Job Description

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Job Title:	Communications Officer
Department:	University of Waterloo Staff Association (UWSA)
Reports To:	President, UWSA
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 9
Effective Date:	November 2022

Primary Purpose

The Communications Officer is responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating communications, professional events, and engagement strategies that advance the goals and reputation of the University of Waterloo Staff Association (UWSA) in representing staff members across all campuses. The Communications Officer is also accountable for information management of UWSA records and ensuring the smooth internal communication of information critical to the Association's day-to-day operations. The Communications Officer reports to the UWSA President but may also provide support to UWSA Directors, committee chairs, and the Operations Team. Director roles are elected or appointed approximately every three years and the President role is elected every year.

Key Accountabilities

Communications Strategy
- Leads the ongoing development of the UWSA's brand positioning, voice, and key messaging
- Develops and implements a comprehensive communications strategy that raises awareness and advances the goals of the UWSA
- Develops and manages a multi-channel, integrated communications plan and communications guidelines to implement the communications strategy
- Identifies and advises on strategic and sensitive communications decisions
- Prepares and manages the UWSA's communications budget
- Monitors and reports on metrics for digital communications; applies research-based decision making to improve content to meet user and organizational needs
- Investigates and learns new technologies as required; remains current on technical and design trends and best practices in communications
- Routinely assesses the UWSA's communications strategies, tools, and infrastructure and recommends improvements

Content creation and management
- Develops and manages an integrated editorial calendar for the UWSA, including print, web, and other digital media platforms
- Creates and reviews UWSA communications including communications attributed to the UWSA President, Board of Directors, the Association, etc.
- Develops and maintains UWSA website, assesses website for usability, redundancy and overall functionality and makes recommendations for improvements
- Monitors website analytics and makes revisions as needed to optimize site for user needs
- Leads the production of the UWSA's communications to staff members and the public

- Safeguards the UWSA's reputation and relationships (and the University, in the case of joint initiatives) by ensuring the consistency, clarity, accuracy, and accessibility of communications, and compliance with University guidelines when required
- Provides writing and editing support across the UWSA to ensure high quality and consistent messaging
- Exercises high degree of confidentiality regarding UWSA information, documentation, and records
- Exercises high level of autonomy and independent judgement relating to highly sensitive situations, social media content, and member communication to safeguard the reputation and relationships of the UWSA
- Maintains thorough knowledge of the UWSA's activities and priorities, post-secondary sector news and trends, and University policies and procedures, and translates these into compelling content
- Supports and educates Board, committee members and Operations staff to produce content for UWSA channels; reviews all such communications and bears overall responsibility for all such communications
- Develops visual marketing materials such as posters, slideshows, and social media images, complying with University guidelines when required

Information Management
- Advises on information technology issues and opportunities and serves as IST liaison for the association, escalating technical issues to IST when required
- Develops and implements, in consultation with the Operations Team information management tools and systems to maintain UWSA records and facilitate internal communications
- Manages and maintains all UWSA records and information
- Develops and maintains processes to create and manage member data and fulfill statistical and benchmark report requests
- Maintains and controls the circulation of confidential documents and files
- Advises on requirements to improve the technical and service matters for the physical office and its members
- Leads special projects as assigned by the President
- Liaises with other staff associations and unions to identify and recommend member engagement best practices

Event Planning and Management
- Coordinates Annual and Special Meetings and Board and Presidential elections
- Collaborates with UWSA President, UWSA staff, Board and committee members to develop a program of meetings, trainings, workshops, and other workplace events that meet the needs of staff and build engagement with the UWSA
- Ensures that events and meetings are planned, managed, and delivered effectively and efficiently, including hosting or co-hosting
- Ensures President is informed of all pertinent (or possible) event issues
- Promotes UWSA events to staff and other audiences as appropriate, working with staff in University Communications and Community Relations and Events as required
- Researches and uses appropriate tools to manage events and event registration
- Evaluates and reports on event success
- Creates financial report for events where applicable

Other
- Leads special Projects as assigned by the President
- Other duties as required

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*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 or equivalent combination of education and experience in a field related to communications or labour relations
- Post-graduate education is an asset

Experience
- Minimum 3-5 years of experience in a communications role, preferably in the not-for-profit sector, with a proven record of developing communications strategies and creating content for multiple channels
- Minimum 3–5 years of experience using web-based platforms to create and maintain web content (e.g., web content management systems, social media accounts)
- Minimum 1–3 years of experience planning and executing meetings and events

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities
- Demonstrated understanding of best practices in information architecture, web accessibility, social media, content strategy, and writing for the web/digital media
- Understanding of the university environment, structure and policies affecting staff is strongly preferred
- Demonstrated knowledge of legal obligations of not for profit corporation and university setting (i.e. FIPPA, ONCA etc.)
- Knowledge of design and print production process is an asset
- Demonstrated ability to independently create and edit effective content consistent with the quality and standard expected of University-level communications
- Demonstrated ability to use and adapt technological solutions to improve processes
- Strong organization skills, including a disciplined approach to project management with exceptional attention to detail and accuracy
- Commitment to and solid knowledge of human rights, equity, inclusion, and justice issues
- Understanding of the foundations of labour relations
- Independent judgment in areas of time management, task prioritization and decision-making
- Experience with web content management systems
- Proficiency with Microsoft Outlook, word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software
- Intermediate-level graphic design and image editing skills
- Familiarity with HTML, WCMS, survey tools, and CSS
- Familiarity with and ability to set up and troubleshoot basic audio-visual equipment is an asset
- Ability to build consensus, work collaboratively, and foster teamwork among diverse staff members located on multiple campuses
- Ability to exercise judgement and discretion when handling confidential situations
- Ability to make reasonable estimates of resource needs to complete projects
- Ability to learn new software quickly
- Advanced level of all Office products, including Sharepoint

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Works with venue and catering staff to ensure successful execution of events on campus Communicates frequently with all UWSA members and UWSA staff and Board Liaises with and consults IST to ensure compliance with emerging technologies and solutions to arrange equipment for events Works collaboratively and shares information with communications colleagues across campus. Works with the Secretariat, Community Relations and Events, and University Communications to promote Association events
- **Level of Responsibility:** This position has specialized work with minimal supervision and requires the ability to perform duties with relative independence and to seek input when needed. It also requires the ability to work well under pressure to ensure the smooth and efficient running of events. This position has a significant role in maintaining, and managing risks to the UWSA's reputation, through providing communications leadership, actively managing public communications channels, and representing the UWSA on campus-wide working groups. The incumbent must be able to balance competing demands and interests, to advise on the best course of action for the UWSA, and to inspire colleagues to work collaboratively toward a common goal. As part of a small team, the incumbent should be willing to assist other staff members and to take on additional tasks as required. It requires initiative, independent thinking/problem-solving, sound judgment, effective time management/prioritization and routine problem resolution. There is a demand for thoroughness and accuracy
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Autonomy in most areas related to this mandate and sound judgement in deciding when to reach out to the UWSA President The incumbent is expected to be self-directed in executing their responsibilities, but many decisions will be taken with input from UWSA stakeholders. This requires the ability to use judgment in determining when and how involvement of others is required, and to make independent decisions when appropriate, sometimes under time constraints. Required to employ initiative, tact and diplomacy, and to maintain confidentiality. This position is responsible for proposing the communications and workplace events budgets and, once approved, independently determines the distribution of those budgets. Makes decisions about the most effective methods of developing and putting communications and events plans into action.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands**: Much of the business of the UWSA is carried out via email, telephone contact and meetings. The incumbent must be comfortable working in this independent environment. The work at times involves deadline pressures and changing or multiple priorities with concurrent demand for thoroughness and accuracy. The role involves periods of extensive sitting and concentrated use of visual senses. The role occasionally requires lifting and transportation of portable banners and other event-related materials to various locations on campus and within the community. It also requires the set-up and take-down of event locations which often includes moving and rearranging chairs and tables.
- **Working Environment:** Typical of an office environment. At times, frequent distractions and exposure to staff members in distress as a first point of contact for staff seeking advocacy and support. UWSA facilities consist of four employee offices and one conference room in the Davis Centre Building on the Waterloo campus. The role occasionally requires travel to other buildings or campuses and extended and/or non-traditional hours in order to set up, oversee and take down events both on and off campus.