



University Students' Council – Position Description

Position Title:	Associate Vice-President, Public Affairs
Supervisor:	Vice President Communications & Public Affairs
Remuneration:	\$16/hour (5-10 hours per week)
Hours of Work:	vary throughout the year
Term:	June 1 st – April 30 th

OVERVIEW:

The USC Communications portfolio exists to manage the organization's communications, issues management, media relations, marketing, and branding initiatives, ensuring alignment with the USC's strategic plan and the political priorities of the Executive Body. The primary role of all student leaders in the portfolio is to promote, protect, and enhance the reputation of the USC and its people. The portfolio is responsible for ensuring that students know who we are and what we do.

The USC's communications portfolio completes two principle activities related to communications: the proactive practice of intentionally promoting our brand to build awareness, recognition, and trust with our students; and the reactive practice of responding to issues as they arise to minimize potential harm to the organization. It is our goal to spend the majority of our time communicating proactively through branding and marketing strategies that help students feel connected to the USC and understand the value we bring to Western's campus. Our most successful communications are planned, flexible, and deliver on intentional objectives.

The communications team employs a number of strategies to achieve our communications goals, including: regular email newsletters, sponsorships and influencers, testimonials, paid digital and print advertising, digital and physical campaigns, contesting and engagement, earned media, social media, brand journalism, and others. With the narrowing in scope of the communications portfolio, and the realignment of the corporate communications department including the addition of a full-time Communications Manager, this is an excellent time to join the USC's communications team.

Under the direction of the Vice-President Communications & Public Affairs (VP-CPA), the **AVP Public Affairs** will support strategic and political communications of the University Students' Council. The role will usually assist with planned and controllable proactive communications, rather than responsive communications, which are managed by the VP-CPA. The AVP Public Affairs will be primarily responsible for offering advice and support with political communications and campaigns, supporting back-end media relations efforts, and overseeing *USC News*, the organization's brand journalism program.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Attend regular communications portfolio meetings as requested, on average once per week, to discuss portfolio projects and workflow.
- Attend meetings and events on behalf of the VP-CPA upon request.
- Attend weekly Advocacy Steering Committee meetings between the President, VP-University Affairs, VP-External Affairs, and Communications portfolios.
- Write, edit, and review the publication of communication documents across the organization, including presentations, meeting briefs, and speeches.
- Monitor the campus, local, provincial, and national political environment for issues that impact the USC and the post-secondary education sector and provide counsel to the VP-CPA in the development and execution of the USC's political strategy.
- Support the VP-CPA with media relations by strategizing and planning engagement with on-campus and local media outlets and identifying opportunities for proactive media pitches that elevate the USC's brand.
- Support key message development and media preparation of USC spokespeople for upcoming media interviews, typically for on-campus media outlets and stories of lesser political significance.
- Participate in media scanning by constantly monitoring and logging publications in campus and local media outlets that directly or indirectly implicate the USC.
- Serve as an official spokesperson for the USC with on-campus or local media outlets upon request of the VP-CPA, typically for stories of lesser political significance.
- Oversee *USC News*, the USC's brand journalism program:
 - Work with the VP-CPA and the AVP Communications to identify and ideate story topics that enhance the USC's brand and align with the political mandate of the Executive Body.
 - Provide direct support and leadership to the Brand Journalism Coordinators who are responsible for writing most stories on *USC News*.
 - Assist the VP-CPA with training of the Brand Journalism Coordinators.
 - Assign stories to the Brand Journalism Coordinators for production and regularly track progress to ensure stories will meet targeted publication.
 - Review and edit all stories written by the Brand Journalism Coordinators for accuracy, readability, length, clarity, scope, and alignment with the USC's core values, brand, and political priorities.
 - Author stories upon request of the VP-CPA, usually when stories are time sensitive, highly political, or of greater significance to the organization.

- Manage overall workflow of brand journalism stories, from identification, to assignment, to writing, to editing, to publication on the *USC News* website.
- Attend all USC Council meetings to author the *USC News* council recap story and assist the VP-CPA with council communications and media management.
- Adhere to USC bylaws, policies and procedures.
- Complete an interim report at the end of the fall academic term (December) and a final report at the end of the winter academic term (April) in compliance with the USC's Final Reports Procedures.
- Complete other duties as set out by the Vice President Communications & Public Affairs.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Academic or professional experience in journalism, English, creative storytelling, and other writing-focused programs/roles would be considered an asset.
- Previous work experience or a personal interest in politics and policy, especially related to post-secondary education, would be considered an asset.
- Previous experience working with accredited media outlets in any environment would be considered an asset.
- All AVPs must be an undergraduate student as defined by Western University during the school year they are in the AVP role.
- An AVP cannot be a USC Councillor or Director during their term as an AVP.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS and ABILITIES:

- **Project Management Skills:** ability to identify project needs, develop plans, mobilize available resources, adapt to changing circumstances, set priorities, and manage time in order to effectively meet deadlines; detail-oriented with a strong sense of follow-through.
- **Communication Skills:** ability to employ strong written and verbal communication skills; actively listens to the issues of others in a manner that elicits cooperation and engagement.
- **Team Facilitation:** ability to provide consistent leadership and support to a project-based team; motivates with purpose and leverages the diverse skills of a team to best complement their collective goals.
- **Evaluative and Analytical:** ability to understand and appreciate the value of metrics and data, using this information to inform future strategic decisions; learns from each experience and uses critical thought to make adjustments for future endeavors.
- **Adaptable and Resilient:** ability to integrate input and perspectives from multiple stakeholders; flexible and able to accommodate or integrate last-minute adjustments while maintaining energy and commitment in the face of setbacks or change.

- Proactivity: ability to anticipate future projects and seek out information and resources needed to take initiative; reconfigures processes and patterns in light of changing needs or circumstance and anticipates needs in advance of adverse circumstances or criticism.
- Exceptional Writing Skills: ability to write persuasively and employ rhetoric, edit and paraphrase others' writing for maximum impact, and use simple and succinct language to communicate complex ideas; utilizes proper grammar and syntax at all times.
- Systemic Thinking: Ability to think systematically and with foresight, identifying trends and priorities with a high level of comfort working in politically charged bureaucratic environments; confidently implements small-scale decision making to realize large-scale goals.
- Research Skills: Ability to provide issue analysis and additional information as required to ensure communications strategy is relevant and sensible; identifies relevant information and subsequent implications from high volumes of information.
- Professionalism and Discretion: ability to act professionally at all times including while working with peers, supervisors, and external stakeholders; exercises appropriate discretion when privy to information that is not available in the public domain.

TRAINING:

- The AVP Public Affairs will be required to attend all USC-mandated training sessions, as determined by the Vice President Communications & Public Affairs and the USC Human Resources Department.
- The AVP Public Affairs will be expected to attend a mandatory Health and Safety training seminar conducted at the beginning of their term.