

Job Description

Job Title:	Director, Executive Communications
Department:	University Communications
Reports To:	Associate Vice-President, Communications
Jobs Reporting:	Manager, Executive Communications
Salary Grade:	USG 14
Effective Date:	July 2022

Primary Purpose

The Director, Executive Communications is responsible for developing breakthrough strategic communication plans directly in support of the president of the University.

Under the direction of the Associate Vice-President, Communications, role exercises an organization-wide leadership role by providing counsel, stakeholder relationship management expertise, and politically astute strategic communications support to the president and senior executives while working in concert with the president's advisors, direct reports, and governance structures.

The role is responsible for overseeing, developing and delivering consistent, measurable, strategic and creative communication products for all audience groups. These approaches will be built on past successes and should introduce new creative ways that will begin to position University of Waterloo as a sector leader in strategic communication impact.

The role covers a broad set of responsibilities requiring expertise in strategic communication and storytelling, speechwriting, thought leadership, public relations, website best practices, social media and digital marketing to inform communication design, development and execution.

Key Accountabilities

Strategy and implementation

- Identifies and supports opportunities to advance the president's image and reputation and position them as an institutional and sector thought leader with targeted audiences, through multiple channels and engagement opportunities, such as public and industry events, speaking opportunities, partner websites and publications, and awards submissions.
- Contributes to the leadership, development and delivery of the University's key messages centrally and in support of priority institutional initiatives and strategic objectives.
- Oversees the creation of consistent, high quality and brand aligned communication publications that set the standard for internal and external communication.
- Champion University Relations' guidelines to all communicators across the campus and support their development to meet these guidelines.
- Leads and coordinates major communication initiatives across the University, serving as the principal project manager for communication projects as required.
- Consults with campus leaders and communicators to inform a thematic communication calendar identifying and reflecting institutional priorities and emerging opportunities.
- Plays a lead role in developing positive relationships within and among University Relations and its primary internal and external stakeholders. Identifies opportunities for internal collaboration and

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<p>consultation with Faculties, departments and academic support units on communication initiatives and executes or supports co- developed plans. Builds and maintains strong relationships with colleagues in communication roles at partner organizations and stakeholder groups, ensuring the University is consistently, accurately and effectively represented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the Associate Vice-President, Communications to provide support for emergency or crisis situations, working closely with colleagues across University Relations and campus partners.
<p>Leading or managing people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervise and lead the executive communication team to deliver high level, impactful communication to all audiences across a wide variety of channels and media. Provide leadership to all campus communicators in developing communication plans and coordinated implementation in support of the president's priorities.• Ensure the team meets deadlines and targets for effective delivery of communication channels.• Responsible for fostering and maintaining a work environment that encourages, recognizes and rewards creativity, innovation, excellence and personal accountability.• Has a direct and positive impact on the Vice-President, University Relations department, the Office of the President and all lines of communication activity. Plays a key role in developing and maintaining strong, positive relationships within the department and its internal and stakeholders.
<p>Insights and understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anticipate economic, social, political, environmental and technological developments to keep activity relevant and targeted.• Maintains expertise in the areas of the post-secondary education sector in Ontario, in Canada, and globally, as well as the political environments and challenges, institutional partnerships, public policy priorities, and emerging educational trends.• Bring together views and perspectives of stakeholders to gain a wider picture of the landscape surrounding activities and policies.• Implements changes to messaging or communication approach based on insights gathered from a range of sources.• Develop tools and vehicles to generate sources of data to inform future communication activities.
<p>Measurement and impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and use a range of data sources to advise leaders on the overall communication approach.• Establish metrics to assess the effectiveness of communication and act on feedback to ensure communication is timely, relevant and meets the needs of the University and audiences.• Recommends and implements cross-channel approaches to communication based on institutional priorities, emerging opportunities and insights gained from data analysis.

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

Required Qualifications

<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University degree in public relations, marketing or a communication related field, or comparable experience.
<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 10 years knowledge, understanding and experience of internal communication and engagement and especially its application to large-scale organizational change and continuous improvement programs in a complex, fast-moving and diverse corporate environment is essential.

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- Skilled writer and editor, experienced in leading institutional or corporate communication.
- Proven experience of working in an organization with a high-profile reputation, often in the media spotlight.
- Experience of working with senior executives and leaders and demonstrating advanced influencing and negotiation skills.
- Recent experience in a senior communications role including executive level communications. Knowledge of issues management and communication planning in a post-secondary, public sector, or broader public sector environment.
- Experience working in a highly complex organization with multi-stakeholders.
- Demonstrable track record of leading, line managing and developing teams of professional staff and of balancing conflicting and pressing demands.
- Experience of developing organizational objectives into material for targeted communications and engagement activities across a range of different channels and media, including face to face engagement.
- Experience with researching target markets and related data collection and analysis, preparation and presentation of reports and recommendations for inclusion in strategic documents.
- Experience of working with people with no direct or negative experience of 'professional' communications and ensuring their expectations/input/requirements from communication are effectively aligned and managed.
- Significant experience in writing, proofing and editing material (including speeches), and of presenting proposals and plans to senior/board level executives.
- Evidence of being a persuasive and dynamic leader with highly developed communication and interpersonal skills, who is outgoing and comfortable with networking, influencing and persuading at the highest level.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Comprehensive understanding of administrative, academic and governance structures of a university.
- Solid understanding of the external environment for universities within Canada and the Province (COU, UC, U15, federal and provincial ministries, etc.).
- Several years of progressive experience performing duties related to the Key Accountabilities listed above.
- Detail oriented to ensure accurate and reliable implementation of communication strategies.
- Thorough command of the technology associated with social media and the digital world (from the evolving social web to mobile tools and trends), sophisticated client service and digital communications skills, and high level of energy and passion with respect to this area of rapid change and innovation.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Excellent editing skills.
- Critical thinking and excellent analytical skills to enable immediate and appropriate assessment of complex issues of concern to stakeholders including among others, the media, the public, and funders.
- The role covers a broad set of responsibilities requiring expertise in strategic communication and storytelling, publication management, public relations, marketing and working knowledge of website best practices, social media and digital marketing to inform communication design, development and execution.
- Strong organizational skills coupled with proven ability to effectively document work, handle multiple tasks, and excel in a fast-paced environment characterized by changing priorities and short deadlines.
- Flexibility to adapt to unexpected and time sensitive demands.

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- Highly developed people management and leadership skills with demonstrated ability to develop and support a professional, service and continuous improvement focused workplace culture.
- Ability to think and act strategically, creatively and dynamically in a high-pressure work environment.
- Ability to manage confidential and sensitive materials and situations with the utmost discretion.
- Ability to deal professionally with tension and conflicts.
- Must be confident, organized and an accomplished problem solver.
- Ability to make decisions with good judgment and with acute sensitivity to the political environment and to the reputation of the University.
- Must be able to quickly assimilate information, analyze data and provide strategic advice, guidance and decisions on behalf of the Office of the President or the President as required.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Works directly with the President of the University on daily basis. Interacts with colleagues across the university and at all levels to develop and build communication awareness, understanding and competency. Internally, communicates with all employees in all groups and departments and at all levels to deal with, influence and motivate others, often with different perspectives and concerns. Demonstrates leadership and integrity when dealing with all internal and external stakeholders, with the goal of advancing the overall University Communication agenda.
- **Level of Responsibility:** Significant level of responsibility and accountability to support the priorities of the President and the vision of the University. The incumbent will possess proven ability, extensive experience and strong working knowledge and understanding of integrated marketing and communication strategies within a highly complex institution and competitive marketplace and the role of communication and marketing in achieving the University's stated goals. The position is expected to bring innovative approaches and new concepts and models to communication programs. Requires a deep understanding of the issues facing the post-secondary education sector and the ability to interpret these factors into insightful communication in support of senior leaders and the university. Engage in communication of highest quality, which reflects and affects the reputation of the university in local, national and international spheres. The incumbent must be a communication professional with experience in producing diverse publications and other communication deliverables (print, web, digital) with simultaneous or overlapping deadlines, in a fast-paced environment.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Responsible and accountable for establishing the priorities for strategic communication programs and addressing the changes to strategic business plans by consulting directly with the Associate Vice-President, Communication as appropriate. The position will independently make high-risk decisions that have significant consequences on the reputation of the University and on the campus community.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal demands typical of a position operating within an office environment; periods of extensive sitting and concentrated use of visual senses. This position requires outstanding customer service, sound judgment, a strong work ethic, calm demeanor, ability to work under very challenging time constraints, constant interruptions and competing priorities.
- **Working Environment:** Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of a position exposed to stress and pressure associated with management level responsibilities. Responsiveness is critical to the role. Work outside the normal operating hours of the University can be expected in this role.