

Job Description

Job Title:	Manager, Strategic Communications
Department:	Co-operative and Experiential Education (CEE)/University Relations (UR)
Reports To:	Director, Communications & Marketing, CEE/Director, Integrated Communications, UR
Jobs Reporting:	Communications Specialist (3), Communications Associate (co-op student)
Salary Grade:	USG 11
Effective Date:	August 2017

Primary Purpose

Over 70% of undergraduate students choose to enroll at the University of Waterloo because of the co-operative education program. The average annual student employment rate of 97% speaks to the success and excellent global reputation of the University of Waterloo's co-operative education program.

Within the University of Waterloo's Cooperative and Experiential Education (CEE) and University Relations (UR) teams, the Manager, Strategic Communications plays a critical leadership role accountable for operational oversight and successful implementation of all activities associated with a strategic and integrated CEE communications plan. This position plays a major role in shaping institutional co-operative and experiential education communication strategies, which significantly impact co-op job development and employer retention rates, support crucial institutional recruitment initiatives, and have a substantial effect on the successful achievement of UR communication objectives.

The Manager, Strategic Communications plays a crucial role in the successful achievement of institutional goals around co-operative and experiential education. To retain our current employers and to support increased hiring from this employer base, the incumbent is accountable for developing communications to drive and support a robust employer engagement and recognition framework that includes events, activities and campaigns both within Canada, the United States and internationally. The incumbent directs integrated messaging to engage with prospective employers across Canada and internationally at over 50 annual industry conferences, tradeshows, sponsorships, top employers' receptions and awards and employer speaking panels.

Key Accountabilities

List the major responsibilities of the job, divided into 3 to 5 broad categories. These should reflect 80 - 90% of "what" the job does not the "how". Insert a category heading and in bullet form below, state specific responsibilities.

Lead the effective development, implementation and management of integrated strategic communications plan to promote key messages around the University's leadership in co-operative and experiential education

- Apply messages accordingly to create a consistent, clear and comprehensive narrative for a wide variety of stakeholders, including those within the expanded CEE portfolio (Co-operative Education, Operations, Centre for Career Action, WatPD, EDGE, WatCACE)
- Lead the development of key messages about CEE and co-op with other departments (e.g., Marketing & Undergraduate Recruitment, Institutional Analysis and Planning, Office of Research) to craft key messages, PowerPoint and other presentations, Q&A's and other documents used by senior administration to convey strategy and to ensure consistent, coherent delivery of information externally and across the institution
- Lead the development of executive messaging and prepare presentations, briefing notes, backgrounders, reports, proposals and research summaries for use by the Associate Provost, Co-operative and Experiential Education, the Executive Director, Co-operative Education, and on occasion other CEE Directors or senior university officials

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- Lead the creation of media messages about co-op and experiential education to meet outreach needs at the request of senior University administration in consultation with CEE executive team, recognizing deadline pressures
- Write letters, briefing notes, speeches, presentations and keynote addresses for a variety of campus and external events, industry relations, government relations, out-reach and advocacy initiatives in addition to employer and student communication as required
- Represent Waterloo's voice and position in print, video, online and social media, and facilitate conversations that enhance Waterloo's reputation and are of value to key local, national and international audiences and stakeholders
- Lead the adaptation of the messaging as required for a wide variety of audience groups and evolve the narrative and messaging as required over time
- Lead the development and implementation of appropriate metrics to define, monitor report, analyze and refine all communications initiatives as a basis for strategy development
- Lead strategic development for all communications initiatives, including personnel, resources, time, and budget, ensuring proper control of expenditures for the strategies for which s/he is responsible
- Lead the development, writing, and implementation of strategic planning documents that accurately capture all components of each particular communications strategy for which s/he is responsible, and contribute appropriate updates to the overall CEE strategic plan
- Lead the development and management of the budget associated with CEE communication activities

Direct, develop, and apply current, relevant market research and institutional knowledge in strategic communications around co-operative and experiential education

- Create and provide advice about audience-centred strategies that incorporate industry knowledge and the role of major influencers in the decisions of prospective co-op employers
- Direct the research, interviews, writing, editing and fact-checking a variety of communications materials in support of the CEE marketing and communications plans and in alignment with University Relations' strategic direction
- Provide research and writing for strategic institutional documents across the University of Waterloo
- Act as the central University and CEE resource for any messaging about experiential education, including co-operative education
- Share information about experiential learning including co-operative education to ensure accuracy, consistency and reliability of messaging across the University, within CEE and for external sources
- Lead the research to create relevant, current, and targeted messaging for speaking engagements, written articles or editorials for the Executive Director, CEE and other senior university staff
- Lead and mobilize strategic communication strategy for employment relations and business development, to deepen understanding of the labour market in various industries in Canada and internationally and to provide marketing communications support

Lead and develop consultation initiatives with campus leaders to collaborate and advise on strategic communications around co-operative and experiential education

- Advise and consult with the Director, Communications and Marketing, with respect to the goals and strategic direction of communications strategies as well as any changes in the operating environment
- Work closely with Associate Provost, Co-operative and Experiential Education, Executive Director, Co-operative Education, and Director, Communications and Marketing, CEE to deepen strategic knowledge and to develop an acute understanding of current messaging in support of co-operative and experiential education across the institution
- Work closely with Director, Integrated Communications, UR, and others within UR to create a message platform for co-operative and experiential education that can be utilized in all external institutional communications including media inquiries, print and digital stories, social media, and branding
- Serve in a senior capacity on university committees that lead institution-wide collaborative projects, ensuring that the needs of CEE audiences are carefully considered
- Lead the development of strategic communications materials to support business development goals as well as employer engagement and recognition strategic initiatives
- With recognition and understanding of the disparate priorities of on-campus partners, proactively establish and foster collaboration with the faculties, professional schools, and university colleges; University

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<p>Relations; the Student Success Office; and other departments in order to provide co-operative and experiential education communications expertise, to contribute to institutionally adopted communications strategies, to build consensus, and to co-ordinate the alignment of CEE communication strategies so that the needs of other areas are balanced with the effective marketing of the university as a whole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead the effective integration and consistency of messaging across all CEE communication and digital initiatives, and to take advantage of opportunities for leveraging• Proactively share knowledge so that all CEE team members and institutional partners can incorporate new information and techniques into their strategies• Represent CEE at university-wide meetings, proactively providing expertise and insight with respect to co-operative and experiential education issues
<p>Direct, motivate, mentor and manage a high-performing, resilient team and ensure delivery of results in support of the University's Basic Principles and CEE's vision, mission and guiding principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support staff to be successful in their roles• Support team-building within the Communications and Marketing team and within CEE• Create opportunities for high levels of communication and collaboration within the Marketing Outreach team, the Communications and Marketing team, CEE and the University overall

Required Qualifications

If hiring today, what would be the required education, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities?

<p>Education University undergraduate degree in communications or marketing or related discipline, or relevant experience</p>
<p>Experience At least 8-10 years of experience in a communications management role Experience working within a university is desirable</p>
<p>Knowledge/Skills/Abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be a strategic thinker with the ability to internalize the current messaging, positioning and branding of the University of Waterloo and CEE• Excellent communications, writing and presentation skills are essential• The talent to communicate the same message to diverse audiences with nuanced changes in the tone of voice but still supportive of the overall master brand expression• Outstanding detail-orientation is imperative for success in this role• Solid understanding, experience, and successful track record with:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Working closely with content experts and senior executives to understand communication needs and meet expectations○ Writing for and producing digital media○ Demonstrated ability to understand and effectively manage the development and use of current and emerging technologies to support communications and marketing efforts○ Production processes for all media formats from print to digital media• Excellent marketing writing and presentation capability with a demonstrated track record of success• Solid research skills to gather, aggregate and interpret data to provide greater insight to stakeholders and to inform messaging• Demonstrated ability to thrive in and contribute to an integrated and collaborative team environment and to apply a positive team approach to working with colleagues• Essential: flexibility, diplomacy, sound judgment, and relations-management skills coupled with the ability to influence and motivate others and to manage crisis situations effectively• Knowledge of Co-operative Education and Career Action or a similar organization is desirable• Excellent organizational and administrative capabilities and time management skills• Experience with multi-tasking and last minute changes• Strong team work ethic and collaborative approach• High tolerance for ambiguity is a critical requirement coupled with a strongly self-motivated attitude that can manage conflict constructively

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- Advanced experience with MS Word, PowerPoint, WCMS, Automated Marketing Software and Social Media
- Basic experience with Excel
- Basic experience with WaterlooWorks is preferred
- Experience working within a university is desirable

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** The incumbent will work closely and directly with the Associate Provost of Co-operative and Experiential Education, Executive Director of CEE, Director of Communications and Marketing, CEE and the Director, Integrated Communications, UR, and will interface with senior leadership and senior employees across CEE, UR and the University. The position will be involved in highly sensitive, confidential matters that are critical to the deliverables of the University's strategic plan. The incumbent will work closely with all units within CEE and will collaborate with several campus partners (Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment, Advancement, Alumni, Research, etc). The Strategic Communications Manager may also work directly with employers, students and faculty members as required. The incumbent will also manage a broad range of external relationships with vendors, service providers and conference organizers, etc.
- **Level of Responsibility:** The position is responsible and accountable for the quality and accuracy of communications that can have a significant impact on the reputation of CEE and the University. The individual demonstrates a deep understanding of the political, cultural and social contexts in which CEE, UR and the University operate and those affecting the campus community. The incumbent manages 3-4 direct reports. The Manager, Strategic Communications is an active participant in the CEE Management team and plays a key role in CEE strategic planning. The Strategic Communications Manager is responsible for a portion of the Communications & Marketing budget and tracks each expense in detail. The incumbent coaches and mentors junior staff and leads the entire Communication and Marketing team in team-building and in team development such as facilitating and delivering professional development opportunities in communications. Staff training is a key component of this role to enable the delivery of a consistent and high-quality experience for all prospective and current employers.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The Strategic Communications Manager makes decisions related to the development and implementation of the CEE strategic communications plan. The incumbent is accountable for implementing the plans in alignment with CEE business goals and priorities as well as the University's strategic priorities. The Manager makes decisions to secure vendor contracts for communications materials and related items such as audio-visual services or equipment. The manager also manages the production of various activities and the related budget. The Manager, Strategic Communications is expected to work with minimum daily supervision and is empowered to make critical decisions such as staffing and budget for the Strategic Communications team.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** The incumbent will work in a fast-paced environment with a number of daily interruptions such as email. This role requires exertion of physical or sensory effort resulting in moderate fatigue, strain or risk of injury. Lifting and transportation of communications materials and/or event components, etc are a requirement of this role.
- **Working Environment:** This campus-based role involves minimal psychological risk resulting from unavoidable exposure to hazardous, disagreeable or uncomfortable environmental conditions. This role involves occasional travel across Canada or internationally for events, occasional unusual hours or schedules due to event-driven deadlines, lack of control over work pace due to externally-driven deadlines, occasional irregular and/or high volumes and multiple and/or tight deadlines beyond one's control due to project deadlines, and constant interruptions due to phone and email. There is a high degree of variability each day and often the work demands are not predictable, and must be managed in a timely manner. Additionally, unplanned work requests and tight deadlines may be directed by senior leaders within CEE or within the University and must be delivered on time and on budget.