

JULIA CUMMINGS, PHD, MBA SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS LEADER

GOLDEN, CO | 720-470-9748 | JULIA.CUMMINGS@UCDENVER.EDU | [LINKEDIN](#)

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT ■ PUBLIC AFFAIRS ■ STRATEGIC VISION

I am an enterprise communications and external affairs leader with deep experience advancing reputation, enrollment, and public trust for complex, mission-driven institutions. I partner with presidents, deans, and boards to align strategy, marketing, media, government relations, and community engagement into unified platforms that strengthen visibility, resources, and impact.

I have led integrated communications that contributed to significant enrollment growth, national media recognition, successful capital campaign initiatives, and expanded access for historically underrepresented communities. My work bridges academic rigor with public understanding — translating research, policy, and institutional priorities into narratives that mobilize students, donors, partners, and policymakers.

As a senior leader, I build high-performing teams and cross-campus coalitions, connecting digital strategy, storytelling, advancement, and crisis management into measurable outcomes. Known for judgment, inclusivity, and strategic clarity, I help institutions navigate change, protect reputation, and convert mission into sustained momentum and civic value.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Drove double- and triple-digit enrollment growth** through targeted, data-informed marketing strategies, contributing to year-over-year increases of **+40% in master's counseling, +133% in doctoral education, and +27% in school psychology**, while sustaining undergraduate teacher education growth.
- **Directed communications for a landmark museum exhibition that attracted 688,000+ visitors** and supported a **\$50 million capital campaign**, elevating national visibility through placements in the *New York Times*, Today Show, CNN, and *National Geographic*.
- **Built and led integrated teams across marketing, media, digital, and advancement**, aligning cross-campus stakeholders to launch institutional strategic plans, strengthen alumni engagement, and expand partnerships serving **2,200 students and 15,600 alumni**.
- **Shaped national policy and public engagement outcomes**, helping secure passage of federal environmental legislation and generating **300+ major media features and editorials**, which resulted in a foundation **doubling grant investment** the following year.

EXECUTIVE ASSETS

Public & Media Relations ■ Crisis Communications Management ■ Marketing & Branding ■ Digital Media & Strategy ■ Creative Design & Web Content ■ Government Relations ■ Engagement & Events ■ Budget Management ■ Market Research and Analysis ■ Project Management ■ Collaborative Leadership ■ Publications ■ Executive Advisor

CAREER IN ACTION

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER – DENVER, CO

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT | 2007 – PRESENT

CU Denver is Colorado's premier public urban research university. Reporting to University Communications and a Dean, my role provides the School of Education & Human Development with strategic leadership for brand, marketing, and digital communications including storytelling and creative direction, web and content strategy, publications, alumni engagement and events marketing, market research, and cross-campus collaboration.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Align school initiatives with institutional priorities, advancing access, equity, and enrollment goals.
- Lead cross-functional teams of staff, research assistants, and external consultants to deliver high-impact campaigns and strategic communications.
- Contribute to year-over-year application growth and enrollment momentum, including undergraduate teacher education +4%, master's in counseling +40%, doctoral education +133%, and school psychology +27% through targeted marketing and audience strategy.
- Elevate visibility of underrepresented leaders, students, and community partners through multimedia storytelling and inclusive content strategy.
- Co-led development, design, and rollout of the school's strategic plan, translating priorities into actionable communications and measurable initiatives.
- Strengthen alumni engagement and partnership promotion through data-informed campaigns, events marketing, and digital content optimization.

JULIA CUMMINGS, PhD, MBA

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DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE & SCIENCE – DENVER, CO

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS | 2001 – 2007

Served as institutional spokesperson and communications strategist for the fifth-largest U.S. science museum, overseeing brand management, media relations, crisis communications, government relations, executive messaging, and publications. Directed communications for permanent and temporary exhibitions, scientific research, Gates Planetarium and IMAX theater.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Led integrated media strategy generating national placements including the New York Times (front page), Today Show, CNN, National Geographic, and U.S. News & World Report.
- Directed communications for the museum's third most-attended exhibition, drawing 688,000+ visitors, and supported a successful \$50M capital campaign.
- Developed and executed comprehensive crisis communications protocols ensuring timely, transparent public messaging.
- Supervised a five-person communications team and external government relations firm; advised executive leadership and Board.
- Earned Gold ADDY Award for the Space Odyssey and Gates Planetarium press kit.

EARLY CAREER

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY – WASHINGTON, D.C. & BOULDER, CO

DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY | 2000 – 2001

Managed key components of national media relations strategy for a 600,000-member conservation organization, cultivating relationships with major U.S. outlets. Collaborated across nonprofit and foundation partners to amplify policy and conservation priorities.

HIGH PLAINS LIBRARY DISTRICT – GREELEY, CO

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT | 1992 – 2000

Led brand launch, media relations, advertising, fundraising communications, and community engagement for an eight-branch library system. Authored bi-weekly newspaper column and managed communications for mill levy and bond initiatives.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION – WASHINGTON, D.C.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST | 1989 – 1992

Supported media and government relations for the world's largest museum and research complex; contributed content to Smithsonian Magazine.

EDUCATION



DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY – PUBLIC AFFAIRS | UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER | December, 2025

Dissertation: Public Policy Communications: Promoting Voter Engagement through Narrative Economics, Contextual Issues/Images, and Diverse Narrators

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION – MARKETING | UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER | 2012

BACHELOR OF ARTS – HUMANITIES, MAGNA CUM LAUDE | UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER | 1989

MINOR: ART HISTORY

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Marketing Association: <i>Higher Education and Academic Chapters</i>	2008 – Present
Public Relations Society of America	2001 – Present
Denver Woman's Press Club	2006 – Present
American Society for Public Administration	2022 – Present
Midwest Political Science Association	2022 – Present

ACADEMIC POSITION

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER – DENVER, CO

Lecturer, School of Public Affairs

Spring 2024 – Present

Strategic Communications for Public Engagement – PUAD 4003. Undergraduate and graduate students; online; asynchronous with synchronous guest speaker appearances and field trips.

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Journal Articles

Cummings, Julia Fisher. 2024. "Closing Age and Race Gaps in Elections through Inclusive and Contextual Communications." *Journal of Social Equity in Public Administration*, 3(1), 69-87.

Invited Book Chapter

Cummings, Julia, and Ken McConnellogue. 2021. From a Dog's Breakfast to a King's Table: Branding and Marketing a Major Research University. In S. Zavattaro editor, *Public Branding and Marketing: A Global Viewpoint*. Springer Nature.

Publications in Preparation

Cummings, Julia Fisher. "Economic Narratives in U.S. Presidential Candidate Acceptance Speeches." in preparation for *Political Communications*

FUNDED GRANT

National Civic League Mini-Grant

2022

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Reviewer

Policy Studies Journal

2024

Volunteer

Conference for Policy Process Research

2023

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Academic Management Institute – Colorado Network of Women Leaders

2024 – 2025

Pforzheimer National Civic League Fellowship

2022 – 2023

Marketing Fellowship, CU Denver Business School

2011

Bighorn Center for Public Policy Fellowship

2005

University of Colorado Denver, School of Public Affairs, Travel Award

2022 – 2024

University of Colorado Denver, Graduate School, Travel Award

2022 – 2024

Dean's Marketing Student Scholarship, CU Denver Business School

2009

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- Cummings, J.** (June 2024). *Syllabus Workshop*. 2024 Public Interest Communications Summer Institute, Denver, CO.
- Cummings, J.** (April 2024). *Women's Economic Narratives in Unequal Times: Political Prose Around a 2023 Women's Convention*. Advances in the Narrative Policy Framework Panel. Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- Cummings, J.** (May 2023). *Experimental Evidence on Policy Narratives, Diverse and Contextual Imagery, and Nonvoter's Intention to Vote*. Power Dynamics in the Narrative Policy Framework Workshop, Speyer, Germany.
- Cummings, J.** (April 2023). *Experiential Evidence on Minimum Wage Policy Narratives, Diverse and Contextual Imagery, and Nonvoters' Intention to Vote*. Advances in the Narrative Policy Framework Panel. Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- Cummings, J.** (March 2023). *Closing Age and Race Gaps in Elections Through Inclusive and Contextual Communications*. American Society for Public Administration's Annual Conference, virtual.
- Cummings, J.** (April 2022). *Following the Money: Economic Settings and Solutions in U.S. Presidential Candidate Acceptance Speeches*. Advances in the Narrative Policy Framework Panel. Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- Cummings, J.** (February 2005). *Business and Arts Partnerships*. Community, Culture and Commerce Conference, Denver, CO.
- Berscheidt, J. and **Julia Cummings** (March 2005). *Crisis Communications: Why Honesty is Important*. Peak Performance Conference, Denver, CO.
- Discussant**
- Cummings, J.** (April 2023). Policy Narratives and Framing Panel, Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.

PUBLIC SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

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| Affiliate Faculty Member
Center for Community Safety and Resilience, CU Denver School of Public Affairs | 2024 – present |
| Center for Common Ground
Volunteer, postcard writer to registered BIPOC voters to get out the vote | 2024 |
| Jefferson County Public Schools
Volunteer, Environmental Learning for the Future | 2016 – 2023 |

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Jefferson County Public Schools – We Are Jeffco Communications strategy team for successful mill/bond	2017 – 2018
Colorado’s Forest Restoration and Wildfire Mitigation Grant Program Co-drafted and lobbied for successful legislation	2007
Jefferson County Symphony Board Member	2005 – 2007
University of Colorado Boulder’s Center for Humanities and Arts Community Council Member	2005 – 2007
Colorado Tourism Promotion Committee Voting member and representative for all arts/cultural institutions in the state	2004 – 2007
Scientific and Cultural Facilities District Reauthorization Communications team member, successful arts and culture tax reauthorization	2004
Smithsonian Institution Women’s Council Elected representative	1990 – 1992
