#### Trent University LogoEXEMPT JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Research Engagement Advisor

**Job Number:** X-339 | VIP: 1176

**Band:** EXEMPT- 6

**NOC:** 1222

**Department:** Office of Research and Innovation

**Supervisor Title:**  Vice President, Research and Innovation (primary)

Director, Office of Research & Innovation (secondary)

**Last Reviewed:**  August 31, 2021

#### **Job Purpose:**

The Advisor is responsible for administering communications, governance and external relations priorities for the Vice President, Research & Innovation and the Office of Research & Innovation. Reporting primarily to the Vice President, the Advisor also lends departmental coordination support to the Director, Office of Research & Innovation, and serves in a liaison position for collaborative activities between Trent’s research enterprise and Cleantech Commons at Trent University.

The Advisor liaises with many internal departments at Trent University and external bodies in university associations and government for the overall coordination of five (5) key components imperative for successful operation of the research and innovation portfolio: **Communications, Governance Relations (internal), Philanthropy Relations, Policy Analysis, and Government Relations**. The Advisor responds to public relations matters requiring specific knowledge of university policies and procedures both research-related and other institutional policies.

The Advisor facilitates numerous activities and competing demands within the Office of Research & Innovation geared to promotion and celebration of Trent University research through marketing, communications, planning and monitoring projects, and special events management as well as the coordination of working groups and committees.

#### Key Activities:

##### Communications

##### Communications oversight for intentional, proactive research promotion through news stories, web site development and content updates, awards announcements, social media oversight, e-bulletins, and important opportunities for faculty researchers.

##### Contributing member to the University’s Integrated Communications committee: provision of content for researcher news articles, and primary liaison with the University’s Communications department for development of Trent Breakthroughs (university’s research publication to the external community), news stories, media releases, and award announcements.

##### Prepare appropriate materials for the Vice President, Research & Innovation’s presentations to internal and external target audiences, including but not limited to: government associations, prospective and current donors, board of governors, senate, faculty, staff, and Trent community members. Communications materials will include high-quality proposals, special and regular correspondence, speeches, quotes for media releases, articles, special event programs and invitations as needed.

##### Supporting the Vice President in leading communications beyond “regular” business when senior management level ad-hoc committees are needed, such as, the Research Continuity working group during COVID19 (return to research on campus directives).

##### Regular review and planned updates of the Office of Research & Innovation webpages, highlighting faculty researcher news, recognition stories, impact and opportunities. Coordinate creative approaches to integrate written and digital content, including the use of web, video and social media, which may include consultant writers and videographers.

##### Guidance for ORI team’s communications needs in terms of editing, drafting and ensuring level of professionalism. The Advisor collaborates with the Executive Director, Cleantech Commons and promotes the relationship between Cleantech Commons and the Office of Research and Innovation.

**Governance Relations (internal)**

The Advisor will liaise with senior administration (Vice Presidents, University Secretary) and their staff as required to ensure timely and coordinated reporting to governing bodies as the lead staff member drafting Board of Governors and Senate reports for research initiatives. The Advisor provides advice to the Vice President, Research & Innovation and the Director, Office of Research & Innovation regarding the approvals process within the University’s bicameral governance system: the Board of Governors, Senate and their respective committees and sub-committees.

Leads planning for the Strategic Research Plan (guiding research vision for Trent University) on behalf of the VPRI including coordinating working groups and ad hoc committees in carrying out the internal consultation process. From time to time similar responsibilities will be required for the VP’s external Provincial Task Forces, Advisory Panels and others.

The Advisor will provide full administrative and policy support for standing committees within the Office of Research & Innovation including the Research Policy Committee (see Policy Analysis section below). This includes planning, managing work plans and agendas, crafting motions, preparing draft minutes, writing reports, etc.

On a yearly basis, prepares the annual Research report (approved by the Vice President) for the Enterprise Risk Management annual exercise identifying areas of concern and respective, proposed action for risks associated with Trent University research activity.

**Philanthropy Relations**

The Advisor will support the Vice President, Research & Innovation’s involvement with philanthropy initiatives, interacting with the External Relations & Advancement team, current and potential donors to the University’s research enterprise.

The Advisor will coordinate (with or without the External Relations & Advancement team) special events to encourage philanthropy initiatives, which may include tours, lectures, dinners, and public workshops.

The Advisor will deal with highly confidential and sensitive information related to donor gifts, agreements and support from the highest levels of donors, including Board of Governors, senior administration and the larger philanthropic community.

In collaboration with the Vice President, Research & Innovation, the Advisor will assist in exploring, for future harvesting, the emerging research interests of Trent University and connecting with philanthropic leaders.

Working closely with the Communications Office, the Advisor will liaise in the preparing, planning and distributing of major announcements and campaign updates. The Advisor will contribute significantly to developing, updating and implementing an annual communications plan that will assist in successfully achieving the University's research philanthropic goals and objectives.

**Research Policy Analysis**

The Advisor will be involved in maintaining, researching, regularly updating, and routing for final approval, all research policies in collaboration with the Vice President, Research & Innovation and the Director, Office of Research & Innovation.

Serving as the Secretary to the Research Policy Committee, which co-reports to both the Trent University Senate and the Vice-President of Research and Innovation, the mandate of the Committee is to develop and recommend research policies, procedures and awards. Committee activity comprises institutional research matters, with topics spanning sectoral trends and initiatives, research funding updates, consideration of matters from the Research Ethics Board subcommittee and the recommendations for the distinguished research and research impact annual awards.

Provides policy and procedural advice on research practices, through interpretation of current research policies when asked by administrators and faculty members.

**Government Relations**

The Advisor will provide executive level assistance for the Vice President, Research & Innovation for external, professional committee work including but not limited to the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), Ontario Council on University Research (OCUR), Alliance of Canadian Comprehensive Research Universities (ACCRU). This function will include the possibility of additional administrative tasks associated with times when the Vice President will be asked to serve on the Executive or Chair working groups.

The Advisor organizes Trent University’s research representation at special government relations activities at municipal, provincial or national levels of government, for example the provincial Research Matters events at Parliament Hill.

The Advisor works closely with the Vice President and the Director to advance strategic innovations activities and awards as they emerge. Responsibilities may include distribution of calls for proposals, logistics, managing internal communications and submissions, administrative support to ad hoc committees and record keeping, communications management with external stakeholders as appropriate (federal, provincial, municipal), submission preparation and reporting.

#### Education Required:

University Degree (Honours); focus on Administration; Marketing or Communications is considered an asset.

#### Experience/Qualifications Required:

1. A minimum of five years progressively responsible experience in administrative positions in a post-secondary educational institution.
2. An understanding of university governance, operations and culture is essential.
3. Proven understanding of the various constituencies within the University environment and their influence on decision making at the executive level.
4. Ability to organize and prioritize tasks with strong use of initiative, sound judgement, independent thought and precise attention to detail with a high level of professionalism.
5. Excellent interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills; adept at problem solving and using excellent judgement in situations requiring initiative, diplomacy and tact.
6. Excellent organizational, analytical and planning skills, including project management.
7. Demonstrated experience in the development of communication and marketing materials and initiatives including web development and social media to promote events, information and outreach;
8. Intermediate level computer skills: Internet and Microsoft Outlook suite
9. Proven ability to adapt and function effectively in a constantly changing environment with solid problem-solving and analytical skills and a proven ability to multitask.
10. Demonstrated ability to handle highly sensitive and confidential information.
11. Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines in a fast-paced service environment.
12. Experience in VIP event planning.

**Job Evaluation Factors:**

##### Analytical Reasoning

##### The position requires complex analysis and highly developed reasoning skills to manage senior level priorities within the Vice President, Research & Innovation’s portfolio.

##### Considerable and careful judgment is required to facilitate not only strategic, but also creative, solutions for research communications, outreach, governance and policy.

##### Critical thinking skills surrounding core issues in competition with emerging issues are employed daily to ensure appropriate analytical reasoning in this role.

##### Decision Making

##### Multi-faceted decision making is required for good planning and coordination of activities, especially due to the prioritizing of multiple, complex projects at any given time

##### General guidance is received from the Vice President on intricate assignments; however, responsibility for the planning of work and successful execution of reports or special events is incumbent on the Advisor.

##### Decisions are made consistent with protecting the university’s reputational image where research activity is promoted and governed.

##### With a dual reporting structure for the position between the VP and Director, the Advisor must determine priority items and triage for urgency when multiple tasks are at stake

##### Impact

##### Impact on the organization would be detrimental if the Advisor’s extension of the Vice President’s communications efforts are not at the utmost level of professionalism.

##### This is also applicable when the Advisor participates in outreach activities and when representing the university on a provincial-wide project management initiative.

##### Strategic initiatives and special events must be thoughtful and appropriate to avoid negative consequence with faculty and staff groups, external stakeholders, philanthropic donors and governing bodies.

**Responsibility for the Work of Others**

Direct Responsibility for the Work of Others:

* Research Operations Administrative Coordinator (dual with Director, task-specific)
* Student assistants (2)

Indirect Responsibility for the Work of Others:

* Follow-up with staff as directed by Vice President or Director

**Communication**

Requires excellent interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills specifically for use in situations requiring initiative, diplomacy and tact with a large variety of diverse audiences. The Advisor needs to apply good judgement to distil and present a volume of information, sometimes pivoting, depending on audience.

Internal: President’s Office, all Vice President’s Offices, University Secretariat, Deans, Graduate Studies, Finance, Human Resources, Risk Management

External: Municipal, Provincial and National Bodies, eg. City of Peterborough, Council of Ontario Universities, FedDEV, etc., Project Leads at other Ontario Universities; Private Sector Entities, Media

**Motor/ Sensory Skills**

* Keyboarding & mouse manipulation - Computer usage impacts upon key responsibilities
* Dexterity/Coordination - Interaction at special events
* Hearing, speech and visual - complex remote and face to face communication and interaction with key stakeholders

**Effort**

Mental:

* Sustained concentration - manage competing priorities and issues on behalf of Vice-President, Research & Innovation
* Constant re-focusing due to variety of key priorities and emergent issues that may arise for the Vice President and Director
* Problem solving ability to exercise sound judgement in order to evaluate and assess situations/issues and to initiate solutions

Physical:

* Long periods of time spent keyboarding, in meetings
* Frequency of exposure to interruptions
* Hours may be outside of traditional work week in the event of emergent issues for the Vice President and for travel and attendance at special events and tradeshows.

**Working Conditions**

Physical:

* Long periods of time sitting at desk for computer work and for meetings.

Psychological:

* Stress – The position is unique and has added complexity as the Advisor reports simultaneously to one primary supervisor (Vice President, Research & Innovation) and a secondary supervisor (Director, Research & Innovation)
* Challenge of managing competing, urgent and key issues
* Public relations complaints may arise
* Administering new initiatives or programs at the University where there are no comparators to refer to.