

Job Description



Job Title:	Community Outreach and Communications Specialist
Department:	Recreation and Leisure Studies
Reports To:	Undergraduate Program Manager
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 6
Effective Date:	April 2022

Primary Purpose

The Community Outreach and Communications Specialist provides leadership for student experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate programs and establishes and nurtures partnerships with community organizations and employers. This position also initiates and maintains relationships with student support groups, working together to support student transitions and successful progress throughout students' academic careers. As Communications Specialist, the position designs and manages effective strategies for departmental communications using a variety of platforms and tools. This position reports to the Undergraduate Program Manager, but also works closely with the Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies, and the Events Coordinator and Program Assistant.

Key Accountabilities

Student experiential learning

- Provides strategic leadership for organizing and monitoring practicum and internship placement opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, working with academic supervisors and key partnership contacts in community organizations and employers. Ensures all policies, procedures and best practices are followed including risk management forms and protocols, evaluation components, and course academic requirements.
- Organizes with course instructors the various experiential learning components included in undergraduate and graduate courses such as capstone seminars, invited panels, guest speakers, first-year retreat, field trips, and other opportunities that may arise. Coordinates with the Events Coordinator and Program Assistant for joint event arrangements.
- Primary contact for inquiries about experiential learning opportunities including practicums, internships, co-op work terms, EDGE certificate, academic exchange experiences, or other opportunities.
- Manages teaching assistant training and supervision for the practicum and internship responsibilities.
- Assists with problem-solving to help manage any issues that may arise during a placement or other experiential learning opportunity, involving course instructors or other administrative leaders (Associate Chair, Chair, Associate Dean) as needed.
- Participates in RLS department meetings, Undergraduate Studies Committee, and Graduate Studies Committee (as needed), and Faculty of Health Communications Committee. Contributes to strategic planning for student experiential learning across the curriculum and provides summary information as requested. Participates in the creation of policies, procedures, and best practices for experiential learning opportunities.

Community outreach

- Identifies, develops, and nurtures partnerships with relevant community organizations and employers for appropriate student experiential learning opportunities through practicums, internships, co-op work terms, classroom learning experiences, or other learning opportunities.
- Provides continuity with community partners across courses so organizations are engaged at appropriate levels in reciprocal relationships, tracking student achievement of broad competencies throughout their degree, and linking classroom teaching with relevant experiential learning opportunities and authentic community support partnerships.
- Coordinates with Cooperative and Experiential Education to follow up with co-op employer leads.
- Maintains database of community partners for experiential learning opportunities at local, national and international levels. Records student placements or other forms of learning opportunities engaged in with each partner. Maintains database of student placement/affiliation agreements approved with each partnership, including monitoring renewal dates.
- Identifies opportunities for outreach experiences with high school students. Works with the Executive Committee to determine viable options. Works with the Events Coordinator and Program Assistant to implement viable options.

Communications

- Designs and manages effective strategies for departmental communications within Faculty of Health and University of Waterloo policies and best practices across a variety of platforms and tools including social media platforms, mass student communications, newsletters, Learn undergraduate and graduate groups, website updates (undergraduate and graduate current student sections, job board postings, news items), infocaster updates, video creation/editing, and other media as appropriate. Communications may include, but are not limited to, recruitment information, student orientation programs, scholarships and awards, student feedback surveys, volunteer and job opportunities, special events, and departmental announcements. Partners with Faculty of Health undergraduate and graduate recruitment teams to ensure print and web content is accurate and relevant.
- Designs and prepares media content as needed for event promotions, news and research stories, and social media campaigns, working with co-op student assistants when available to provide guidance and support for their contributions. Coordinates with the Events Coordinator and Program Assistant for event promotions.
- Participates in student note writing campaigns (admissions, graduation) or other recruitment or celebratory strategies.
- Organizes student information sessions on various academic topics for student success as appropriate, working with the Undergraduate Program Manager and/or Graduate Administrator.
- Develops and maintains relationships with student support groups such as AHSUM, Healthy Hub, GARLS, EDGE, Co-operative and Experiential Education, orientation committees, etc. to coordinate activities and communications to support student transitions and success throughout their academic career.
- Member of Faculty of Health Communications Committee.

Staff management and support

- Supervises co-op and practicum students hired for department support activities such as social media and events assistance.
- Provide backup support for the Undergraduate Program Manager during absences as needed, including student advising, course enrolment overrides, and processing of undergraduate student forms.

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- Collaborates with the Events Coordinator and Program Assistant for joint events involving experiential learning or classroom components, and for social media and other communications for departmental events.

**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

- Bachelor's degree preferably in Recreation and Leisure Studies or equivalent education and/or work experience

Experience

- Demonstrated experience in student support in an undergraduate or graduate program in an academic environment is required.
- Proven ability to manage multiple priorities with a high level of initiative, flexibility, accuracy and detail with minimum supervision
- Experience in dealing with conflict resolution and the ability to proactively anticipate potential challenges and take the initiative to rectify situations
- Experience with Microsoft Office Suite, Sharepoint, UW Learn, Quest, and web content management system an asset
- Strategic management experience with a variety of social media platforms an asset

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively, developing and maintaining effective working relationships with both internal and external partners
- Well-developed oral and written communication skills with the ability to respond with sensitivity, sound judgement, tact, diplomacy, and patience in challenging situations
- Effective organizational, time management, and problem-solving skills to manage multiple priorities from different portfolios with tight deadlines
- Ability to adapt and implement new technologies
- Ability to work effectively and successfully with diverse stakeholders on campus, in the local community, nationally and internationally
- Working knowledge of University of Waterloo policies and procedures is an asset

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** The incumbent will have significant interaction with various key stakeholders across campus as well as community organizations at the local, national, and international levels. They must have strong interpersonal skills, be passionate about quality and attention to detail, and be able to deliver in a high-performance environment with multiple projects, stakeholders, and competing deadlines. The incumbent must be proactive, enthusiastic, positive, open-minded, show initiative, and prepared to work both independently and collaboratively with students, faculty, staff, and external partners.
- **Level of Responsibility:** The position is responsible for identifying, developing, and nurturing reciprocal partnerships with diverse community organizations. The role requires initiative, tact, confidentiality, sensitivity, flexibility, and good judgement to proactively deal with issues as they arise. Works with a high degree of autonomy. Responds to queries and requests for information requiring a thorough understanding of University policies.

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- **Decision-Making Authority:** The incumbent makes decisions based on University of Waterloo policies and procedures regarding practicum and internship matters, referring students and community contacts to the appropriate department or administrative authority as required for resolving issues that escalate beyond their scope. The incumbent is responsible for communications strategies within University of Waterloo and Faculty of Health policies, procedures, and best practices.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** There is a frequent need to give close attention to various written and verbal information while maintaining thoroughness and accuracy. The incumbent requires the ability to prioritize multiple simultaneous demands with tight deadlines.
- **Working Environment:** The role is primarily office based with regular working hours. There may be occasional requirements to support an experiential learning opportunity with a class or capture photos of events outside of regular business hours for communications.