and the market forces impacting the profession.
- Evaluating programs and services, with recommendations to the Boards for change as needed.
- Assuring that the Boards are kept fully informed of the activities, operations, and financial condition of the organizations required for the efficient and orderly conduct of business.
- Overseeing the preparation and presentation of annual budgets for the consideration of the Boards, and reporting to the Boards on the financial condition of the organizations.
- Maintaining continuing communication with SPJ and Foundation President and other officers so that necessary actions can be taken between meetings of the Boards.
- Accounting to the Boards for carrying out all motions, resolutions, and directives approved by the Boards.

Membership Activities and Interaction

Provide leadership to and oversee staff and volunteers as they work to retain existing members, enhance the diversity and expand the size of the membership. Also, the Executive Director will oversee those activities necessary to maintain effective member relations and meet member expectations.

He/she is responsible for motivating members to personally, professionally, and financially support programs and events.

Responsibilities include:

- Analyzing and interpreting the needs of members and recommending revisions in programs to improve service and assistance to make membership more valuable and relevant.
- Identifying and developing other appropriate non-dues revenue opportunities.
- Maintaining communication with members through on-site visits, conversations, meetings and writings.
- Working diligently to insure that organizational programs, services and products assist members to become increasingly competitive and successful.
- Soliciting suggestions, proposals, and requests from members and working closely with the SPJ and Foundation Presidents and officers to translate them into action consistent with the fundamental objectives and policies of SPJ and the Foundation.

Programs and Services

Be responsible for the effective delivery of organizational programs and services to members and, as appropriate, to the public at large. This includes professional resources, advocacy efforts, publications, events, educational programs, web content and fund raising opportunities.

SPJ Staff

As the Executive Director of SPJ, oversee employment, assignment of duties, supervision, evaluation, training and ongoing leadership of all professional and support staff. Responsibilities include:

- Assuring consistency of HR policy development and implementation and ensuring that staff members are prepared to successfully implement the organizations' programs.
- Fostering a working environment that values teamwork, diversity, and inclusion while ensuring the highest levels of service to the members.
- Creating and promoting ethical standards of work and behavior.
- Reflecting and reinforcing a commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Ensuring appropriate staff participation in continuing education, training, professional conferences, and seminars to develop and maintain overall staff competence.
- Determining competitive compensation levels of staff employees in line with approved budgetary guidelines.
- Managing remote employees, if necessary.

Fiscal Management

In concert with the Boards, outside auditors, and financial staff, ensure the efficient preparation of accurate and timely financial statements with detailed supporting information relating to programs and services. Responsibilities include:

- Working with financial staff to ensure that all financial records are accurately and properly maintained as required by law and generally accepted accounting principles.
- Working with financial staff to present financial statements and reviews to the Boards.

Interaction with Related Associations

Serve as a leader in the journalism association industry, regularly connecting with executive directors and leaders of other national journalism associations. Responsibilities include:

- Serving as chief liaison to SPJ's Association Management partners, which currently include associations which have hired SPJ to manage their finances, communications, membership and event planning.

- Continually seeking out new partnerships with other journalism associations, with the goal of SPJ serving to support such associations.
- Maintaining an e-mail distribution list of leaders of all relevant journalism associations.
- Fostering partnerships/communication among all journalism associations.
- Connecting SPJ with other associations for efforts related to advocacy, education and other areas where coalitions are valuable.
- Representing the positive values of SPJ to all interested parties.

Development

In concert with the Boards and fundraising staff, ensure continued growth in development activities for SPJ and the Foundation. This includes oversight of fundraising programs, partnerships and grant-seeking efforts.

Headquarters Office Operations

Supervise the facilities, operations and assets of SPJ and the Foundation. Responsibilities include:

- Managing building and leasing of first-floor office space.
- Overseeing all building maintenance.

Other Duties

Perform such other duties as are provided by the bylaws of SPJ or the Foundation or assigned by the Boards.

Travel

The Executive Director will have several occasions each year to travel, including attendance at the SPJ Annual Conference (Excellence in Journalism); Foundation Awards Banquet; educational seminars; conference of other journalism associations; and other related events.

Compensation

The Executive Director receives a competitive compensation package, including health, dental and vision insurance, short-term and long-term insurance, life insurance and 401k match.

The Candidate

Education

A Bachelors' degree from a college or university is required; a degree in journalism, communications or related field is highly preferred. A demonstrated commitment to continued professional development is expected (e.g., American Society of Association Executives or Certified Association Executive designation).

Professional Qualifications

The ideal candidate has demonstrated a successful track record in association management and is currently serving as the top executive of a comparable professional services-focused association with a proven track record of success. Alternative experience includes serving as a “#2” or other senior-level executive at an association, as an executive from a media company, or other relevant senior leadership role in the military. Persons with a demonstrated commitment to, and success in, addressing and enhancing membership diversity and inclusion as well as the growth of a professional association of professionals are highly preferred.

Preferred Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Board management (experience working collaboratively with a volunteer Board of Directors).
- Journalism experience not required, but knowledge of, and a passion for the First Amendment and journalism's value to a democratic society is.
- Volunteer organization experience (appreciates the value of voluntary organization structure and operating techniques; proven ability to motivate and utilize staff and volunteers).
- Management experience (strong human resource management skills; has effectively organized and managed diverse teams of people; familiar with labor and employment laws).
- Fiscal management (develop revenue sources and control expenditures so as to preserve and enhance financial stability).
- Marketing orientation (ability to develop marketing strategies and plans that will retain and grow membership, promote the organization and the benefits of its programs and services to a variety of constituents;).
- Planning (experience in developing and implementing operational, financial, and strategic plans).
- Communication (effective communicator with internal and external constituents including Members, Board of Directors, government entities, staff, the media, and the public; has a clear writing and speaking style).
- Entrepreneurial (has experience with perceiving and working with Board leadership to capitalize on available opportunities to enhance services and relevance for members).
- Advocacy (in coordination with leadership, staff and legal counsel, engage in advocacy on behalf of SPJ).

Challenges and Opportunity

The projected first year accomplishments for the new Executive Director include:

- Establish presence as Executive Director and become familiar with the operations of the organization including staff, finances, programs, Officers, and Board members. Meet with various leaders and key supporters to begin to develop strong relationships with key constituencies.
- In concert with the Boards and staff, evaluate the strategic direction and future opportunities through a review of current programs and personnel; develop strategic, operational, and budgetary plans.
- Evaluate and develop responses to important organizational challenges and operational goals.

The Executive Director position of SPJ is an outstanding opportunity for a committed association or other executive to lead a professional association with a long history of success. An experienced staff, supporting Foundation, and committed Officers and Boards provide a strong foundation for SPJ's future and continued success. At the same time, however, journalists and the journalism profession face significant challenges from eroding media credibility, shrinking newsrooms and non-traditional news providers. Under the new Executive Director's leadership and guidance, SPJ must discover ways to continue to provide outstanding services and programs that are both affordable and relevant to today's journalists as well as advocate on behalf of the membership.

Contact

Interested candidates should send a resume/CV to spjexecsearch@gmail.com.

Equal Opportunity Employer

SPJ and the Foundation are committed to the principles and philosophy of equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of race, religion or belief, citizenship, color, sex, pregnancy, age, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, national origin, gender identity or association, ancestry, veteran and uniformed service status, genetic information, disability or any other status protected by local, state or federal law.