

Job Description

Job Title:	Communications Specialist
Department:	Student Success Office
Reports To:	Manager, Marketing and Communications
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 8
Effective Date:	March 2018

Primary Purpose

The Communication Specialist is responsible for the effective project management and execution of high-quality, cutting-edge, multi-channel, marketing and communications projects. These projects will support integrated communications strategies to meet retention and student success targets of the Student Success Office and help to achieve the University's goal of a vibrant student experience. The Communications Specialist is accountable for planning and executing strategic communications initiatives to promote the Student Success Office and the services provided while positively positioning the University to students, supporting strategic priorities, and aligning closely with the Waterloo brand experience.

Key Accountabilities

Responsible for providing expertise in enrolment management, student audiences, and the application of communications and marketing principles while executing integrated communications projects

- Based on SSO enrolment management goals, conducts research and analysis to create effective research-based communications plans, aligned with the University's strategic plan. This includes, but not limited to, establishing goals and objectives, defining key messages, allocating resources, relationship-building, and operationalizing print, web, and digital initiatives.
- Ensures the accuracy, consistency, appeal and effectiveness of communication initiatives to support student success and retention.
- Proactively conceptualizes, writes, edits, and curates content for graduate and undergraduate students to support communications initiatives including but not limited to email campaigns, web sites, key messages, project plans, ads, stories, and posters, both for print and digital.
- Support key projects of the SSO with integrated communications initiatives to increase student awareness of services including but not limited to new student transition, current student life, student support services, etc.
- Develops campus-wide campaigns based on strategic direction and institutionalizes those messages through collaboration with campus partners.
- Responsible for applying the UWaterloo brand and visual identity frameworks to all SSO marketing and communications strategies.
- Responsible for developing effective solutions to problems that impact retention, for capitalizing on opportunities that help realize SSO strategic priorities and goals, and for determining initiatives that support a student-centred approach, focusing on excellent client/customer service and conversations.
- Leverages technology to achieve the objectives of the SSO marketing and communications plans, including but not limited to the incorporation of digital strategies (e.g., social networking) to engage with students and support their personal and professional success.

Job Description



- Manages positive and effective relationships with incoming and current students, parents, faculty partners, campus partners, professors, UWaterloo alumni, and employers. Meets with appropriate campus partners, committees, and individuals to share research, information, and perspectives related to student-centred enrolment management and to make recommendations related to communications best practices.
- Builds relationships with key stakeholders (faculty, staff, and current students) to inform the development of communications strategies with the goal of meeting SSO retention targets.
- Represents SSO on university-wide and faculty-wide committees and advisory groups related to campus-wide partner projects related to digital/web and social media including but not limited to: attending Web Advisory Committee, Social Media Committee, and other meetings for information purposes as needed. Reports regularly on matters pertaining to student engagement and success, provides key information and data, and advises on matters pertaining to student communications and student success.
- Operationalizes communications plans including writing, content management, and quality control.

Provide strategic oversight for Student Success Office web and @UWaterlooLIFE social media presence

- Serves as project leader for SSO digital presence, working collaboratively to develop crisp, compelling content for multiple audiences on current and emerging digital platforms and ensuring digital tactics are part of all integrated communications plans.
- Uses a collaborative, research-driven approach to direct SSO, Orientation and partner web presence. Assesses user needs, preferences and trends and usability as it relates to user experience.
- Provides leadership and guidance to the SSO and campus partners in crafting copy for digital content, including social media, web content, video scripts, and digital screens.
- Provide leadership to campus partners by sharing best practices for strategic digital engagement with students.
- Utilizes campus-wide tools, including Hootsuite Enterprise, to make informed content creation and curation decisions and executes campus-wide social media collaboration on campaigns and initiatives.
- Gathers, analyzes and reports on data and analytics for web and social initiatives. Utilizes findings to drive future evidence-based approaches.
- Maintains an accurate and up-to-date content calendar, creates content daily, curates content, monitors and generates new content.

Project manage marketing and communication projects

- Assumes project management responsibilities for content development and maintenance of communication material including personnel, resources, time and budget, while ensuring proper control of expenditures.
- Liaises with initiative owners and stakeholders to ensure satisfaction at all stages of the project implementation.
- Manages work flow and production process. Documents tactics and maintains records in a shared drive or digital tool.
- Reports regularly on project status to colleagues and management team.

Collaborate with key campus partners, students, and other key stakeholders

- Works collaboratively with key internal stakeholders including faculties and departments across campus, centralized offices including but not limited to University Relations, Registrar's Office, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs, Associate Provost Students, Campus Wellness, and the Federation of Students.

Job Description



- Works collaboratively with key external stakeholders including vendors, parents and families, and partners.

Maintain a strong understanding of current trends and best practices for communicating with student audiences

- Maintains an understanding of how the timing, tactics and nature of communication with students can influence student success and of new and developing strategies for effective communication.
- 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.
- 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.

Required Qualifications

Education

- Bachelor's degree in communications, business, or a related degree
- Equivalent combination of education and experience will be considered

Experience

- 3 years of experience in a marketing and/or communications role, preferably in higher education
- Project management experience
- Experience in web/WCMS, social media, digital content creation, and digital/social advertising
- Experience and knowledge of web information architecture and UI/UX design principles
- Experience and knowledge of accessibility requirements (AODA)
- Experience writing and curating content for a student audience

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Advanced: MS Office suite of products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) or Mac equivalents
- Advanced: web content management system (WCMS – Drupal)
- Advanced: social media platforms and tools (Hootsuite)
- Advanced: email marketing campaign and distribution platforms (MailChimp)
- Advanced: web-based project management platforms (Smartsheet)
- Intermediate: Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, Acrobat, InCopy)
- Strong communication skills – oral and written
- Strong organizational skills
- Effective time management skills
- Effective relationship-builder/collaborator

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internally, contact with colleagues in the SSO and across campus, some senior management, faculty and instructors, students and their families. Externally, minimal interaction with partners, vendors, and the general public (i.e. at events)
- **Level of Responsibility:** Web and social media management - responsible for accurate representation of the Waterloo brand and increasing student awareness of student services. This position provides oversight and functional direction to co-op students.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Daily decision making for initiatives within the responsibilities and of the role; expectation to consult with Manager, Integrated Communications for decisions outside of typical responsibilities of the role.

Job Description



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- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal demands typical of a position operating within an office environment; extensive periods of sitting and concentrated use of visual senses.
 - **Working Environment:** Located in a comfortable indoor office area; location may change within campus; minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of a supervisory position, one where it may be occasionally necessary to convey negative or unwelcome information to students or staff.