



**Lakehead**  
UNIVERSITY

## **OPPORTUNITY PROFILE**

**Associate Vice President, Communications**





## ABOUT LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

[Lakehead University](#) is a fully comprehensive university with approximately 9,700 full-time equivalent students and over 2,000 faculty and staff at two campuses in Orillia and Thunder Bay, Ontario. We have over 66,000 alumni in Canada and around the world.

Lakehead has nine faculties, including Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Graduate Studies, Health & Behavioural Sciences, Law, Natural Resources Management, Science & Environmental Studies, and Social Sciences & Humanities.

Lakehead University's achievements have been recognized nationally and internationally, including being ranked in the top half of Times Higher Education's (THE) 2023 World Universities Rankings for the fourth consecutive year, and the number one university in the world with fewer than 9,000 students in THE's 2023 Impact Rankings (which assesses institutions against the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals).

We are the university of choice for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit learners who account for approximately 11% of the total student population at Lakehead's Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses – and this vibrant population is growing.

Dynamic, modern, and highly learner-centred, we acknowledge all our students as valued leaders of tomorrow, whose education and success are paramount to our institution. Both campuses in Thunder Bay and Orillia promise the total university experience: a blend of academic excellence and opportunity with a rich variety of social and recreational activities. We also promise excellence in research; Lakehead is the proud host of eleven Canada Research Chairs and revolutionary facilities such as our world-renowned Paleo-DNA Laboratory and Biorefining Research Institute.





## Additional Information

- [University Governance](#)
- [Report to the Community](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Academic Plan](#)
- [Research Plan](#)
- [Indigenous Initiatives](#)
- [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan](#)
- [Thunder Bay Campus](#)
- [Orillia Campus](#)

## Campus Locations

**Lakehead Thunder Bay** is located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. Nestled on the shores of Lake Superior, in the heart of Thunder Bay, Lakehead Thunder Bay features a welcoming lake and river running past many of its buildings and residences.

Fieldwork and hands-on learning are integral to a high number of our programs, taking advantage of the vibrant, natural laboratories right in our backyard. Our northern landscape also presents ample opportunity for world-class outdoor sports and activities. Students here can opt to take a ski break or hiking trip between study sessions and maintain an ideal work-play balance with ease. Over 7,500 students call the Thunder Bay Campus home.

Facilities belonging to a wide array of professional options are located on the Thunder Bay Campus including nursing, kinesiology, forestry, business, engineering, education, social work, law, and medicine.

**Lakehead Orillia** is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. Opening in 2006 with a single downtown building, the campus has continued to expand in terms of students and infrastructure. Today, Lakehead Orillia is a growing, vibrant, close-knit campus community with two locations — downtown and a main campus that opened the doors to its [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED®\)](#) design Simcoe Hall, cafeteria, and residence buildings beginning in 2010.

Now home to 2,000 students, Lakehead Orillia offers 17 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, as well as a curriculum-based partnership with Georgian College in Barrie, Ontario.





## THE OPPORTUNITY – Associate Vice President, Communications

The Associate Vice-President of Communications is responsible for the effective direction and leadership of professional communications at Lakehead University including media relations and all institutional, leadership, crisis/emergency, and internal communications. With extensive internal and external communications accountabilities, the AVP of Communications seizes opportunities to achieve synergies ensuring the University develops compelling and timely communication materials that protect and enhance its reputation with internal and external audiences.

Reporting to the President and Vice-Chancellor, the AVP of Communications also works closely with Vice-Presidents, Deans, and other senior academic and administrative leaders as a catalyst for strategic communication excellence and innovation at Lakehead. The AVP of Communications will develop and execute a cohesive communications strategy for the University that addresses a variety of audiences and incorporates a digital-first approach that protects, enhances, and promotes the reputation of the University locally, nationally, and globally, across multiple platforms. The AVP of Communications will be responsible for providing leadership and guidance for strategic university-wide digital and brand strategy, marketing, media relations, social media, multi-media production and design, communications planning, strategic website direction, and issues management.





## Key responsibilities and priorities for the AVP will include:

**Develop and deliver an overarching strategic plan as well as annual work plans with clearly articulated goals, objectives, and key performance indicators.**

- Lead the development of a comprehensive and forward-thinking University Communications Strategic Plan, aligning it with the institution's vision, mission, and strategic goals.
- Collaborate with communication teams across various departments to ensure their goals and projects are integrated into the annual work plans and aligned with the overarching strategy.
- Regularly review and assess the progress of the University Communications Strategic Plan and annual work plans, identifying achievements, challenges, and opportunities for refinement.
- Conduct thorough research and analysis of communication trends, best practices, and emerging technologies to identify opportunities for enhancing the university's communication strategies.
- Lead and manage University's various communications- and marketing-related personnel, providing clear direction, coaching, and support to enhance individual and team performance.

## Key responsibilities and priorities for the AVP will include (cont'd):

**Lead University leadership in meeting communication objectives related to Marketing and Brand Strategy, and Community Relations and Events. Lead and develop the University Communications team to develop integrated, multi-channel, multi-audience communication strategies, channels, and programs.**

- Act as a liaison between various departments and communication teams, fostering collaboration and information sharing to enhance the university's overall communications and marketing effectiveness.
- Oversee the development of multi-channel communication plans that leverage various platforms such as digital media, social media, email marketing, print materials, events, and public relations.
- Collaborate with the team to optimize content creation and distribution across different channels, tailoring messages to resonate with specific audience segments.
- Develop comprehensive, integrated communication strategies that align with the university's brand identity and overall mission, catering to multiple target audiences across various channels.
- Ensure that communication strategies are well-coordinated and consistent across different platforms to maximize their impact and effectiveness.
- Lead the development of targeted communication programs that address the specific needs and interests of various audience groups, including prospective students, current students, alumni, faculty, staff, and the broader community.
- Implement personalized communication strategies that nurture relationships with each audience segment, fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty to the university.

**Provide strategic counsel to the President and Vice-Chancellor, Board of Governors Chair, Vice-Presidents, Deans, and other senior academic and administrative leaders, in all areas of communications.**

- Collaborate with key stakeholders, including senior university administrators, department heads, and communication teams, to gather insights and input that inform the strategic planning process and ensure it meets their requirements.
- Prepare key stakeholders for media interviews and public appearances, providing media training and guidance on message delivery.
- Advise on effective messaging and positioning to enhance the reputation and visibility of the organization among key stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and the wider community.
- Serve as a trusted advisor guiding senior leaders in handling sensitive issues, managing communication responses, and maintaining transparency and credibility as well as conveying their vision, values, and key messages effectively.
- Facilitate communication alignment among different academic and administrative units to enhance institutional coherence and collective impact.

## Key responsibilities and priorities for the AVP will include (cont'd):

**Provide leadership and vision for all institutional, leadership, crisis/emergency, and internal communications, as well as media relations and issues management.**

- Develop and oversee crisis communication plans that effectively address potential reputational risks and mitigate negative impacts during emergencies or crises.
- Serve as the primary spokesperson during critical incidents, providing timely and accurate information to media, stakeholders, and the public.
- Coordinate with relevant teams and departments to ensure consistent and cohesive messaging in response to crises and emergencies.
- Cultivate and maintain relationships with media outlets, journalists, and key influencers to promote positive media coverage and handle media inquiries effectively.
- Monitor news and social media platforms to proactively identify potential issues or negative sentiment related to the organization and develop strategies for issues management.
- Collaborate with Human Resources to develop and execute internal communication strategies that foster a positive organizational culture, enhance employee satisfaction, and promote transparent communication.
- Support internal communication initiatives ensuring that employees are well-informed, engaged, and aligned with the organization's vision, and values.





## THE CANDIDATE

### Commitment to Equity Diversity and Inclusion

Lakehead University is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and recognizes that a diverse staff/faculty benefits and enriches the work, learning and research environments, and is essential to academic and institutional excellence. We welcome applications from all qualified individuals and encourage women, members of racialized communities, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, and persons of any sexual orientation or gender identity to apply for this AVP Communications position. In accordance with the provincial legislation, accommodation will be provided by Leaders International Executive Search and Lakehead University throughout the recruitment, selection, and/or assessment process, upon request, to applicants with disabilities. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply.

### Candidate Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree (graduate degree an asset) in marketing, communications, journalism, public relations, or related field.
- Minimum of 15 years experience in a communications or public affairs environment in post-secondary or not-for-profit sectors, relevant public/private sectors, and minimum 5 years in a senior leadership capacity.
- Significant previous experience in a senior communications position with a reputation as a learner, innovative leader, and resilient communications strategist.
- Demonstrated experience and successful track record as an effective media spokesperson.
- Experience in issues management, demonstrated experience in leadership communications and C-suite coaching and support for crisis communications.
- Experience in leading and motivating high-performing teams.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills.
- Capacity to engage and communicate in highly complex issues such as those relevant to higher education.
- Demonstrated commitment to reconciliation, Indigenousization and equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Adept in current and emerging communications technologies and social media platforms.
- Exceptional public speaking and social media skills.





## COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation package will be provided, including an attractive base salary and excellent benefits. Further details will be discussed in a personal interview.

## FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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