

Job Description

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| Job Title: | Communications Officer |
| Department: | Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo |
| Reports To: | Executive Manager |
| Jobs Reporting: | None |
| Salary Grade: | USG 9 |
| Effective Date: | June 2019 |

Primary Purpose

The Communications Officer is responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating communications, events, and engagement strategies that advance the goals and reputation of the Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo (the Association) in representing faculty members across all Faculties and campuses. The Communications Officer is also accountable for maintaining Association records and ensuring the smooth internal communication of information critical to the Association's day-to-day operations. The Communications Officer reports to the Executive Manager but is also accountable to the Association president and other executive officers, Board members, and committee chairs. These roles are elected or appointed approximately every two years; this role provides necessary consistency, long-term planning, and institutional memory to mitigate the risks associated with frequent turnover.

Key Accountabilities

Communications strategy

- Leads the ongoing refinement of the Association's brand positioning, voice, and key messaging
- Develops and implements a comprehensive communications strategy that raises awareness and advances the goals of the Association
- Develops and manages a multi-channel, integrated communications plan and communications guidelines to implement the communications strategy
- Advises on strategic and sensitive communications decisions
- Prepares and manages the Association's communications budget
- Monitors and reports on metrics for digital communications; applies research-based decision making to improve content to meet user and organizational needs
- Investigates and learns new technologies as required; remains current on technical and design trends and best practices in communications
- Routinely assesses the Association's communications strategies, tools, and infrastructure and recommends improvements

Content creation and management

- Develops and manages an integrated editorial calendar for the Association, including print, web, and other digital media platforms
- Safeguards the Association's reputation and relationships (and the University, in the case of joint initiatives) by ensuring the consistency, clarity, accuracy, and accessibility of communications, and compliance with University guidelines when required
- Provides writing and editing support across the Association to ensure high quality and consistent messaging

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- Maintains thorough knowledge of the Association's activities and priorities, post-secondary sector news and trends, and University policies and procedures, and translates these into compelling content
- Leads the production of the Association's email newsletter, blog, social media channels, and other communications to faculty members and the public
- Supports and educates Board and committee members to produce content for Association channels
- Develops visual marketing materials such as posters, slideshows, and social media images, complying with University guidelines when required; provides creative direction to University of Waterloo Creative Services on Hagey Lecture and other joint marketing materials as needed

Event planning and management

- Collaborates with Association staff, Board, and committee members to develop and deliver a program of meetings, trainings, workshops, lectures, and other events that meet the specialized needs of faculty and build engagement with the Association
- Prepares and manages the Association's events budget
- Ensures that events and meetings are planned, managed, and delivered effectively and efficiently
- Coordinates the annual Hagey Lecture, the University's premier invitational lecture series, with support from the University's Community Relations and Events department; provides strategic and operational support to the Hagey Lecture Committee, jointly appointed by Association and the University President
- Promotes Association events to faculty and other audiences as appropriate, working with staff in University Communications and Community Relations and Events as required
- Researches and uses appropriate tools to manage events and event registration
- Evaluates and reports on event success

Information management

- Advises on information technology issues and opportunities and serves as IST liaison for the association, escalating technical issues to IST when required
- Develops and implements, in consultation with the Executive Manager, information management tools and systems to maintain Association records and facilitate internal communications
- Maintains the Association's membership database by understanding and continuously tracking faculty appointments through liaison with academic and administrative departments
- Maintains accurate records of Board and committee membership and faculty appointments to University committees
- Liaises with other faculty associations, CAUT, and OCUFA to identify and recommend member engagement best practices

Management and volunteer engagement

- Leads the development and implementation of volunteer recruitment and retention plans
- Leads the development and delivery of an outreach strategy to welcome new members and engage existing members
- Manages Board and presidential elections and referenda of members
- Works with the vice president of the Association to build and maintain connections between the Board and faculty in all academic units through the Council of Representatives
- Provides independent support for Association standing and ad hoc committees as assigned
- Supports Board and committee members to be successful in their roles

**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 or equivalent combination of education and experience in a field related to communications, labour relations, non-profit management, or event planning is strongly preferred
- Post-graduate education is an asset

Experience

- Minimum 3–5 years of experience in a communications role, preferably in the not-for-profit sector, with a proven record of developing communications strategies and creating content for multiple channels
- Minimum 3–5 years of experience using web-based platforms to create and maintain web content (e.g., web content management systems, social media accounts)
- Minimum 1–3 years of experience planning and executing meetings and events
- Experience working with university faculty members is strongly preferred

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Demonstrated understanding of best practices in information architecture, web accessibility, social media, content strategy, and writing for the web/digital media
- Understanding of the university environment, the role of faculty members, and policies affecting faculty members is strongly preferred
- Knowledge of design and print production process is an asset
- Understanding of volunteer engagement theory and best practices is an asset
- Demonstrated ability to independently create and edit effective content consistent with the quality and standard expected of University-level communications
- Demonstrated ability to use and adapt technological solutions to improve processes
- Strong organization skills, including a disciplined approach to project management with exceptional attention to detail and accuracy
- Independent judgment in areas of time management, task prioritization and decision-making
- Experience with web content management systems
- Proficiency with Microsoft Outlook, word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software
- Intermediate-level graphic design and image editing skills
- Familiarity with HTML and CSS
- Proficiency with MacOS, Wordpress, Trello, and web-based survey and event registration tools is an asset
- Familiarity with and ability to set up and troubleshoot basic audio-visual equipment is an asset
- Ability to build consensus, work collaboratively, and foster teamwork among diverse faculty members located on multiple campuses
- Ability to exercise judgement and discretion when handling confidential situations
- Ability to make reasonable estimates of resource needs to complete projects
- Ability to learn new software quickly

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Liaises with Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) and Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) staff Communicates with, advises, and consults faculty association staff and representatives at other universities about best practices. Consults with IST on technology solutions and to arrange equipment for events. Works collaboratively and shares information with communications colleagues across campus. Provides guidance to the Renison Association of Academic Staff on their communications. Shares information with Human Resources

payroll and compensation staff to ensure accurate membership records and dues. Frequently works with venue and catering staff to ensure successful execution of events on campus. Liaises with the Renison Association of Academic Staff, Librarians Association of the University of Waterloo, St. Jerome's University Academic Staff Association, and other FAUW affiliates. Collaborates with Human Resources and Office of Provost staff on annual new faculty events. Works with the President's Office, Community Relations and Events, and University Communications on the Hagey Lecture and to promote other Association events. Occasionally engages the services of University and external vendors to produce high quality print materials and merchandise.

- **Level of Responsibility:** This position has specialized work with minimal supervision and requires the ability to perform duties with relative independence and to seek input when needed. It also requires the ability to work well under pressure to ensure the smooth and efficient running of events. This position has a significant role in maintaining, and managing risks to, the Association's reputation, through providing communications leadership, actively managing public communications channels, and representing the Association on campus-wide working groups. This position takes direction from a number of faculty volunteers. The incumbent must be able to balance competing demands and interests, to advise on the best course of action for the Association, and to inspire colleagues to work collaboratively toward a common goal. As part of a small team, the incumbent should be willing to assist other staff members and to take on additional tasks as required. It requires initiative, independent thinking/problem-solving, sound judgment, effective time management/prioritization and routine problem resolution. There is a demand for thoroughness and accuracy.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The incumbent is expected to be self-directed in executing their responsibilities, but many decisions will be taken with input from Association stakeholders. This requires the ability to use judgment in determining when and how involvement of others is required, and to make independent decisions when appropriate, sometimes under time constraints. Required to employ initiative, tact and diplomacy, and to maintain confidentiality. This position is responsible for proposing the communications and events budgets and, once approved, independently determines the distribution of those budgets. Makes decisions about the most effective methods of developing and putting communications and events plans into action.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Much of the business of the Association is carried out via email, telephone contact and meetings. The incumbent must be comfortable working in this independent environment. The work at times involves deadline pressures and changing or multiple priorities with concurrent demand for thoroughness and accuracy. The role involves periods of extensive sitting and concentrated use of visual senses. The role occasionally requires lifting and transportation of portable banners and other event-related materials to various locations on campus and within the community. It also requires the set-up and take-down of event locations which often includes moving and rearranging chairs and tables.
- **Working Environment:** Association facilities consist of three employee offices and two meeting rooms in the Math & Computer Building on the Waterloo campus. The role occasionally requires travel to other buildings or campuses, and extended and/or non-traditional hours in order to set up, oversee and take down events both on and off campus. The role involves occasional and optional opportunities to travel to OCUFA, CAUT, and/or COFAS conferences within Canada.