

JAKIA PROPST, MBA

Brand Strategist & Creative Director

She/Her · Pronounced Jah-KYE-Ah | jakiaspropst@gmail.com · 828.291.5533 · Nashville, TN

10+ years of experience building communications ecosystems, campaigns, and creative work across nonprofit, agency, and institutional contexts. My practice sits at the intersection of story, strategy, and community — and travels across industries without losing integrity.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Brand Strategy · Communications Campaign · Community Building · Content & Storytelling · Creative Direction · Crisis & Change Management · Inclusive Marketing & Communications · Web Design & Development · Workshop Facilitation

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder & Creative Director

2022 – Present

Culture Marketing Agency · Nashville, TN

- **Built a fractional creative practice from the ground up** — serving as embedded brand and communications director for a multi-client portfolio, leading strategy, content, paid media, and performance reporting from brief to measurable results.
- **Developed a repeatable brand strategy process from scratch** — turning instinct into a scalable, transferable framework now applied consistently across a growing client roster.
- **Drove 135% increase in social media engagement** through precision media planning and high-impact activations, including Art Basel placements.
- **Exceeded first-year revenue goals by 25%** through proactive market analysis and data-driven client proposals that surfaced growth opportunities ahead of client ask.
- **Built and designed client websites** — end-to-end, from architecture and UX through to launch, as part of integrated brand strategy engagements.
- **Built campaign analytics infrastructure for clients from zero** — standardizing tracking and performance reporting across all accounts to enable real-time optimization and clear ROI communication.

Senior Communications Strategist

Nov 2023 – Present

Vanderbilt University — Student Affairs · Promoted from Associate Communications Strategist (Apr 2024) · Nashville, TN

- **Architect and own the full communications infrastructure** for student belonging & engagement and multiple institutional initiatives — strategy, execution, and optimization across web, email, and social.
- **Lead high-stakes change management communications** for the community centers restructuring — co-designing a 5+ website ecosystem, authoring phased stakeholder messaging, and executing a division-wide rollout that preserved community trust throughout.
- **Collaborate with campus partners to build crisis communications protocols from scratch** for campus-wide incidents — producing contingency frameworks and message architectures now adopted as division-wide institutional standards.
- **Oversee the T.H.R.I.V.E. Grant annual communications cycle** — overseeing website development and updates, leading the multi-channel campaign, and producing the post-launch storytelling opportunities published on [Vanderbilt News](#).

- **Lead the Community Takes Courage annual campaign cycle** — Vanderbilt’s institutional response to the Stop Campus Hazing Act – including a university-wide **multi-channel campaign**, Hazing Prevention Week, website development and updates, and full design of training materials.
- **Lead Welcome Communications for incoming first-year and transfer students** — a cohesive multi-channel initiative spanning a printed booklet, welcome website, multi-newsletter series, and SMS campaign, produced in partnership with Admissions and several university departments.
- **Supervise and develop professional staff and student workers** — setting priorities, reviewing deliverables, and building team capability aligned to organizational goals.

Digital Communications Strategist

Feb 2020 – Oct 2023

Alive Hospice · Nashville, TN

- **Collaborated on a full digital communications ecosystem** — managing web, email, and social strategy across patient services, fundraising, and recruitment simultaneously.
- **Generated \$800K+ in donations and pledges** by directing the Make a Will Month campaign end-to-end — building the full digital campaign from scratch and aligning storytelling directly to donor motivation and philanthropic intent.
- **Grew organic web traffic 130% YOY and email performance 125%** through audience segmentation, A/B testing, lifecycle journey redesign, and integrated SEO and content strategy.
- **Standardized analytics tracking across 50+ annual and monthly projects** — giving organizational leadership consistent, actionable campaign visibility for the first time in the organization’s history.

Senior Creative Strategist

Aug 2018 – Jan 2020

SocialCoaster Digital Agency · Promoted from Marketing Communications Manager (June 2019) · Franklin, TN

- **Promoted to Senior Creative Strategist in under 12 months** — leading full-funnel creative strategy for client accounts while supervising a team of 4–5 creatives.
- **Grew a flagship client’s Instagram organic traffic 200% in three months** — building a content strategy model subsequently adopted as standard practice across the agency’s full portfolio.
- **Increased client referrals 10%** through high-performing, data-driven campaign frameworks that consistently delivered measurable results.

COMMUNITY & CREATIVE PRACTICE

Founder & Steward

2021 – Present

Out the Margins · Nashville, TN

- **Built a community storytelling platform from the ground up** — designing programming, curating experiential spaces, and creating environments where stories are held, not extracted, for intersectional Black identities.
- Facilitates community creative workshops and in-person and digital programming for Black queer and intersectional communities.

MLK March Communications Chair

2023 – Present

Vanderbilt University · Nashville, TN

- Lead all communications for Vanderbilt’s annual MLK Day March — producing all promotional and marketing materials (e.g., flyers, apparel, handouts, signage), leadership briefs, volunteer materials, and a crisis communications protocol now embedded in institutional planning.

DEI Chair & ERG Founder

2021 – 2023

Alive Hospice · Nashville, TN

- Founded and led Alive Hospice’s first Employee Resource Group — designing annual equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging programming, managing a cross-functional budget, and delivering focus group data that directly informed executive strategy on equity and inclusion.

Creative Writing Workshop Facilitator 2021

Warby Parker — ROOTS ERG · Nashville, TN

- Consulted and entrusted to design and facilitate a creative writing workshop for Black History Month — building a safe community infrastructure for expression and storytelling among BIPOC staff members.

PRESENTATIONS & FACILITATION

Digital Accessibility & Website Editing Training 2026

Student Affairs Summer Learning Series · Vanderbilt University

- Presented two sessions as part of the division-wide Summer Learning Series — covering digital accessibility regulations and best practices, and a practical walkthrough of website editing tools, training materials, and pre-recorded tutorials. Both sessions were designed with accessibility principles embedded throughout.

Welcome Communications Initiative — Campus Partner Presentation 2026

Admissions & Campus Partners · Vanderbilt University

- Shared the vision and process for a more streamlined, centralized approach to Welcome Communications — covering partnership goals, new processes, and tools for cross-departmental collaboration.

Student Affairs Communications — Student Leader Orientation 2025

Vanderbilt University · Student Leaders & Organization Leads

- Delivered a comprehensive overview of Student Affairs communications resources to student organization leaders at the start of the academic year — covering marketing and branding, website support, design resources, photography requests, branding guidelines, and social media channels.

Belonging & Communities Mission and Values Development 2024 – 2025

Co-Facilitation · Vanderbilt University Student Affairs · 7-week process

- Co-led a seven-week facilitated process with representatives from five community centers — gathering archival materials, producing training workshops on language and storytelling, and guiding the group through the development of a Mission and Values framework subsequently reviewed and approved by division leadership.

Welcome Communications Initiative 2024

Student Affairs All-Staff Meeting · Vanderbilt University · 200+ staff members

- Presented metrics, materials, and strategy for the Welcome Communications Initiative to the full Student Affairs division — covering a printed booklet, welcome website, seven-newsletter series, and SMS campaign produced in partnership with Admissions and multiple university departments.

Marketing & Communications Orientation 2020 – 2023

New Staff Orientation · Alive Hospice · Nashville, TN

- Delivered rotating monthly presentations to incoming staff as part of organizational onboarding — covering the Marketing & Communications team's scope of work, materials produced, media request processes, and the institutional importance of legacy and storytelling in end-of-life care.

CREATIVE WORKS

Poetry Collection In Development

First chapbook · manuscript in progress

- A collection of poems exploring identity, culture, and intersectional experience. Rooted in a practice of spoken word and theatre.

Featured Artist & Panelist 2024
Nashville Design Week · Nashville, TN

- Produced, directed, performed and edited a short poetic feature examining the intersections of Black southern identities and intimacy as ritual — screened as part of Nashville Design Week programming drawing 200+ community members for a panelist discussion. | [View the featured work](#)

Published Poetry Video – when the blues cry back. 2020
Button Poetry · published poetry video

- Directed and produced – as part of my series “Neuroses & other things borrowed” – a poetry video exploring the relational dynamics of distance, time, vulnerability and loss, which was submitted and published by Button Poetry, an independent publisher and media company. | [View the published video](#)

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Standing Ovation Award 2025 – 2026
Vanderbilt University · Student Affairs

Recognized for impact and execution in leading digital strategy, marketing, and communications for the institution-wide Community Takes Courage campaign, in alignment with the Stop Campus Hazing Act.

New Student Affairs Professional Award 2024 – 2025
Vanderbilt University · Student Affairs

The highest recognition for early-career staff in the Student Affairs division, awarded within the first year in role.

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration 2022
Walden University · Minneapolis, MN

Bachelor of Arts, English & African American Studies 2017
Florida State University · Tallahassee, FL

References available upon request · With care, always.