

Job Category:	Executive
Job Code:	JC100314
Original Date:	October 2012
Last Revision Date:	June 2026
Pay Grade:	18

VICE-PRESIDENT, EXTERNAL RELATIONS

NATURE AND SCOPE OF WORK

The Vice-President, External Relations provides strategic leadership for the University's reputation, constituent engagement, enrolment growth, advancement, and external partnerships. The Vice-President leads the External Relations portfolio, including philanthropy and alumni relations, communications and government relations, marketing and digital experience, student recruitment, and university events and ceremonies.

As the University's senior executive responsible for external engagement, the Vice-President advances institutional priorities by strengthening relationships with alumni, donors, governments, Indigenous Nations, community organizations, industry partners, and other key constituents. The role provides executive leadership for activities that support enrolment growth, fundraising, reputation management, government and community relations, and institutional visibility.

Working closely with academic, operational and student success leaders, the Vice-President champions an integrated approach to the student lifecycle, with particular emphasis on prospective student awareness, recruitment, application, and enrolment. The Vice-President serves as a principal advisor to the President on public affairs, constituent engagement, reputation management, and external relations matters.

Direct reports include the Director, Philanthropy and Alumni Relations; the Director, Communications and Government Relations; and the Executive Director, Marketing and Recruitment. Through these leaders, the Vice-President oversees a multidisciplinary team responsible for advancing the University's external relations objectives.

The Vice-President reports directly to the President, serves as a member of the Senior Leadership Council, and participates in Board of Governors meetings.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

Strategic Leadership and Oversight

- As a member of the University's Senior Leadership Council, provides executive leadership on institutional reputation, recruitment and engagement, and the strategic positioning of the University.
- Leads the External Relations portfolio and ensures its activities, priorities, and resources are aligned with the University's strategic plan and institutional objectives.
- Provides leadership in identifying, assessing, and managing opportunities and risks related to institutional reputation, public affairs, constituent relations, and external engagement.
- Establishes portfolio goals, performance expectations, and accountability measures, and evaluates portfolio effectiveness and outcomes.
- Oversees the development of performance frameworks, reporting mechanisms and assessment processes to evaluate outcomes and support continuous improvement.
- Provides leadership, support, and performance oversight to direct reports and fosters a collaborative, high-performing leadership team.
- Champions an integrated approach to external engagement, ensuring alignment among philanthropy, alumni relations, communications, government relations, recruitment, marketing, events, and community engagement activities.
- Works collaboratively with academic, operational, and student success leaders to advance institutional priorities and support the student lifecycle.
- Provides executive sponsorship and strategic oversight for major institutional initiatives related to external engagement, constituent relations, enrolment growth, fundraising, and reputation enhancement.
- Builds leadership capacity through mentorship, succession planning and professional development initiatives.
- Leads the University's external advocacy efforts and represents the institution with senior government officials, Indigenous Nations, donors, industry leaders, community organizations, and other key constituents.
- Develops and strengthens strategic partnerships that advance the University's strategic goals.
- Acts as a principal advisor to the President and Board of Governors on matters relating to external relations and constituent engagement, reputation management, and strategic partnerships.
- Identifies emerging issues, trends, opportunities, and funding priorities of strategic importance to the University and develops recommendations to advance institutional interests.
- Supports the President and Executive in the development and implementation of institution-wide initiatives and external engagement strategies.
- Provides strategic counsel and support to academic and administrative leaders in advancing constituent relations, partnerships, and community engagement objectives.
- Oversees the financial, human, and operational resources of the External Relations portfolio and ensures effective stewardship of those resources.
- Reports on portfolio performance, outcomes, and strategic initiatives to the President, Board of Governors, Foundation Board, and other appropriate governing bodies.

Financial and Resource Management

- Oversees the development and management of operating and project budgets.
- Allocates financial and human resources in alignment with strategic priorities and institutional objectives.
- Monitors portfolio performance and resource utilization and recommends adjustments as required.
- Ensures responsible stewardship of institutional resources and compliance with university policies and procedures.
- Reviews and approves major initiatives, investments and projects.
- Ensures financial planning supports the university's priorities and goals.

Strategic Support to the President

- Serves as a key strategic advisor to the President on matters related to institutional reputation, stakeholder relations, government relations, community engagement, and strategic communications.
- Supports the advancement of the President's priorities by coordinating and aligning initiatives across the University Relations portfolio and with institutional partners.
- Provides strategic counsel, environmental scanning, issues analysis, and recommendations to support executive decision-making and institutional positioning.
- Leads or supports special projects, institutional initiatives, and emerging priorities on behalf of the President.
- Represents the President on institutional committees, external engagements, and strategic initiatives as delegated.
- Develops briefing materials, presentations, correspondence, and strategic communications to support the President's engagement with government, community, industry, donors, alumni, Indigenous partners, and other key stakeholders.
- Supports the coordination and execution of presidential outreach, relationship-building, and advocacy activities that advance the university's strategic goals.

REQUIRED TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

- A minimum of eight years of progressive senior leadership experience within a complex organization, including responsibility for multiple operating areas, diverse teams, and significant budgets.
- Demonstrated success leading and integrating multidisciplinary functions such as communications, marketing, recruitment, advancement, government relations, community engagement, constituent relations, or comparable areas.
- Experience working with and supporting a Board of Governors, Foundation Board, or similar governing body, including leveraging the expertise, influence, and networks of board members to advance institutional priorities.
- Proven ability to develop and execute strategic initiatives that advance long-term institutional goals.
- Demonstrated experience leading organizational change, building high-performing teams, and fostering collaboration across multiple departments and stakeholder groups.

- Experience representing an organization with senior government officials, donors, industry leaders, community organizations, and other external constituents.
- Experience within the post-secondary sector or another purpose-driven public sector organization is preferred.
- A graduate degree in a relevant discipline or equivalent combination of education and leadership experience.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND SKILLS

Specific Requirements

- Possesses a track record of success in senior leadership within a large, complex, multi-stakeholder organizations, with public post-secondary experience being an asset.
- Demonstrated ability to provide strategic leadership to all areas of the portfolio.
- Proven ability to lead through complex change involving many diverse constituents.
- Solid acumen around digital outreach strategies and able to guide an organization toward effective approaches to leverage this key tool.
- Strong ability to “connect the dots” amongst community and government partners, able to find common ground and has an ability to forge relationships around win-win partnerships and initiatives.
- Ability to develop a shared vision and strategy among the team. Can guide, mentor and motivate staff, as well as promote the vision broadly across an organization.
- Has a track record of seeing initiatives through to completion.
- Excellent prioritization abilities. Can assimilate ideas and proposals from a variety of places and determine viability and impact to get to the key achievable priorities.
- Effective in using data, research and evidence in decision making.

Relationship Skills

- Outstanding relationship skills with an ability to work across autonomous functional areas to understand needs, communicate and gain buy-in for strategies and initiatives, and set expectations.
- Superior interpersonal abilities: engaging, approachable, accessible, diplomatic, open and collaborative.
- Comfortable and effective in building relationships with a wide variety of people, from students to major donors to government officials to corporate sponsors.
- Excellent listener

Personal Characteristics

- Works well with a diverse team and is able to incorporate a wide variety of perspectives and experiences.
- Strong intellect: ability to consider complex subjects and synthesize them into compelling messages/ideas.
- Service-oriented: can build productive, professional relationships that serve the institution.

- Demonstrates integrity, respect, trust and openness. Highly professional, able to maintain focus, effectiveness, emotional control and maturity.
- Believes in the power of education in furthering the lives of individuals as well as local and regional economies.
- A 'big-picture thinker' who can see how their work fits into the greater strategy of an organization, and who can contribute effectively to both the departmental as well as the organization as a whole.
- Well-developed analytical and problem-solving skills, as well as proven conflict resolution skills.
- Strong conceptual abilities combined with high attention to detail.