



University Students' Council of the University of Western Ontario
POSITION DESCRIPTION
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

EFFECTIVE:

SUPERSEDES:

AUTHORITY: Council

RATIFIED BY: Council

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POSITION TITLE: COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

1.00 POSITION OVERVIEW:

Facilitate communication and issue management on behalf of the organization and develop communications strategies which further the USC mandate and support the political priorities of the Executive Body.

2.00 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- (1) Oversee USC public relations efforts. This includes corresponding with on and off-campus media, arranging interviews, creating press releases and briefing Executive or other USC members. Collect and analyze this media coverage.
- (2) Act as the primary steward of the USC's brand. Collaborate with the USC's Promotions department to oversee graphic, video, photo and social media campaigns. Consult on the promotion of USC services, events and other operations.
- (3) Manage communications to support the political implementation of the Executive Body's platforms and policies.
- (4) Enable the Executive to manifest a shared political will, and become the advocate for such ambitions.
- (5) Serve as the President and Executive's public liaison with internal and external stakeholders, at the discretion of the President.
- (6) Ensure open lines of communication with students and support Council in their efforts to garner opinion and feedback, specifically in the form of surveys, focus groups or other outreach initiatives.
- (7) Act as a direct support to the President in periods of crisis management.
- (8) Manage ongoing or developing issues relevant to the President and Executive Body.
- (9) Write, review, edit or consult on all publications, reports or public addresses relevant to the Executive Body.
- (10) Respond to all general inquiries and questions concerning the organization. Also manage the organization's mass-emailing capacities.
- (11) Directly assist the President in developing the organization's strategic priorities.
- (12) Consult on – and assist in planning, implementation, and evaluation of – the President's initiatives and projects as needed.
- (13) If wishing to take a leadership role in an external organization, the Communications Officer is required to request a non-binding majority endorsement of this intention from Council in an in-camera session of Council before running for or accepting the position.



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3.00 QUALIFICATIONS:

- (1) Qualified candidates for this position must be an undergraduate student of Western University and will have aptitudes in the following areas:
- i. *Project Management Skills:* Identifies project needs, develops plans, mobilizes available resources, adapts to changing circumstances, sets priorities and manages time in order to effectively meet deadlines. Detail-oriented with a strong sense of follow-through. Approaches a complex task or problem by breaking it down into its component parts.
 - ii. *Communication Skills:* Strong written and verbal communication. Actively listens to the issues of others in a manner that elicits cooperation and engagement.
 - iii. *Team Facilitation:* 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.
 - iv. *Evaluative and Analytical:* Understands and appreciates the value of metrics and feels comfortable using metrics to form future decisions. Takes learning from each experience and uses critical thought to make adjustments for future endeavors. Gives constructive feedback to team members.
 - v. *Adaptable and Resilient:* Integrates input and perspectives from multiple stakeholders. Flexible and able to accommodate or integrate last-minute adjustments. Maintains energy and commitment in the face of setbacks or change.
 - vi. *Proactivity:* Anticipates future projects and seeks out information and resources needed to take initiative. Reconfigures processes and patterns in light of changing needs or circumstance. Anticipates, understands and strategizes around public relations needs instead of reacting to events and circumstance. Takes initiative to assist other areas in the USC with public education campaigns.
 - vii. *Exceptional Writing Skills:* Can write persuasively and employ rhetoric. Can use simple and succinct language to communicate complex ideas. Able to edit and paraphrase others' writing for maximum impact. Utilizes proper grammar and syntax at all times.



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- viii. *Systemic Thinking*: Thinks tactically and with foresight, identifying trends and priorities. Comfortable working in politically charged bureaucratic environments.
- ix. *Research Skills*: Able to provide issue analysis and additional information as required to ensure best practices and up-to-date context. Can identify relevant information and subsequent implications from high volumes of material.
- x. *Professionalism and Discretion*: Uses diplomacy and respect engaging with inquiries and concerns. Can be trusted with sensitive or strategic information. Provides helpful feedback and information to internal and external stakeholders in a consistent and timely manner.

4.00 TIME COMMITMENT:

- (1) The time commitment requirement is 35 hours per week commencing the position on May 1st, 2016 until the end date of May 31st, 2017. There will be an additional responsibility of 10 hours per week from April 1st, 2016- April 30th, 2016.

5.00 TRAINING/SUPPORT:

- (1) There will be a Health and Safety training seminar conducted at the beginning of employment. This seminar is mandatory for all new members of the USC.
- (2) There will be a transitional period during May, which will include training with the outgoing Communications Officer as well as Employee Development Program (EDP) sessions.
- (3) On-the-job training will be provided on an ongoing basis in both a formal and informal capacity.
- (4) Technical writing training for procedural and policy development will be offered.

6.00 LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- (1) The Communications Officer will be provided with a structured professional development opportunity to build their personal and organizational capacity. This experiential learning opportunity is geared for students who have future aspirations of working alongside professionals in a democratic and public relations environment.
- (2) All projects assigned to the Communications Officer will aid in their interpersonal and professional growth, ability to formulate, implement and evaluate projects by applying principles of project management, and heighten their understanding of organizational governance. They will learn how to develop effective group facilitation skills in addition to becoming more proficient in supervising and managing their portfolio.



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(3) They will demonstrate an understanding of and act in the mediating role of the professional communicator within the organization, and between the organization and the general public.

7.00 COMMUNITY IMPACT:

(1) The Communications Officer has the opportunity to directly impact student engagement within the University Students' Council at Western University to improve the overall student experience.

(2) The Communications Officer will impact the USC and its governmental functions by becoming a key steward of student democracy and its critical facilitator of a transparent and constructive government. The Communications Officer shall strive to enhance and grow the USC's brand clarity and presence by evolving creative initiatives with the organization to align with the broader mission and mandate. USC communications strategies strive to provide clarity around what the USC does and engage the broad community of students in public discourse, and influence student attitudes, interests, systems and policies.

(3) USC communications strives to provide an education for students, keeping the Western community informed on relevant and important issues and events on campus. The incumbent shall strive to support and create experiential learning opportunities for students as well as crisis management.

8.00 EVALUATION:

(1) *Formative Assessment:* The Communications Officer will maintain an ongoing and open dialogue of informal feedback with the President of the University Students' Council. This informal process of feedback will be completed on-the-job and will aid in identifying learning needs for successful task completion. This will allow for instructional guidance in learning a new skill and being able to execute assigned tasks and projects successfully. This type of feedback goes both ways so as to allow the Communications Officer to obtain a meaningful experience while also informing the President about specific learning and development goals they wish to achieve.

9.00 SUPERVISION:

(1) The President of the University Students' Council will oversee all day-to-day delegation and evaluation of the Communications Officer. This will include any additional training the President deems appropriate to aid in the development and skill set of the Communications Officer to allow them to perform to their highest ability as the public presence and steward of the corporation.



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11.00 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- (1) A familiarity with the political and organizational structure of the USC and an understanding of its services and operations, as well as the student-leadership branch, is an asset but not required.
- (2) Ability to be flexible and adaptable to an ever changing environment with the organizational ability to react quickly during a crisis. Crisis management is one of the main components of the Communication Officer and they are the official facilitator and direct link to the students at Western University.