

---

<b>Job Title:</b>	Director, Student Life Communications
<b>Department:</b>	UWaterloo, Associate Provost Students Office
<b>Reports To:</b>	Associate Provost, Students
<b>Jobs Reporting:</b>	Manager, Student Insights and Communications Student Systems and Data Integration Manager Manager, Digital Student Experience
<b>Salary Grade:</b>	USG 13
<b>Effective Date:</b>	August 2021

---

### **Primary Purpose**

The Director, Student Life Communications builds and enhances the Associate Provost, Students (APS) portfolio by providing institution-wide strategic leadership, effective management, successful implementation, and collaborative leadership of communications and data strategies to enhance the student experience and mitigate institutional risk. The Director works in accordance with the University of Waterloo's overall brand and strategic plan and the APS's vision, mission, goals and strategic plan, and works directly with the Associate Provost, Students and the APS leadership team. The Director conducts background research, develops reports, and provides advice on APS strategic priorities and special projects, particularly those that support student communications, student engagement and student data strategies. This Director will play a key role in working with the Associate Provost, Students to find and seize opportunities that maximize our connection to students and advance the APS vision, mission and goals across campus.

The Director leads a team of marketing, communications and data professionals responsible for engagement initiatives, integrated communications strategies, and the strategic positioning of the APS portfolio with student, faculty and staff audiences. Plays a crucial role in the successful achievement of institutional goals for student retention and student success targets.

Responsible for ensuring effective student engagement strategies to capture the student voice, the delivery of student-centric programming, and effective and leading-edge communications strategies based on the unique needs and preferences of Waterloo students throughout all stages of their education. A leading expert on campus for student engagement, outreach and communications, responsible for leading cross-campus initiatives, presenting student voice insights and communications best practices to cross-campus partners.

### **Key Accountabilities**

Provides strategic leadership and direction to the Integrated Communications team and communications and student data support/consultation for the Associate Provost, Students.

- Leads collaborative cross-campus student communications initiatives in support of a cohesive and consistent communications experience for students.
- Co-leads development and cross-campus implementation of Student Communications Framework to inform best-practices for communications teams with student audiences.
- Provides communications leadership to, and on behalf of the broader Associate Provost Students portfolio on an as-needed basis.
- Provides communications consultation to and support for the Associate Provost, Students.

- Exceptional leadership and management of staff including hiring, staff performance management, professional development, salary administration, priority setting, strategic planning and ensuring the effective delivery and assessment of services.
- Directs and oversees strategic activity related to integrated communications, marketing and data ensuring key audiences receive accurate and timely information about transitioning to university, continuing success, student resources, student life, and other essential information throughout their time at Waterloo.
- Ensures that APS plans are linked to and integrated with those of other campus units to maintain quality, ensure consistency, and champion student-centric guiding principles.
- Accountable for ensuring the strategic direction and effective management of digital and social media properties (e.g., UWWaterlooLife, UWWaterloo Portal, centralized student web properties).
- Provide strategies, management, structure and process for assessment, planning, and provision of facilities, services, programs and initiatives in support of student communications and student engagement.
- Responsible for the development and implementation of an issues-communication strategy, in partnership with key campus stakeholders for addressing unpopular or controversial issues that may arise and be of concern to students and their families.
- Maintain current knowledge about best practices for initiatives that prepare a student for university and that help provide a meaningful, relevant, and engaging experience while they are at Waterloo.
- The director demonstrates a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism through their leadership, management and operational practices.

**Provides leadership for the Department's strategic planning, policy development, financial administration and resource allocation as a key member of the senior management team.**

- Establishes objectives and performance expectations in alignment with the overall objectives and direction of the SSO and strategically plans for continuous improvement.
- Provides advice and input to the Director, in regard to the overall expenditures and maintenance of the APS communications budget and input on reporting of the SSO budget expenditures to the SSAC committee.
- Manages the budget for the student communications team within the APS portfolio.

**Collaborates, advises, consults, educates, and builds consensus**

- Develops an effective network of relationships with members of the University's senior administration and senior communications staff across campus. Political acumen is critical.
- Works closely with faculties, other departments and student governments to help guide student communications in a strategic and effective way and works with these areas to help improve student communications across campus.
- Utilize extensive knowledge of the University, highly developed strategic, analytical and communication skills, expert knowledge of communications process and technology and a high degree of political acumen and interpersonal skill to nurture relationships with a range of stakeholders across the University.

**Research, reporting, and information-sharing**

- Develop and execute strategies that provide faculty and staff with timely, accessible, and relevant information to help students succeed.
- Collaborate with APS colleagues to develop and provide relevant data and information that will inform student success strategies and execution across the University. Champion assessment and evaluation related to student retention and engagement, with the Data Specialist and with the support of key partners including Institutional Analysis and Planning, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs and the Registrar's Office.
- Lead the strategic planning for the sharing of research results and insights with campus partners to influence strategies and initiatives across campus.
- Ongoing management of the institutional profile and reputation with student audiences.
- Interprets the University's positioning and visual identity frameworks and ensures the effective positioning of the university to students and their families.

**Maintains a strong understanding of current trends and best practices for communications and student engagement**

- Maintain an in-depth understanding of how the timing, tactics and nature of communication with students can influence student success.
- Strategies for effective communication.
- Accountable for the safeguarding of the University's reputation through the identification, development, and delivery of new concepts and models along with well-tested, on-brand, creative, innovative and high-quality approaches to marketing, communications, design, and student engagement.

*\*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-graduate degree in marketing, communications, journalism, public relations or related field

**Experience**

- 12+ years of experience in a marketing or communications management role – preferably in higher education or non-profit environment.
- Experience managing/leading a large team of professional staff in a student service environment.
- Experience working within academic and academic support units an asset.
- Project management experience.

**Knowledge/Skills/Abilities**

- Advanced - strategic, analytical, and communication skills.
- Advanced - knowledge of communication process and technology.
- High degree of political acumen.
- Demonstrated level of maturity, competence and professionalism appropriate for interacting with senior administrators
- Interpersonal and relationship skills with a range of stakeholders.
- Proven ability to take initiative and be both creative and flexible.
- Proven ability to think strategically and exercise political savvy.

- Excellent oral and written communication skills, solid organizational skills, and sound judgment.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively, build consensus and be sensitive to the needs and interests of various stakeholders.
- Demonstrated ability to contribute to and thrive in a collaborative environment and to apply a positive team approach to working with internal and external colleagues.
- Expert knowledge of communication strategies with a special emphasis on web, social media, video, mobile communications and various web systems that enhance communications (LEARN, Portal, etc.) and provide a strategic and student-centric communications approach to a diverse and multi-audience.
- An understanding of website architecture and the WCMS system, social media principles and strategy, and CRM/communication platforms that enhance student communications.
- 

### **Nature and Scope**

- **Contacts:** Collaborates with Senior Management and University Administration as well as colleagues from across campus, and some interaction with students. To a lesser extent, may communicate externally with vendors, partners, families, and the public (i.e., at events, etc.).
- **Level of Responsibility:** High-level oversight and organizational responsibility for discussions and events; integral involvement in strategizing on issues of the utmost importance to the APS portfolio and the University. More generally, contributing in a helpful, professional and timely manner to the management of a multitude of issues in a fast-paced, multifaceted environment.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Must be capable of making decisions independently, knowing when to escalate matters to Associate Provost, Student or other members of the APS leadership team, and contribute positively and creatively to discussions around strategic decisions to be made by the Associate Provost, students and the APS leadership team
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal demands typical of a position operating in an office environment; periods of extensive sitting and concentrated visual senses.
- **Working Environment:** Office based; minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions; typical of a position exposed to stress and pressure associated with senior-management-level responsibilities; intermittent work outside of normal operating hours of the institution.