Job Description

Job Title:	Community Relations and Events Specialist
Department:	Community Relations & Events (ORG 5691)
Reports To:	Associate Director, Community Relations & Events
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 9
Effective Date:	February 2022

Primary Purpose

The Community Relations and Events Specialist (CRE Specialist) is accountable to the Associate Director, Community Relations and Events to support the community relations and events framework and its initiatives. The Community Relations and Events Specialist will plan and execute specific events and projects to execute strategic University events that positively position the University, support its community and broader outreach agenda, and align closely with the Waterloo message and brand experience.

The position works collaboratively within University Relations and with the Office of the President, faculties and departments across campus, and key external stakeholders and contractors to plan and execute University events and programs, creating a best-in-class experience for visitors to campus.

Key Accountabilities

Event Management

- Under the direction of the Associate Director, Community Relations and Events, supports the execution and evaluation of events as assigned that support the department.
- Acts as point of contact with internal stakeholders at all levels within UW, as well as with various external stakeholders to provide knowledgeable and timely communication to ensure the delivery of successful events.
- Identifies measures of effectiveness for their assigned events, streamlining existing processes when needed.
- Supports the Government Relations team by executing protocol for government visits, funding announcements, ceremonies and campus visits.
- Sources and managers services with internal service departments and external vendors as required supporting event activities, which includes equipment and tools for successful event staging (e.g., signage, flags, etc.).
- Ensures consistency, accuracy and excellence in quality and content of messaging in all materials.
- Oversees systems and processes, updating, refining and streamlining as necessary.
- Ensures that all department initiatives and participation in community events align with UW brand guidelines and standards.
- Establishes measurement targets to monitor and assess the effectiveness of engagement initiatives, including but not limited to web analytics, event attendance, surveys, etc.
- Develops objectives, issuing and/or tracking event invitations and drafting event programs.
- Implements project management strategies to prepare detailed schedules, identifying critical dates and deadlines to ensure that events are managed on time.

Convocation

- In partnership with the Registrar, leads portions of the ceremonial and celebratory preparations and event management components of fifteen convocation ceremonies annually.
- Assists the Associate Director, Community Relations and Events: Maintains and edits convocation procedures ensuring that protocol is followed, well documented and applied to all written materials.
- Supports the production of convocation materials including the compilation and editing of the convocation program and invitations.
- Manages a complex database that houses all event and participant information. This database is the template for creating the program, invitations, communications, participation listings, etc.
- Manages projects with a wide range of campus partners including but not limited to the Registrar's office, Plant Operations, parking, UW Police, and external vendors.
- Recruits, trains and recognizes student, staff and faculty volunteers who support signature University events, most notably Convocation and the Waterloo Innovation Summit.
- Acts as a point of contact for convocation requests and inquiries from internal and external contacts, which are time sensitive and require tact and diplomacy.
- Aides in the management of VIP participation, which may include the convocation robing rooms and Chancellor's Luncheon greeting special guests, and support to awards winners and honor ands; managing the inventory of academic regalia.
- Participates in best practices with other institutions and with the North American Convocation Organization.

Financial Management

- Purchases required products on department purchasing card (Pcard) in accordance with relevant budget and project plans, reconciling monthly statements using established University and/or University Relations guidelines, procedures and processing requirements.
- Engages internal departments as required to complete UW's Independent Contractor Determination (ICON) paperwork in order to establish the correct employee or independent contractor status for payments. Manages the required documentation and due diligence associated with hiring Independent Contractors, including ensuring that invoices are accurate and submitted in a timely manner for payment.

Communications

- Leads the development of communications plans, collaborating with Marketing & Strategic Initiatives and University Communications staff to ensure that event promotion, registration and outcomes are communicated as required, e.g., web, media relations, digital media, integrated communications, internal communications, and executive communications
- Provides some on-site communications support, which may include photography and social media.
- Ensures the University of Waterloo brand is appropriate in all communications and events, reflecting the reputation of the University.
- Builds collegiality among other event planners on campus by providing access to information, resources and consultation.
- Ensures the Senior Director, Community Relations and Events or Associate Director, Community Relations and Events, or other department staff as required, are aware of emerging issues that may impact the University.
- Responds to inquiries from internal and external stakeholders, including complaints and issues management.

**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 event management, public relations and communications, or equivalent post-secondary education.

Experience

- Minimum four years of deep experience and expertise in event planning and production, partnership building and community engagement.
- Previous experience as event facilitator as well as an accomplished project manager who can envision and articulate the goals and objectives of the project, create clear project plans, manage cross-functional teams who contribute to the project, and collaborate with multiple project participants to ensure a successful outcome.
- Experience and a proven aptitude for success in solving problems is required.
- Experience with project management software an asset.
  Experience with event management software such as TicketFi, SurveyMonkey, Hootsuite and Submittable an asset.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- The individual must be strategic, analytical and insightful, able to assess and interpret the various factors affecting the successful planning and execution of events on campus and within the community and be experienced in developing event management approaches to address these.
- Must have a superior understanding of community relations best practices and event management.
- Ability to exercise proactive project leadership, communicate effectively to project participants who need to understand progress, and identify risks/mitigating strategies before problems occur.
- Must have superb planning and organizational skills, be able to work simultaneously on multiple initiatives with demanding deadlines and manage time/resources accordingly.
- Proven ability to manage high volumes of activity, multiple tasks and constant change while demonstrating the ability to maintain confidentiality, ensuring sensitivity to the needs and interests of a variety of stakeholders and support the functioning of diverse teams.
- Proven ability for delivering quality events in a high performance environment, with multiple projects, stakeholders and competing deadlines.
- Demonstrated strong interpersonal skills.
- Ability to liaise with senior leaders and VIP guests and stakeholders.
- Exceptional attention to detail is essential.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and experience in editing and proofreading under very tight deadlines is required.
- A high level of independence is required requiring excellent judgment in areas of time management, task prioritization and decision-making.
- Demonstrated ability to thrive in, and contribute to, an integrated and collaborative team environment and to apply a calm, positive team approach to working with colleagues.
- Outstanding political acumen, negotiating skills, conflict management and the ability to influence others is essential.
- Collaborative team player who is comfortable providing and taking constructive input from multiple sources.
- Knowledge of communications planning, creative brief development, event marketing and advertising, media relations, and social media are an asset to this role.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:**
  Internally, communicates with employees and UW departments and has the ability to influence and motivate others who may have different perspectives and concerns. The incumbent will be required to work closely and collaboratively within University Relations and across campus to ensure consistency in institutional messaging and management of University image and reputation through community relations initiatives and events. Works with student leaders.

- **Level of Responsibility:**
  The incumbent must be able to succeed in high profile, high-pressure situations with significant public and campus scrutiny and potential for impact on the reputation of the University. Many of the events led by the department, such as Convocation and the Waterloo Innovation Summit, involve a high degree of risk and reputation building. In addition to acting as a role model to others in the performance of duties, they must have a thorough and in-depth understanding of the work they perform and the impact it has on others in the larger context of the University and the community.

- **Decision-Making Authority:**
  There is a high degree of risk management inherent in this role. Complex, large-scale events, important announcements, and VIP visits must be handled with significant attention to the experience as a whole, including constant shifts and changes that can throw whole plans off balance. All aspects of events must be managed extremely well, as the risk to the University's reputation can be significant. Hence, the incumbent must be able to stay on top of many moving parts, respond calmly and professionally at all times, and exercise good crisis management protocols when things inevitably go wrong or change. The Community Relations and Events Specialist must work autonomously and make judgment calls for event management requests.

- **Physical and Sensory Demands**:
  The event management of the role requires a significant physical effort with lifting and transportation of event toolkits, portable banners and other event-related tools to various locations on campus and within the community. The role also requires the set-up and takedown of event materials at locations, which could include moving and rearrangement of chairs and tables and other equipment for the event. Standing for extended times can be expected.

- **Working Environment:**
  Significant events such as Convocation and the Waterloo Innovation Summit require work during evenings, weekends and holidays. Flexibility in working hours is required as the role often requires long hours or non-traditional hours in order to set-up, oversee and takedown an event.