

Job Description

Job Title:	Communications Officer
Department:	Dean of Environment
Reports To:	Associate Dean, Strategic Initiatives
Jobs Reporting:	N/A
Salary Grade:	USG 10
Effective Date:	November 2018

Primary Purpose

The Communications Officer is responsible for raising awareness for the Faculty of Environment and its units, programs, Departments, Schools, Centres and activities, as well as ensuing smooth internal communication of information critical to the day-to-day operations in the Faculty.

Key Accountabilities

Digital Media: Responsible for planning, creating, delivering and evaluating digital marketing and communications strategies and programs supporting the Faculty's goals and strategic plan and provide leadership and guidance on all digital communications to dean's office, Faculty departments, affiliated units and research groups including but not limited to:

- Responsibility for the content strategy for the faculty and department websites;
- Writing and editing multi-media web and online content in alignment with digital-content writing best practises and web accessibility legislative requirements and provides editorial support for web content as required;
- Ensuring quality and compliance: usability and accessibility; copyright and other legal compliance; consistent with University policy, guidelines, and best practice;
- Responsibility for the information architecture user experience for the faculty and department websites;
- Managing major digital communications initiatives undertaken for the faculty, including migration of sites into the University's Content Management System (CMS);
- Assuming project management responsibilities for web, online and social media content development and maintenance (including people, tools, time and budget);
- Aligning the faculty's digital communication initiatives with the Waterloo vision, brand promise and attributes;
- Managing social media accounts including twitter, instagram, facebook, youtube and other platforms.

Media relations: Develop and manage program delivery to support the media relations strategy to meet established targets including but not limited to:

- Maintaining comprehensive knowledge of all teaching and research activities within Environment;
- Strategically and systematically, evaluate research findings, events and new developments, identifying those with the greatest potential for being picked up by the media, and ensuring emphasis on Faculty and greater institutional priorities;
- Gathering information, conducting research and interview sources in order write a variety of high-impact materials for the media, including but not limited to press releases and media advisories. The incumbent must understand and operate in a broad spectrum of political, social and cultural milieus, and be able to distill complex academic information into plain language to bring research to life;
- Collaboration with Media Relations, Marketing and Strategic Communications, to ensure excellent quality/consistency and initiate coverage and outreach;
- Drafting quotes on behalf of Faculty spokespeople, including the Dean and senior administration in keeping with and relying on a knowledge of the Faculty's and University's main messages;
- Acting as an advisor providing expert opinion to effectively counsel academic colleagues on the optimal approach to public messaging to ensure media interest and coverage;

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- Providing advice and support to Faculty researchers by providing training and tips on responding to media queries;
- Fielding media requests through Media Relations, Marketing and Strategic Communications by quickly identifying appropriate experts and supporting the arrangement of interviews;
- Position faculty members and researchers as thought leaders in their fields by identifying authors and topics, and supporting the writing of op-ed pieces;
- Working with Media Relations, Marketing and Strategic Communications to maintain or increase both the quality and quantity of earned media;
- Representing the Faculty at events and activities both on and off-campus. These events require the incumbent to diplomatically and effectively facilitate media interaction with the Faculty's most senior leaders, stakeholders, and funders;
- Acting as backfill of the Manager, Media Relations, Marketing and Strategic Communications, during absences, as required;
- Crisis Communications: This position will be accountable, working in support of the Director, Media Relations and Issues Management, Marketing and Strategic Communications, for enhancing the profile, image and reputation of the Faculty in the media and general public. The incumbent participates in and advises on the planning of issues management strategy on confidential matters relating to Environment in order to minimize and manage risk to the Faculty. This includes the assessment of risk and the astute evaluation of the expected media approach to inform the development of strategy and messaging. The incumbent is a member of the University of Waterloo Emergency Communications Team.

Marketing and branding: Responsibility for positioning the Faculty as a leader in research and academic excellence through the creation of on-brand marketing materials in support of Environment's strategic priorities.

- Act as a primary Faculty content provider for the University's print and online channels (institutional communications materials; website homepage and highest level pages) identifying and writing engaging and informative stories from academic research, student activities and teaching initiatives, ensuring alignment with the broader communications calendar. Coordinate photoshoots and/or source accompanying photographs for copy when necessary.
- Share new content with Manager, Web and Digital Communications for publication and promotion on appropriate Environment online channels.
- Research, write and edit compelling copy for marketing collateral that supports strategic initiatives. Work with designers, photographers and external vendors to create visually appealing products within budget.
- Maintain an exceptional understanding of brand guidelines and promote a unified look and feel for the Faculty through the creation and maintenance of a suite of promotional material.
- Encourage adherence to brand guidelines among faculty, staff and students by fielding questions, and providing direction and expert counsel on best practices.

Internal Communications: Lead the development and implementation of an effective internal communications program to foster increased information sharing among the Faculty's departments and associated research centres.

- Gather information, conduct research, interview sources and write content for ongoing deliverables associated with the internal communications program.
- Work with Mapping Analysis and Design to utilize their resources for photography, video and audio production and mass email lists.
- Build relationships with faculty and staff in order to maintain awareness of all teaching and research activities within Environment and enhance stakeholder participation in internal communications.
- Ensure relevant external communications are shared internally with key stakeholders through appropriate channels.
- Own and manage the day-to-day activities of ad hoc internal communications, including acting as an advisor to departments and colleagues on best practices. The incumbent will be expected to work closely with senior administration to craft timely and appropriate messages to employees.
- Write content for the Associate Director, Internal Communications, Marketing and Strategic Communications, for use in University of Waterloo Central channels.

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Advancement and recruitment communications: The incumbent will assist with the delivery of advancement programs and recruitment marketing materials by producing compelling and strategic communications for development activities imperative to achieving the Faculty's strategic goals.

- Act as an editorial resource for the advancement and recruitment team by assisting with researching, writing, editing and designing strategic publications and communications including, annual reports, backgrounders, and brochures. Incumbent must be able to write convincingly in a voice appropriate for intended stakeholders.
- Act as key author and editor on the annual News To You alumni magazine, writing content, interviewing sources and editing proofs.
- Develop messaging for Faculty leadership at speaking engagements, in keeping with and relying on a knowledge of advancement goals and priorities.
- Support colleagues at events with communications needs or marketing collateral.

**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

- Post-secondary degree in marketing communications, online journalism, public relations, writing-centric and/or corporate communications or equivalent and/or relevant combination of education and experience

Experience

Minimum of 3 to 5 years relevant experience in communications or journalism, as a writer/editor.

Thorough knowledge and understanding of marketing communications, strategic communications planning, print media.

Experience fielding media inquiries and working with journalists on deadlines.

Track record of innovative and effective storytelling.

Experience articulating positioning/messaging. Strong social media knowledge and experience.

Must have a successful track record of achieving results in a highly collaborative environment.

Familiarity with advertising creative development, advertising media planning and buying an asset.

- Minimum of seven to 10 years of digital and or web marketing and communications experience
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; excellent copy editing and proofreading skills; multi-media storytelling experience
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of and practical experience in marketing communications, print and electronic media, and strategic communications planning
- Track record of innovative and effective multimedia storytelling
- Demonstrated understanding of best practices in information architecture, navigation, user interface, usability, accessibility standards and testing
- Expert knowledge of social media trends, digital analytics tools, and maintenance of content for strategic digital communications that meet the Faculty's overall communications objectives
- Extensive experience using web-based user interfaces to manage and maintain web content (e.g., web content management system, social media accounts)

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Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

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Highly creative and innovative

Demonstrated expertise in writing for various formats, both print and web, with outstanding copyediting and proofreading skills

Exceptional computer skills in software for word processing, in web publishing within a content management system, in web graphics to edit and resize images and create Faculty 'call to action' (CTA) buttons from university templates and following the university's Web Style Guide

A demonstrated understanding of best practices in information architecture, navigation, user interface, usability, accessibility standards and testing Experience administering and using a content management system in a multi-contributor environment, and using social media and new media tools, including social networking sites, video sharing sites, blogs and wikis Demonstrated strong understanding of user-centric design and principles and experience with user needs assessments and web accessibility in compliance with W3C WCAG 2.0

Strong ability to make use of SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and SEM (Search Engine Marketing) leading techniques to build traffic to and awareness of Faculty digital properties

Proficiency and experience with video and audio editing software an asset

Ability to leverage proven, strong social media capital

Strong organizational and problem-solving skills; initiative; demonstrated skill in managing priorities with limited resources and strong project management skills, including budget development and fair price negotiation and managing projects from concept through execution

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internally, communicates with all employees in all groups and departments and at all levels. Must demonstrate political acuity and be successful at building alliances. Incumbent must be able to effectively manage change and succeed in time sensitive, high-pressure situations with potential for significant public and campus scrutiny and potential for impact on the University's reputation. The incumbent will be required to work closely and collaboratively with Marketing and Strategic Communications and campus-wide marketing and communications colleagues to ensure consistency in institutional messaging and management of university image and reputation through paid and earned media, public relations initiatives and issues/crisis management. The incumbent will need to be able to influence and persuade faculty colleagues to embrace best practices for media relations initiatives. Externally, this position will have significant contacts with suppliers and community and sector partners and will be involved in conferences and meet ups to advance the strategic communications agenda of the Faculty and at times, the University of Waterloo
- **Level of Responsibility:** The position is responsible for specific results of the Faculty's media relations program as part of wider University of Waterloo Media Relations programs led by Media Relations, Marketing and Strategic Communications. Responsible and accountable for the results of the strategic communications plan and for supporting the achievement of Faculty and University goals and objectives. The position will be involved in and advise in emergency, crisis and issues management situations relating to the Faculty. This position is a member of the Emergency Communications team. The position demonstrates a broad and thorough understanding of the news media and its needs and will have a sensitivity to the political, cultural and social contexts in which the University operates and those affecting the campus community. The position is expected to bring innovative approaches and new concepts and models to media relations programs. Must be a strong strategic thinker and able to help lead change in an evolving environment. The job has specialized work with minimal supervision and provides thought leadership and guidance to senior leaders and managers and colleagues within the Faculty. The position is also expected to be forward looking, aware of trends and bring innovative and creative concepts
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The incumbent is required to exercise superior judgment relying on expert knowledge and ability to make critical decisions quickly while supporting the Director, Media Relations and Issues Management in the delivery of media relations initiatives that best support the University of Waterloo's strategic priorities and enhance its reputation. The individual must be analytical and insightful, able to quickly assess and interpret complex issues, planned and emerging, and able to develop media relations approaches and public messaging to enhance the institution's reputation.

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- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal demands typical of a position operating within an office environment.
 - **Working Environment:** Moderate exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of a position exposed to stress and pressure associated with management-level responsibilities with significant public and campus scrutiny and potential for impact on the university's reputation. Media inquiries and issues affecting the Faculty occur at any time. As a result, work outside the stated operating hours of UWaterloo normal in this role.