#### Trent University LogoEXEMPT JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Communications & Media Relations Officer

**Job Number:** X-413 | VIP: 1708

**Band:** EXEMPT- 5

**Department:** Trent University Durham

**Supervisor Title:** Manager, Communications

**Last Reviewed:**  November 24, 2021

#### **Job Purpose:**

The Communications & Media Relations Officer, Trent Durham is a key member of the Trent Durham and Communications teams, and significant contributor to the University’s Communications team. In line with the institution’s positioning and branding, this position takes a lead role in dimensionalizing the Trent Durham GTA story across all media platforms and in the digital realm. As a media and marketing/ communications expert, the successful candidate will possess media and social media expertise and will bring a Trent Durham perspective to plans, meetings, and discussions with the Communications team, while also ensuring all aspects of Trent Durham’s marketing materials, publications, presentations and e-communications remain consistent with broader University marketing and communications strategies. The role reports to the Manager, Communications, with guidance and direction from the Dean & Head, Trent University Durham and the Manager, Community Engagement.

#### Key Activities:

##### Media Relations

##### Contribute to a media relations strategy with an emphasis on the Trent Durham campus, as part of the University-wide marketing plan with clear metrics for tracking and measuring success.

##### Proactively seek out, plan, manage, pitch and execute media opportunities and coverage, and create content for producing/coordinating communications material and events in support of the strategic Trent Durham goals to build reputation and awareness of GTA Campus.

##### Conduct reviews of Trent Durham media coverage.

##### Conduct daily media scans, proactively identifying opportunities for Trent Durham.

##### Respond to Durham media calls and inquiries and prepare detailed reports on media issues for the Manager, Communications; prepare and update key messaging for issues arising for the Durham campus including news releases, backgrounders, fact sheets, bios;

##### Create and maintain relationships with members of the local media related to Trent Durham’s key focus areas and collaborate with the Communications team to actively pursue a match for media needs for content and experts with Trent Durham faculty, students and alumni.

##### Meet with senior administration, academic and administrative department heads to effectively and strategically identify Trent Durham expertise, faculty, student and alumni successes, opportunities for commentary on topical issues, features and profiles – and activate use in media relations and marketing/communications materials.

##### Maintain an awareness and understanding of media trends, innovations and opportunities and act as expert on media, both traditional and new (e.g. social).

##### Work with the Communications team to contribute to a University-wide Social Media Plan, with a focus on the Durham campus.

##### Marketing & Communications

##### Plan, write, oversee writers/designers and edit materials for all mediums directed at both internal and external audiences, consistent with the University's mission, vision and strategic directions, enrolment (recruitment and retention) and objectives. Materials include, but are not limited to: news releases, viewbooks and publications, web content, news stories, digital media, etc.

##### Produce quality of content and effective delivery of Trent Durham stories using a brand journalism approach and through a robust contribution to the publications plan and e-delivery strategy leveraging university events and success stories.

##### Explore and implement creative ways to integrate written content with digital content, including video;

##### Serve as lead on Trent Durham social media content, tracking and identifying any issues requiring response, ensuring media prominence and a high level of social media activity through involvement and attendance at high profile Trent Durham events, announcements, occasions and celebrations;

##### Contribute to publications that provide an opportunity for the Trent Durham to promote its researchers, faculty, students and staff;

##### Drive innovation by researching best practices, media trends, new digital strategies in using both new and traditional forms of communication to effectively engage with the Trent Durham’s key target audiences including media, prospects and current students;

##### Plan publications and e-projects, write, edit, proofread and coordinate suppliers from concept to completion;

##### Assist with digital and other photography/video/podcasts to support marketing, communications, recruitment and admissions materials and initiatives;

##### Coordinate and liaise with designers, producers, photographers/videographers, and other marketing, communications and creative suppliers to facilitate timely delivery of marketing material for various Trent Durham campaigns, announcements, initiatives and events;

##### Participate in team meetings and brainstorming sessions, with the Trent Durham management team as well as with the Communications team, identifying marketing opportunities and new approaches to positively position Trent University Durham in building reputation, awareness and enrolment;

##### Emergency Operations & Issues Management

##### Act on strategies for crisis/emergency communications as required, including emergency response, campus closures, issues management

##### Access and synthesize confidential and sensitive information, related to board governance, budgets, human resources, for backgrounders, speaking points, communications plans, etc.

##### Maintain discretion and confidentiality with regard to files and sensitive issues, attending meetings, interviewing senior administrators to support the Manager of Community Engagement and Manager of Communications on plans and materials;

##### Develop briefing materials, backgrounders, speaking points for Trent Durham senior administration on media requests and confidential issues as required

##### Administrative Duties & Support

##### Work with external freelance writers, providing direction on Trent standards and writing guidelines, assigning and editing work, etc.;

##### Act as key member and contributor to University-wide Integrated Communications Group;

##### Assist in planning, development and implementation of public relations, marketing and communications, recruitment and admissions special events, including Open House;

##### Build effective relationships and collaborate with all Trent Durham administrative and academic departments on key messaging;

##### Oversee and provide direction on work of Communications student employees;

##### Liaise with suppliers (e.g. freelancers, printers, sign companies, designers) to ensure deadlines are met;

##### Post material to daily news, mobile app and myTrent portals, and other communications tools as they evolve;

##### Support distribution logistics for print and e-newsletters;

##### Estimate budgets for communications materials and projects and ensure timely, on-budget delivery

##### Contribute to management of materials library, assist with photo database, electronic and hard copy department files;

##### Schedule, take minutes and follow-up on action items of department meetings, standing or ad hoc committees;

##### Other duties as assigned.

#### Education Required:

##### Honours Bachelor’s Degree (4 year) in Communications, Public Relations, Journalism, Media Studies, or a related field.

##### Postgraduate degree, diploma or certificate may be considered an asset.

#### Experience/Qualifications Required:

##### A minimum of five (5) years’ experience in professional writing and communications activities (using new and traditional forms of media), preferably in a large public sector or corporate setting, is required.

##### Excellent written and verbal communications skills.

##### Interest and appetite for the latest developments in marketing and media as well as experience in integrating social media and online media strategies.

##### Exemplary interpersonal, communications, conflict resolution skills with abilities to build bridges between complex stakeholder groups and individuals.

##### Outstanding strategic, creative, and conceptual writing and editing skills for various media

##### Demonstrated experience working with major national news outlets and/or magazine/trade/online publications.

##### Proven record of securing positive press with key media, including magazine/trade/online publications at the national and international level.

##### Well-honed issues management skills and ability to manage confidential information and display sensitivity during difficult situations.

##### Ability to manage diverse projects and shifting priorities within tight timelines

##### Recognizable and consistent social media presence as well as interest and expertise in new media technologies.

##### Excellent computing skills (Microsoft Office, Word, Excel, Project Management, email, internet, web content management, PowerPoint, etc.)

##### Excellent sense of discretion, judgment, tact and diplomacy.

##### Demonstrated knowledge and experience in marketing and understanding of target audiences;

##### Dedication to customer service and a student-centred environment.

##### Superior interpersonal strengths, conceptual skills, the ability to collaborate creatively and consult with others;

##### Conversant with new media technologies, social media, photography and videography;

##### Experience in proof-reading, editing and in managing publication projects;

##### Ability to work with constructive feedback and take direction;

##### Knowledge of the Ontario secondary and post-secondary system environments, trends and needs;

##### An understanding of complex stakeholder groups and diverse audiences

##### Job Evaluation Factors

##### Analytical Reasoning

##### Must display an issues management mindset and be able to project how evolving issues will impact the reputation of Trent Durham and the University. The complexity of this role is tied to the multitude of projects and priorities that must be managed simultaneously, with tight deadlines. The output of work is very public in nature and special attention must be adhered to ensuring the accuracy of work that is published in the public domain. Intense conceptual thinking is required to define the correct path for successful project management (e.g. media relations, planning and coordination on confidential issues management topics).

##### This job requires analytical reasoning to apply to responsibilities that are diverse, complex and multifaceted. Judgment is exercised in adapting methods to arrive at solutions. Situations are broad in scope, and lack standard practice to resolve, thus requiring the recognition, analysis and creative definition of practical solutions. Work planning includes others, and occurs within broad time frames, but may require adjusting plans and priorities to respond to changing circumstances.

##### Logical and critical thinking is often required to define problems, develop alternatives, propose, plan and implement solutions.

##### Decision Making

##### Interacts regularly with senior administration, including Dean and Head of Trent Durham, President, VPs, AVPs, as well as external stakeholders including media. In doing so, the Communications & Media Relations Officer, Trent Durham provides support and messaging that has wide-reaching impact across the University, in the community, and beyond. Sound judgement is required to maintain and cultivate relations with a variety of stakeholders in media, administration and internal/external communities. In broader consultation with Manager, Communications, Manager, Community Engagement, and Dean and Head of Trent Durham, this position is required to use sound judgement; decisions usually involve determining the best process to carry out the job tasks.

##### Impact

##### Decisions taken by the Media Relations & Communications Officer, Trent Durham have the potential of impacting the reputation and public image of the University. Work completed is frequently broadcast and shared in the public domain. The management of media inquiry, for example, has the potential of resolving an issue or extending a controversy, depending on decisions taken and acted upon.

##### Impact on the organization is likely to extend to other work groups and may also have some effect on clients and service partners: errors are normally detected before they become serious, but may cause interruption and loss of time to colleagues in the same section or other work groups to correct. Errors that go undetected may affect recommendations, decisions or actions, leading to a minor negative impact to the whole organization.

##### Responsibility for the Work of Others

##### Direct Responsibility for the Work of Others:

##### Contracted suppliers, including freelance writers, designers, photographers, and printers – often act as first point of contact in the department for contracted suppliers – manage work of freelance writers (assign stories, review and edit materials, provide feedback and act as mentor/provide direction for future pieces); designers – seek quotes on publications and projects, manage relationships with multiple designers; photographers – provide creative direction of photo shoots and video projects; printers – seek quotes on publications and projects, manage relationships with multiple print houses, ensure work is distributed equally, etc.

##### Student employees – provide direction to student employees on projects/tasks to be undertaken; review/edit written materials and photography; assist with training on various office procedures, etc.

##### Indirect Responsibility for the Work of Others:

##### Liaises with other internal departments (e.g. President’s Office, Office of the Dean and Head of Trent Durham, Communications, Recruitment & Admission, Student Affairs, Advancement, Risk Management, Facilities Management) on messaging and materials

##### Communication

##### The Communications & Media Relations Officer, Trent Durham is a direct point of contact for both the internal and external communities. Communication involves the ability to clarify ideas and messages, to summarize or synthesize the information according to the audience’s need, to use judgment in discussing problems, presenting information, making recommendations. Communication requires consulting on issues. Lack of judgment and discretion in communicating messages could result in damage to the organization’s image. Job responsibilities require communication with very diverse contacts, both inside and outside of the organization, including senior officials in the University, media, government representatives, prospective students and applicants, the community, and the general public.

##### Internal Contacts:

##### University administration – President’s Office, Vice Presidents, Board of Governors, Deans, etc. (institutional messaging, speech and letter writing, briefing and background documents, internal memos/updates, press materials, etc.)

##### Academic department heads, faculty and administrative assistants – all Trent Durham departments/programs, including undergraduate, graduate and professional programs (institutional messaging, press materials, profiles, brochures, marketing materials, online marketing/websites, photography, etc.)

##### Administrative department directors and staff – all offices (i.e. Communications, Recruitment, Advancement, Alumni, Trent International, Registrar, Liaison, Career Centre, Library, etc.) (institutional messaging, profiles, brochures, marketing materials, online marketing/websites, photography, etc.)

##### Students – undergraduate and graduate – regular contact with current students and alumni for profiles, press materials, online marketing/web content, events promotion, etc.

##### Ancillary operations; (Food Services, Housing, etc.) (institutional messaging, profiles, brochures, marketing materials, online marketing/websites, photography, etc.)

##### External Contacts:

##### Media – direct contact with members of the media; front-line media response

##### Suppliers, vendors (freelance writers, designers, printers, etc.) – arrange “contracts” with vendors (RFPs, quotes, etc.), act as liaison between university clients (including departments, offices and M&C) and suppliers on various projects, etc.

##### Associations – COU, Universities Canada, etc.

##### VIPs – honorary degree recipients, Chancellor

##### General public – indirect contact through development of stories and messages for press releases, website stories and text, etc.; occasionally respond to direct inquiries from the public

##### Prospective students and applicants – through printed materials and social media interaction communicate with prospective students and their families and influencers, including guidance counsellors, etc.

##### Government representatives – work with government reps through Manager, Community Engagement, Manager, Communications, on press conferences and university events, news releases, etc.

##### Counterparts or contacts at other universities or academic institutions – consult on best practices; work with them on various events and/or announcements (especially local institutions/Ontario Tech University, Durham College), etc.

##### Representatives from various external organizations – includes community organizations (around events, press releases, etc.)

##### Motor/ Sensory Skills

##### Working at work station throughout the day, responding to telephone calls, large volumes of e-mails

##### Keyboarding – require dexterity involving speed and accuracy

##### Handwriting – required to capture notes from interviews (in person or on the phone) quickly and accurately

##### Verbal – excellent verbal communication skills; engaged in extensive verbal communication in media and public relations role; pick-up on verbal cues in interviews (in person, on phone or through e-mail); communicate effectively with all audiences

##### Visual – attention to fine detail and overall presentation of professional-looking materials; fit with Trent brand and identity; photography and videography best angles/lighting/set-up for various purposes