

# Kelley T. O'Brien

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## CREDENTIALS

### SUMMARY

Accomplished communicator with a proven track record in grant proposal writing and communications instruction. Excellent strategic thinker and program planner with a keen attention to detail and strong project management skills.

## PROFESSIONAL

### EXPERIENCE

#### **Owner and Principal, KTO Strategy & Communications**

Carrboro, North Carolina

2016 — present

Work with public and private organizations to articulate strategic priorities, develop program plans, create content, manage complex projects, and secure funding. Clients include Advanced Energy, EducationNC, the North Carolina Community Development Initiative, Marbles Kids Museum, and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries.

#### SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Develop and manage strategic fundraising campaigns that have resulted in clients raising over \$10 million from public, private, and individual sources
- Write content and manage processes for federal grant proposals, including those to the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, US Department of Energy, and US Department of Education, successfully securing over \$5.5 million
- Work with executive leadership teams to develop organizational and departmental priorities, resulting in strategic roadmaps and communications plans

#### **Adjunct Faculty, School of Government**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2009 — present

Teach business communication, grant proposal writing, and grants management to graduate students and working professionals

#### **Strategic Search Partner**

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2017 — present

Provide nonprofit, higher education, and corporate clients with search, consulting, coaching, and training services. Part of the search team for positions including Charlotte Regional Business Alliance CEO, Gillings School of Global Public Health Vice Dean and NC Institute for Public Health Director, Golden LEAF President & CEO, and SAC (Southern AIDS Coalition)

#### **Director for Strategy and Innovation, School of Government**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2012 — 2016

Led a variety of initiatives, each requiring broad-based buy-in and support, to advance the School's work as the largest university-based local government training, advisory, and research organization in the country. Served as a member of the senior-level management team, providing input on strategic direction and financial management of the organization

#### SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Oversaw strategic planning for the School, which resulted in priorities related to fundraising, diversity, engaged scholarship, and organizational development
- Managed cross-departmental initiative to develop standardized evaluations for use in the School's nearly 200 annual courses for North Carolina public officials
- Designed and managed the School's Innovation Fund, which supports internal and external projects that advance the School's mission
- Designed and administered a comprehensive market research study of local government officials to evaluate price sensitivity, preferred delivery channels, and new markets for School products and services
- Completed UC Berkeley Haas School of Business Executive Program in Innovation and Harvard Division of Continuing Education's Design Thinking program

**Interim Associate Dean for Development, School of Government**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 2012 — 2013

Served as the School's lead development officer, supervising three staff members and overseeing all fundraising activities; led School planning for university capital campaign

**SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Guided multiple stakeholder groups to develop and communicate campaign priorities
- Secured faculty support for strategic corporate partnerships involving selected School courses for North Carolina public officials

**Director, NC Civic Education Consortium, School of Government**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 2005 — 2012

**Assistant Director**

2004 — 2005

**Civic Index Project Director**

2002 — 2004

Managed the daily operations (including recruitment, hiring, and evaluation of employees, interns, and graduate assistants) of a statewide K-12 civic education program and served as a spokesperson for state, national, and international civic education efforts

**SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Developed and published the *2010 North Carolina Civic Health Index* and *2003 NC Civic Index*, the nation's first statewide study of youth and adult civic engagement
- Successfully secured more than \$1.5 million in funding from foundations, government agencies, and professional associations
- Served as project lead for North Carolina's Deliberating in Democracy program, which involved partnerships with schools across the United States and South America
- Managed redesign of the program's website, which included development of a searchable database of lesson plans that received more than 520,000 page views annually

**Associate Director, Durham Workforce Partnership**

Durham, North Carolina 2001 — 2002

Developed and oversaw school-to-career programs in Durham Public Schools

**SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Initiated successful partnerships between schools and businesses in the medical, technology, construction, and hospitality sectors
- Transitioned the organization to an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit

**SERVICE**

Frank Adoption Center Board of Directors 2014 — present  
President (2014-present)

Kids Voting North Carolina Board of Directors 2005 — 2012  
Chair (2007-08) Treasurer (2005-07)

New York Marathon, Team for Kids November 2008

**EDUCATION**

Master of Public Administration and Certificate in Nonprofit Management

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Thesis: *Welfare Reform, Food Stamps, and The Food Bank of North Carolina's Member Emergency Food Providers: An Analysis of Food Substitution Effects*

Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, with honors, Honors Interdisciplinary Studies, Phi Beta Kappa  
The University of Georgia