

Job Description

Job Title:	Director, Strategic Initiatives & Communications
Department:	Faculty of Environment
Reports To:	Dean of Environment
Jobs Reporting:	Communications Manager
Salary Grade:	USG 14
Effective Date:	August, 2022

Primary Purpose

The Director, Strategic Initiatives & Communications, working directly with the Dean's Leadership Team, is responsible for developing, executing, and sustaining strategic initiatives and special projects in the Faculty of Environment. The Director provides critical leadership, direction, and expertise in the development of integrated and long-term communications strategies that further the strategic objectives, plans and vision for the Faculty of Environment. In addition, the Director conducts background research, develops reports, implementation plans and strategic communications on strategic priorities and special projects of the Faculty of Environment especially those that require broad campus collaboration and participation of stakeholders. With a focus on developing performance strategies to accelerate operationalization of plans, the Director leads implementation, knowledge management, related communications, and the monitoring of related performance targets. This role requires an innovative and collaborative leader who excels in connecting the dots across multiple Faculty initiatives to provide an enterprise-wide view of communications risks and opportunities. The role is responsible for the supervision of the Faculty's Communication Manager and is responsible for oversight of the development and delivery of strategic and creative communication products.

Key Accountabilities

Strategic Initiatives

- Identify, research and implement, in collaboration with other members of the Faculty of Environment leadership team, strategic initiatives for:
 - Advancing key priorities of the Faculty of Environment
 - Elevating the profile of Waterloo's Faculty of Environment research expertise and impact within concert with the Dean, Executive Officer and leadership team members, and relevant Institution colleagues, develop, refine, implement and communicate the Faculty's strategic plan, ensuring alignment with the University Strategic Plan
 - Increasing use and trust in data and analyses to support strategic planning, for evaluating progress and performance.
- Seize opportunities to identify and lead opportunities to advance the mission of the Faculty of Environment, particularly those that raise the profile of Environment within the Institution.
- Maintain a strong knowledge base of current UW programs, policies, resources, and services; develop strong relationships with senior leadership to effectively liaise, anticipate issues and opportunities, and identify trends.
- Maintain a strong knowledge base of external drivers affecting the post-secondary sector and of other institutions' initiatives and achievement in environment and sustainability.

- Lead the development of the strategic plan/framework and work-plan for the Faculty of Environment, and support the detailed current year operating plan, while adhering to direction set by the Dean and Executive Officer. This includes formalizing and leading the strategic planning process for the Faculty of Environment, with a focus on long-term trends and outlook, and developing competitive intelligence.
 - Working in collaboration with the Dean and Director of Advancement, engage external experts to learn and influence strategies, constantly remaining alert and forward thinking about opportunities and risks.
 - Organize planning retreats, including setting an agenda and overseeing follow-up on agreed action items.
 - Lead the Faculty of Environment approach to measurement and evaluation of the work-plan initiatives with a focus on the creation of a performance dashboard for impact and organizational effectiveness
 - Facilitate development of an annual work-plan for the Faculty of Environment strategic plan.
- Research high priority projects and prepare backgrounders that cogently identify both opportunities and inherent risks
 - Gather intelligence and maintain environmental scans for major initiatives and developments, both on campus and externally, that are relevant to the Faculty of Environment academic and research mandates.
- Leverage external relationships to support achievement of the Faculty of Environment's priorities and objectives.
- Work collaboratively with Faculty and Institutional communications, advancement, and government relations to support and improve Faculty of Environment's planning and decision making.
 - Prepare/oversee key written communications to ensure they accurately reflect the Dean's and the Faculty of Environment's position.
 - Prepare slide decks for use by Faculty of Environment.

Relationship Management

- Supervise and lead the Faculty of Environment Communication Manager in the delivery of high level, impactful communication to all audiences across a wide variety of channels and media.
- Facilitate relationships with Faculty of Environment's departments, schools, centres and institutes.
- Work closely with the Dean and Executive Officer and leadership team to support both Faculty of Environment and Institutional objectives.
- Work collaboratively with University Relations, Advancement, Institutional Analysis and Planning, the Associate Provost Integrated Planning Office, the Office of the Provost, the Office of Research and the Office of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Faculty of Environment and the management team.
- Liaise as appropriate with President, Provost, Deans, AVPs, Directors, Chairs.
- Build credibility with faculty members and staff across the Faculty of Environment in support of strategic initiatives.
- Supervise the Faculty's communications team.
- Create an environment of continuous improvement, open channels of communication that invite suggestions and innovative thinking, and proactively seek best practices.

Data, Analyses and Planning

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- Oversee the development and implementation of strategies to identify Institutional and Faculty data and analyses in the pursuit of advancing the mission of the Faculty of Environment.
- Build trust in the use of relevant credible data and analyses to inform decision-making and evaluation of strategies.
- Provide a focus on creation and implementation of projects that support teaching and research within the Waterloo Budget Model environment.
- Undertake professional development to remain current on issues pertaining to strategic planning, project management, evaluation and data analyses, and reporting.
- Lead the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and dashboards to monitor, measure and assess the effectiveness of all strategic communication activities and plans.

**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 marketing communications, online journalism, public relations, writing-centric and/or corporate communications required.
- Additional training or professional development related to strategic planning, performance measurement and communications preferred.

Experience

- At least 10 years of experience in roles of progressive responsibility for planning, relationship building and strategic initiatives, preferably in an academic setting.
- Skilled writer and editor, experienced in leading institutional or corporate communication.
- A proven track record of providing strategic advice to advance the goals and objectives of an organization, taking account of priorities, mandates, and stakeholder needs and aspirations.
- Demonstrated track record of leading, supervising and developing high performing teams and of balancing conflicting and pressing demands.
- Knowledge of federal and provincial programs and policies affecting the post-secondary sector.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills.
- Evidence of being a persuasive and dynamic leader with highly developed communication and interpersonal skills, who is outgoing and comfortable with networking, influencing and persuading at the highest level.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Deep expertise in strategic planning and communication, as well as project management.
- Broad and deep knowledge and experience of the workings of a large research university, in particular the relationship between the Institution and academic units, the workings of academic support units, and relationship across academic Faculties.
- Advanced understanding of institutional data, and analyses, including how to leverage and make use of data and analyses to inform and advance the Faculty of Environment mission.
- Strong organizational, prioritization and analytical skills; proven ability as a problem-solver.
- An ability to work independently and as a member of a team.
- Strong interpersonal skills; strong verbal and written communication skills; tact, good judgement, diplomacy and an ability to maintain confidentiality are essential.

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- Relationship management skills to engage, cultivate, and manage relationships with a broad range of stakeholders to meet or exceed internal and external audience needs
- Problem-solving skills to maintain a clear focus on the Faculty's needs in an environment of multiple stakeholders and often conflicting interests
- Experience with Microsoft Office programs including Power BI and SharePoint. Knowledge of UW policies, procedures and guidelines.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** : Broadly based, at a very senior level, both within and external to the University
- **Level of Responsibility:** The role directly supervises the Communications Manager and is responsible for the oversight of the Faculty's communications portfolio. High-level oversight and organizational responsibility for discussions and reporting; integral involvement in strategizing on priorities of the Faculty of Environment and the Institution. More generally, contributing in a helpful, professional, and timely manner to the management of strategic priorities in a fast-paced, multifaceted environment.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Must be capable of making decisions independently, knowing when to escalate matters to the Dean of Environment, Executive Officer or other members of the leadership team, and contribute positively and creatively to discussions around strategic decisions to be made by the Dean, the Executive Officer and the Faculty management team.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal, typical for administrative position in office environment
- **Working Environment:** Occasional travel; regular working hours with some evening/weekend work; minimal exposure to disagreeable physical conditions in the workplace.