



Wexner Center Names New Marketing & Communications Talent

Columbus, Ohio—August 18, 2016—The Wexner Center for the Arts is pleased to announce the appointments of Densil R.R. Porteous II as Director of Marketing and Communications and Melissa Starker as Creative Content and PR Manager.



Porteous, who begins at the center in September, has over 13 years' experience in recruiting and enrolling the best and brightest students to Kenyon College, Stanford University, and most recently the Columbus College of Art & Design through strategically marketing, leveraging, and enhancing their unique collegiate brands. At the Wex, he will lead a team of eight and work closely with Creative Services Director Erica Anderson on all aspects of the center's marketing and branding.

Starker, who will join the team at the end of August, is a seasoned journalist and arts critic on the local and regional cultural scene, working for more than 10 years as an editor and lead arts writer at *Columbus Alive!*, and as a contributing writer for national and local publications, including *The Guardian US*, *Rocker Magazine*, and *The Columbus Dispatch*. She will serve as the center's media spokesperson, publicist, and chief storyteller, interacting with the local, national, and international media while also creating content for the Wex blog and social media feeds.

“We are thrilled to welcome both of these talented professionals to our marketing and communications team,” says Director Sherri Geldin. “The combination of Densil’s keen and agile brand marketing skills with Melissa’s media and storytelling savvy will create untold synergies as we extend the reach and reputation of the Wex.

Deputy Director Jack Jackson, who oversaw both searches, adds, “Their respective immersion in the Columbus community will even further deepen our strong bond with existing members and patrons of the Wex.”

During his time as CCAD's Chief Enrollment Officer, Porteous developed comprehensive, multi-channel marketing and communication plans that expanded the states and markets represented in the applicant pools and improved the selectivity and diversity of incoming classes. As Assistant Dean of Admission/Marketing and Communications Outreach at Stanford University, he rebooted the enrollment communication strategy and organization, including integrating digital communications into social media networks; instituting data-driven outreach initiatives to diversify candidate pools; and leveraging the university's brand and thought leaders for connective storytelling with diverse audience segments.

With her lively and informed reviews, features and blog posts on film, visual art, fashion, and cultural trends, Starker has become a “go-to” for cultural institutions, publishers, and readers. In addition to her journalistic career, Starker has worked as a publicist, marketing manager, and spokesperson for the Coolidge Corner Theatre (Boston), as well as Columbus's own Drexel Theatre, Studio 35 Cinema, and Gateway Film Center. She also has worked recently with Express LLC's ecommerce division to craft strategy and content for its blog and social media storytelling.

Porteous—born in Jamaica, raised in New York, and now a Columbus resident—earned a Bachelor of Arts at Kenyon College and an MBA, with a focus in marketing and communications, from the University of Phoenix. He serves on the National Board of Governors for the Human Rights Campaign, the Board of Directors of Equitas Health, and the Pizzuti Collection's Pacesetters Steering Committee.

Starker, a Boston native, is an alumnus of the Massachusetts College of Art. She chairs the Independent's Day Festival's Moving Images Program in Columbus, and serves as a juror for the Columbus International Film + Video Festival, and the Columbus 48 Hour Film Festival.

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