

Job Description



Job Title:	Communications Officer
Department:	David R Cheriton School of Computer Science
Reports To:	Administrative Officer
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 9
Effective Date:	December 2020

Primary Purpose

The Communications Officer is responsible for researching, writing, editing, and coordinating communications materials written specifically for internal and external audiences as a means to enhance the Cheriton School of Computer Science's reputation as a world-class leader in computer science. The overall objective is to advance the School's image and reputation through the production of professional, compelling and effective communications materials.

Key Accountabilities

Collaboration, research and writing

- Develop rapport with faculty members and undergrad and graduate students to ensure they are willing and eager to have their research findings and achievements disseminated
- Create and expand Wikipedia profiles for faculty members
- Write research features, researcher and student profiles, news articles, award and recognition announcements for SCS website, ensuing content is topical and timely
- Conduct background research (seek out and read journal and conference papers), conduct faculty member and student interviews, write, edit and fact check articles for content accuracy across a variety of story content types for SCS website and Faculty of Mathematics news section and social media accounts
- Integrate and leverage SCS content across the range of Faculty of Mathematics online channels (Faculty's website, social media accounts and TV screens)
- Disseminate research features, findings and news to internal audiences (Faculty of Mathematics, Daily Bulletin, Waterloo home page) and to external audiences (e.g., ACM TechNews, eTies Newsletter, The Record, etc.)
- Ensure accuracy, consistency and excellence in quality and content of messaging in all written communications materials
- Maintain and update list of faculty member and student awardees for annual SCS Achievement Awards ceremony

Photography, photo editing, illustration and graphic design

- Take high-quality photographs of SCS faculty and students and SCS events for features and news articles across a variety of internal and external media, including web banners, web pages, TV screens, brochures, pamphlets, posters, and news sites
- Digitally edit photographs for accuracy and aesthetics (correct colour balance, adjust brightness, contrast and shadow and highlight detail, selectively lighten and darken images, etc.)
- Design visually compelling content for digital display screens

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- Create brochures, recruitment advertisements, banners and posters to advertise SCS events and to promote the School, CS groups and events (e.g., annual submission to CRA member directory, UROC, WiCS events, Technovation Girls Waterloo, etc.)

Annual report preparation

- Lead preparation of the annual Report on Investment in Education: The David R. Cheriton Endowment for Excellence in Computer Science
- Work with SCS Director, Cheriton Chairs in Software Systems, Cheriton Faculty Fellows, SCS graduate studies officer and financial officer to ensure report's content (research reports and financial statements) is accurate, complete and compelling
- Design and edit report, adding photographic and design elements as appropriate,
- Coordinate print production of report and disseminate copies to key people and departments

Website creation and maintenance

- Create new web pages, expand existing pages, and maintain and update content on SCS website
- Ensure written material is of high quality, both informationally and grammatically
- Work with IST to assist individuals and research groups create new WCMS-based websites

Presentation and event dissemination

- Post upcoming SCS seminars, master's presentations and PhD defences, symposia and the like on the SCS weekly events page, as individual items on the website's events section, on the Faculty-wide WebNotice system, and disseminate weekly via the SCS newsletter and digital screens
- Create print posters and banners for TVs screens for high-level events (Cheriton Research Symposium, DLS talks, SE Capstone project, etc.)
- Work with colleagues across campus (e.g., Faculty of Mathematics, other faculties at Waterloo, Daily Bulletin) to ensure high-level CS events are disseminated widely and well attended

Other

- Attend events to compose notes capturing key messages, take photographs and video; network with attendees to generate content for research features and news articles
- Stay current on evolving social media, mobile devices and other digital communications
- Create ongoing social media content and disseminate in collaboration with Faculty of Mathematics communications team
- Perform other duties of a comparable level/type as assigned

**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

Education

- University degree in journalism, communications or an equivalent combination of education and experience
- Diploma or education in a STEM discipline

Experience

- Experience working in a STEM environment
- Extensive experience in journalism or a communications environment
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills; excellent proofreading and editing skills
- Extensive experience interviewing people for media profiles
- Extensive experience in news and media researching skills
- Extensive experience translating research findings and explaining technical concepts in plain language for media and other external audiences
- Experience writing effectively, authentically, and consistent with the quality and standard expected of university-level communications and aligned with brand strategies

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Strong understanding of computer science and a curious mind
- Proven ability to take difficult concepts and make them understandable and engaging to a general audience
- Proven ability in managing multiple deadlines that require attention to accuracy, detail, consistency, and the ability to work with different people with competing priorities
- Ability to build consensus, foster teamwork among a variety of stakeholders, and lead integrated project teams
- Effective time management skills, ability to multitask, and confidence in decision making under pressure
- 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
- Effective interpersonal and written communication skills
- Ability to quickly produce and distribute quality, thoughtful and engaging content
- Demonstrated ability to thrive in and contribute to an integrated and collaborative team environment and to apply a positive team approach to working with colleagues
- Flexibility to adapt to unexpected and time-sensitive demands
- Strong photographic skills
- Intermediate experience with photo editing software (e.g., Photoshop)
- Intermediate experience with illustration, design and layout software (e.g., Illustrator and QuarkXPress)
- Extensive experience using web-based user interfaces (i.e., Waterloo's content management system) to manage and maintain web content

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Interacts with colleagues at all levels across the School of Computer Science to develop trust, rapport and promote collaboration. Demonstrates leadership and integrity when dealing with all internal and external stakeholders, with the goal of advancing the overall School of Computer Science communications agenda. Must maintain productive internal and external working relationships with primary internal groups, including Director, faculty, students, alumni and staff within the School of Computer Science. Interacts with colleagues across the university including Office of Research, faculty-based recruitment personnel, Office of University Relations, Creative Services and Marketing and Strategic Communications. Represents the direct interests of the Director and the School of Computer Science to internal and external audiences and creates content that reflects the values and reputation of the School of Computer Science. Confident communications skills to interview researchers on technical elements of research work. Able to manage confidential information, and work independently or as part of a team. Able to work as part of a project team in a complex, fast-

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paced, and changing environment with numerous deadlines and priorities is essential. The incumbent serves as a professional and competent resource to the campus community at all levels.

- **Level of Responsibility:** This position performs specialized work with minimal supervision and has the ability to take initiative where minimal direction is provided. Proactive in contributing ideas and solutions.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Responsible for meeting critical project milestones and deadlines.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal demands typical of a position operating within an office environment; work outside of normal hours can be expected
- **Working Environment:** Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions. Work outside the normal operating hours of the institution can be expected in this role.