Job Description

Job Title:	Communications Officer*
Department:	Office of Advancement
Reports To:	Director, Marketing & Communications
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 8-10
Effective Date:	November 2023

Primary Purpose

The Communications Officer is a key member of the Advancement Marketing & Communications team and will deliver creative and tactical planning, implementation and project management of integrated communications plans, projects and strategies to support the Office of Advancements goals: to increase alumni engagement, raise philanthropic support and build Waterloo champions.

Reporting to the Director, Marketing & Communications, the Communications Officer works as part of a dynamic and integrated team within Advancement and with campus partners, to thoughtfully and effectively engage our community of alumni, donors and prospects, through compelling communications using various channels.

The Communications Officer will have accountability for one-to-two key units within Advancement but will support all Advancement communications as needed. The role will have definitive accountabilities such as editor of the alumni e-newsletter, management of the annual report, or creation of highly customized content for high-level donors etc. Projects may include initiatives to support alumni engagement, donor solicitations, cultivation, stewardship or recognition.

*At the USG 10 level, the job title becomes Senior Communications Officer.

Key Accountabilities

Create, plan and execute creative content for all Advancement audiences

- Proactively writes, edits, creates content, project coordinates, executes and evaluates Advancement communications which may include: alumni e-newsletter, web content, social media content, print publications, audio content, proposals, letters, video storyboarding and scripting writing, video creation, invitations, media releases, stories, profiles or advertisements
- Develops and executes project strategies and integrated communication plans across all channels to successfully engage our audiences and inspire action
- Provides creative support including strategy, content creation and editing for 1-2 key units within Advancement; may also provide support for Advancement-related projects led by University Relations or other campus units, such as Waterloo Magazine
- Produces compelling stories and profiles that demonstrate impact and inspire alumni engagement and donor support
- Manages web content and web platforms, using analytics and reporting to inform content strategy
- Provides writing and editing support for all Advancement, as required, to ensure high-quality and consistent messaging

- Develops high-level, customized writing for targeted audiences, working with the Office of the President and Vice-President, Advancement to reflect the voices of senior leadership in letters, internal messaging, speaking notes, social media posts and more
- Liaises with Advancement partners across campus to ensure a consistent strategy when planning creative projects and contacting alumni, donors and volunteers
- Ensures all strategies and content aligns with the University brand and supports the needs of Advancement

Collaborates, advises and consults

- Uses communications area expertise to provide advice on strategic and integrated communication plans to develop audience-specific content that will best resonate with audiences and maximize results
- Works collaboratively as a member of the Advancement Marketing & Communications team in order to strategically support Advancement and University goals
- Works closely with campus partners, including Faculties, colleges, and units such University Relations on projects, in a highly collaborative and creative environment
- Liaises with campus partners to share current projects in Advancement and amplify content that may be of interest to alumni, donor and volunteer audiences
- Provides high level of customer service internally and externally to support relationship cultivation and engagement with Waterloo
- Provides creative direction to Creative Services or third-party vendors on writing, design, photography and videography
- Coordinates and art directs photography and video development, as needed, working collaboratively with colleagues who may be lead on these projects
- Manages or provides coaching to junior team members or co-op students, as needed
- Participates in Advancement communications committees/working groups, as needed

Manages creative communications projects

- Conducts research, interviews alumni and donors, gathers testimonials and photos for publications and websites, providing a professional and engaging level of interaction with both internal and external stakeholders
- Evaluates all communication initiatives, through data analysis and collaborative post-mortem exercises to inform future decision making and return on investment
- Researches donor and alumni behavior, staying on top of best practices and evolving trends in Advancement
- Coordinates and art directs photography and video development, working collaboratively with colleagues who may be the project lead
- Remains current on communications best practices and digital trends for effective communications with alumni and donors
- Looks for opportunities to integrate communications, reduce duplication and streamline communications process
- Manages project budgets

Other

- Assumes roles in special projects or committees, as assigned
- Provides social media or event support for key Advancement events including Reunion, Convocation and President's reception, as needed
- Engages in active learning by seeking opportunities for ongoing training and professional development (i.e.: industry articles and blogs, webinars, conferences)
- Hires, coaches and manages a co-op student or junior staff, as needed

**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 communications, writing, journalism or public relations, or equivalent combination of education and experience

Experience

USG 8-9

- 3-5 years' experience in communications or marketing role, preferably in education or not-for-profit sector with a proven record of writing, editing and developing creative communications in print, web and digital platforms for multiple audiences

USG 10

- 6-8 years' experience in communications or marketing role, preferably in education or not-for-profit sector with a proven record of writing, editing and developing creative communications in print, web and digital platforms for multiple audiences, with demonstration of progressive responsibility for complex communications projects

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Possess exceptional writing and editing skills, with a flair for language
- Experience in writing effectively, authentically, and in a manner consistent with the quality and standard expected of University-level communications and aligned with brand strategies
- Experience developing compelling, integrated marketing and communication programs and creating persuasive content for different audiences, including proposals, letters, web content, articles, profiles, video, social media and publications
- Experience producing content in multi-media formats is preferred, including podcasts, videos, webinars and e-newsletters
- Experience managing a content or editorial calendar is preferred
- Experience working with alumni/donor or membership-based audiences preferred; University advancement experience considered a strong asset
- Ability to understand the goals, strategy and planning of Advancement and the University and translate that into compelling communication strategies and content
- Strong organization skills, including a disciplined approach to project planning and execution with exceptional attention to detail and accuracy
- Possess strong interpersonal skills, passionate about marketing and communications and high-quality work, and deliver creative and consistent work in demanding environment with multiple stakeholders, projects and deadlines
- Ability to build consensus, work collaboratively and foster teamwork with multiple stakeholders and work with integrated project teams
- Resilient, able to excel in fast-paced environment with shifting priorities, ambiguity and public scrutiny
- Sound knowledge of design and print production process as asset
- Willingness to work occasional hours outside of traditional hours
- Experience with a content management system (Drupal); Advanced Word, Excel and PowerPoint skills; Adobe Creative Suite helpful
- Understands privacy regulations with respect to the University sector

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internally works with colleagues across Advancement and campus, collaborates with the Vice-President, Advancement and the Office of the President; externally, will have contact with alumni and donors, third-party vendors or volunteers.
- **Level of Responsibility:**
  USG 8 - Must be able to make informed decisions recognizing the broader accountability as representative of the University. Responsible for managing own work but will work proactively with staff in assigned areas of responsibility and work collaboratively with manager.
  USG 9 – May coach or manage a co-op student, as needed. May manage project budgets.
  USG 10 - Ability to take initiative where minimal direction is required. Responsible for managing own work but will work strategically with staff in assigned areas of responsibility. Ability to inspire colleagues to work collaborative towards a common goal. Ability to act as a key relationship manager with campus partners. Leads to solve problems and provides direction, guidance and support to communication colleagues. Takes leadership role in developing communications strategies and leads projects. Manages budgets.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Continually makes decisions about the most effective methods to operationalize communications strategies and plans, personal interactions and collaboration, work flow, consultation, organizing resources and other writing/edit accountabilities; determines the optimum course of action to solve problems and exert a positive influence on other stakeholders.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands**: Deadline pressures with concurrent demand for thoroughness and accuracy. Peak times may include many simultaneous demands.
- **Working Environment:** Typical of a communications role in an office environment with extended periods of computer use and the need to walk across campus for meetings. Office is on University of Waterloo main campus in a comfortable, indoor area. Willingness to work occasional hours outside of traditional business hours will be required.