

Job Description

Job Title:	Communications Manager
Department:	School of Optometry and Vision Science
Reports To:	Director, School of Optometry and Vision Science Associate Director, Advancement, School of Optometry and Vision Science
Jobs Reporting:	N/A
Salary Grade:	USG 10
Effective Date:	May 2023

Primary Purpose

The Communications Manager plays a critical leadership role in the development of communications and building the brand for the Waterloo Eye Institute and the School of Optometry and Vision Science. The Communications Manager take leadership in communications, marketing, branding, and key projects, internally and externally, as well as ensuring the smooth internal communication of information critical to the day-to-day operations of the Institute and the School. The Communications Manager is responsible for the image and reputation in the media and general public, at the local, provincial, national and international levels among a wide range of stakeholders, partners and donors.

Key Accountabilities

Marketing and Branding

- Responsible for positioning the School as a leader in research and academic excellence through the creation of on-brand marketing materials in support of the School's strategic plan.
- Act as a primary content provider for the School's print, web and social media channels, identifying and writing engaging and informative stories from academic research, student activities and teaching initiatives ensuring alignment with the broader communications strategic plan.
- Coordinate photo and video shoots and/or source photos for copy when necessary.
- Research, write and edit compelling copy for all print material that support strategic initiatives. Work with designers, photographers and external vendors to create visually appealing products within budget.
- Maintain an excellent understanding of brand guidelines and promote a unified look and feel for the School through the creation and maintenance of a cache of promotional materials.

Internal Communications

- Lead the development and implementation of an effective internal communications strategic plan to foster increased information sharing among all stake holders (research, clinical and academic).
- Gather information, conduct interviews, and write content for ongoing deliverables.
- Build relationships with faculty and staff in order to maintain awareness of all teaching, research and clinical activities within the School to enhance stakeholder participation.
- Ensure that all relevant external communications are shared internally with key stakeholders through appropriate channels.
- Own and manage the day-to-day communication activities, including acting as an advisor to colleagues on best practices. The incumbent is expected to work closely with the senior administrative team to craft timely and appropriate messages to employees.
- Write content for the Director to use in public speaking engagements.

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- Leads the development and implementation of appropriate metrics to define, monitor, analyze and refine all communication initiatives as a basis for strategy development.

Advancement and Recruitment (External) Communications

- 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, and brochures. Incumbent must be able to write convincingly in a voice appropriate for intended stakeholders.
- Act as key author and editor on the Monthly Director's Report, the Insight Newsletter, and the Impact Report, writing content, interviewing sources and editing proofs.
- Develop messaging for school leadership at speaking engagements, in keeping with and relying on a knowledge of advancement goals and priorities, including slide decks, news stories, media relations and promotions to ensure a consistent and coherent delivery of information across all units within the school.
- Support colleagues at events with communications needs or marketing collateral such as donor events, alumni events and continuing education events.

Media Relations

- Maintain comprehensive knowledge of all teaching and research activities within the school and clinic.
- 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 research, academic and clinical priorities.
- Gather information, conduct research, and interview sources in order to 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.
- Collaborate with University Relations, Marketing and Strategic Communications, to ensure excellent quality/consistency and initiate coverage and outreach.
- Draft quotes on behalf of school spokespeople, including the Director and senior administration.
- 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.
- Provide advice and support to researchers by providing training and tips on responding to media queries.
- Field media requests through University Relations, Marketing and Strategic Communications by quickly identifying appropriate experts and supporting the arrangement of interviews.
- Work with University Relations, Marketing and Strategic Communications to maintain or increase both the quality and quantity of earned media
- Represent the School at events and activities both on and off-campus. These events require the incumbent to diplomatically and effectively facilitate media interaction with the School's most senior leaders, stakeholders, and funders.

**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

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- University degree in communications, journalism, marketing, public relations, or equivalent combination of education and experience required.
- Master's degree preferred.

Experience

- 5-7 years of experience with developing messaging, creating media releases, storytelling and developing internal communications required.
- Experience with scientific writing required.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Thorough knowledge and understanding of marketing communications, strategic communications planning and print media.
- Experience fielding media inquiries and working with external forces on deadlines.
- Proven track record of innovative and effective storytelling.
- Proven experience articulating positioning/messaging. Strong social media knowledge and experience.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; excellent copy editing and proofreading skills; multi-media storytelling experience. Active listener to foster positive working relationships and partnerships.
- Ability to manage multiple projects (from concept through execution), demonstrate effective time management skills and confidence in decision making with a positive attitude while remaining flexible to adapt to unexpected and time-sensitive demands.
- Demonstrated ability to lead and support the management of change, and to remain flexible, diplomatic, efficient, and capable of managing crisis situations as they arise.
- Proven self-starter with demonstrated commitment to innovation, creativity, and excellence.
- Strong organizational and problem-solving skills; initiative; demonstrated skill in managing priorities with limited resources (time and funding), and strong project management skills including budget development.
- Advanced skills in MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Sound working knowledge of design and photography software, content management platforms; social media channels and web-based project management platforms.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internally, communicates with all employees in all groups and at all levels. Must demonstrate political acuity and be successful at building alliances. The 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 School's reputation. The incumbent will be required to work closely and collaboratively with the Director and the Associate Director, Advancement, the Faculty of Science communications team, 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, with our colleges and associations, and will be involved in conferences and meet ups to advance the strategic communications agenda of the School and at times, the University of Waterloo
- **Level of Responsibility:** This position is responsible and accountable for the results of the strategic communications plan and for supporting the achievement of school goals and objectives. This position is a member of the Faculty of Science 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 school operates and those affecting the campus community. The position is expected to bring innovative approaches, new concepts and models to media relations programs. The incumbent 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 leadership and guidance to Director, Associate Director, Advancement and the senior leadership team. The position is also expected to be forward looking, aware of trends and bring/implement 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 and independently while supporting the Director and the Associate Director, Advancement in the delivery of media relations initiatives that best support the School'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 School's reputation
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of an office setting
- **Working Environment:** 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 impact on the School's reputation. Work outside of the normal UW working hours can be expected in this role (evenings and weekends).