

# Recruiting Leaders

## POSITION PROFILE

### Associate Vice President, Communications and Marketing



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## Associate Vice President, Communications and Marketing Athabasca University

### ▼ COMPANY OVERVIEW

Athabasca University (“AU”) is a global leader in online and distributed learning serving more than 40,000 students in every province and territory in Canada and in over 90 countries around the world. Offering more than 850 courses in over 55 undergraduate degree, graduate degree, diploma and certificate programs, AU is committed to dismantling barriers to learning, encouraging inclusion and enabling access to advanced education in a format and on a timeline that enables students to tailor their learning goals to fit their lives.

As Canada’s only digital-first learning university, created by Alberta innovators, Athabasca University’s classrooms, collaboration spaces, and student hubs are not bricks and mortar, but Cloud and Code. AU’s main campus is located in the Town of Athabasca, with administrative locations in both Edmonton and Calgary.

Athabasca University provides learning for life. Through the achievements of its students, faculty and staff, AU stands out as a provider of high quality post-secondary education.

- AU serves over 40,000 students (over 7,800 full-load equivalents).
- AU offers over 850 courses in more than 55 undergraduate and graduate programs in a range of arts, science and professional disciplines.
- AU has a \$160 million annual operating budget.
- AU employs over 1,000 team members across our administrative locations in Athabasca, Edmonton and Calgary.
- AU maintains over 350 collaborative agreements with other Canadian and international post-secondary institutions, with professional associations and employer groups and with First Nations institutions and communities.

### AU’s IMAGINE Strategic Plan

Athabasca University’s 5-year strategic plan “*Imagine*” is in year two of operation. It is focused around 4 key strategic themes and 5 key values at their foundation:

- Moving Beyond Place: Transforming communities through belonging and relationships.
- Moving Beyond Open: Bridging open and inclusion.
- Moving Beyond the Now: Supporting transformative and incremental change through agility and adaptability.
- Moving Beyond the Norm: Adopting innovative ideas, taking calculated risks.

## AU's "I-Care" Values

- Integrity: We are guided by ethics, honesty and fairness in all our actions, engendering trust within our University community.
- Community: We are one University. We achieve more together. We embrace collaboration and connectivity among our diverse individual community members and teams.
- Adaptability: We are flexible. We respond to the changing needs of our University and its learners with courage and continuous improvement.
- Respect: We foster respect by contributing to an environment in which every individual is valued.
- Excellence: We ask bold questions, provoke new ways of thinking, and focus on those things at which we can excel to enhance the quality of all that we do.

We encourage you to learn more about AU at [www.athabascau.ca](http://www.athabascau.ca).

## ▼ THE LOCATION

Athabasca University shapes and enables mutually supportive communities, regardless of where those communities exist. One of the strategic themes under AU's Strategic plan, *IMAGINE: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities* (<http://imagine.athabascau.ca/>) is Moving Beyond Place. Therefore, as AU is a semi-virtual organization anchored by three administration hubs across Alberta, this role has the option of being located in Athabasca, Calgary or Edmonton. Where applicants have equal skills, abilities, and experience, candidates who are willing to relocate within the County of Athabasca will be given preference.

## ▼ THE ROLE

The Associate Vice President ("AVP") of Communications and Marketing leads efforts to elevate AU's profile and steward its reputation within the university as well as with external audiences (media, influencers, prospective students, etc.) The AVP oversees the development and implementation of Athabasca University's overarching brand vision and communication and marketing campaigns to advance the university's local and global reputation and profile. The AVP is responsible for ensuring alignment and synergy of communications and marketing efforts internally and externally. The AVP leverages modern, dynamic, and strategic communications tools and methods to drive desired outcomes in enrolment, (graduate, undergraduate, professional development), fundraising/sponsorship, and internal/external communications.

The AVP is an essential partner who works with the Vice President, University Relations and other senior leaders of the university to drive positive change. The AVP will help foster internal campus pride and promote AU's I-CARE values to enable the achievement of institutional goals and priorities.

With a team complement of 29, the AVP has full leadership and supervisory authority for both the Communications unit and the Prospective Student Relations unit. Marketing and Communication is central to the successful implementation of the university's *Imagine* Plan. The incumbent has direct impact to the value and success of the university's leadership to cultivate and enhance meaningful relationships with targeted, high-level external audiences, including the media and key stakeholders, including corporate and government partners to enhance AU's brand.

### **Key Responsibilities**

#### **Strategic Branding & Integrated Communication:**

- Provides strategic branding, integrated communications, and marketing leadership to the university.
- Oversees the development of a comprehensive and proactive university-wide communications and marketing strategy that articulates the value proposition of AU, supports the strategic goals, values and aspirations of the university and ensures that all messages from the university are accurate and consistent.
- Closely collaborates, communicates, and partners with relevant constituencies throughout the university to ensure goals and priorities are achieved.
- Oversees communication strategy and planning, including providing communication advice to the Board of Governors, Office of the President, Executive Group, faculties and members of the university community.
- Advises members of the university community on communication matters as required, ensuring that AU team members are informed and prepared to actively participate in sharing AU's core messages with internal and external stakeholders.
- Liaises with national and international post-secondary organizations to ensure that AU has a voice in sector issues management and to align the university's response with national messaging where appropriate.
- Organizes and maintains emergency communication response measures to support prompt and effective crisis management action.
- Develops and implements regular reviews of communication and creative services (including user feedback) to ensure that the university is aware of and is in a position to respond to new opportunities.

- Develops communication strategies, tactics and projects to increase awareness of AU and knowledge of university practices across various stakeholder groups.
- Develops and maintains strategic and strong relationships across the university and with representatives of other post-secondary institutions with which AU has shared interests.
- Oversees establishment and maintenance of communications and marketing policies and procedures.
- Ensures unit compliance with relevant university policies and procedures and liaising with the Manager of Policy and Planning in the Office of the Vice President, University Relations to ensure that policies and procedures for which Communications is responsible are up to date or to develop new policies and procedures as required.
- Oversees the establishment and monitoring of budgets within communications and marketing and the allocation of marketing resources based on institutional strategic priorities.
- In collaboration with the Vice President, University Relations, the AVP participates in the development of annual University Relations budget submissions to the Executive Team and the Board of Governors and monitoring and approving budgeted unit expenditures.

#### Leadership:

- Provides Institutional Leadership as a secondary member of University Executive.
- Participates in institutional-level strategic planning and ongoing implementation.
- Leads crisis and issues management communications planning and rapid response messaging to deal with critical events as they may occur. The AVP conceptualizes plans, initiates and ensures effective implementation of all campaigns and activities that increase awareness and visibility of the universities.

#### Occupational Health and Safety:

- Responsible for awareness of one's OHS Responsibilities as an AU employee and Manager, for participating in the AU OHS Program as required, and for ensuring participation of the AU Community in the AU OHS Program as required.

### ▼ THE CANDIDATE

#### Core Competencies

Given the pivotal role this individual will be expected to play in achieving the strategic and operational objectives of the VP, University Relations and in supporting the success of the organization, it is essential that the successful candidate possess the following:

## Education:

- A post-graduate degree in Marketing and or Communications with seven or more years of experience in senior management in marketing and or communication division in a post-secondary institution or related industry.

## Qualifications and Experience:

- Demonstrated experience and leadership in managing comprehensive strategic communications, media relations and marketing programs to advance an organization's mission and goals.
- Demonstrated understanding of and experience with brand strategy, integrated marketing, media relations, crisis communication, market research, and web best practices in planning, writing, editing and production of newsletters, press releases, annual reports, marketing literature, and other print publications and directories for undergraduate, graduate education markets.
- Demonstrated experience and leadership in managing comprehensive strategic communications, media relations and marketing programs to advance an organization's mission and goals.
- Demonstrated success in increasingly responsible positions and as a change agent.
- Extensive successful writing, editing and producing experience within a variety of communications media.

## Personal Characteristics

**Strategic Planning:** You have a keen ability to understand, plan for and adapt to change. You are an effective strategist full of ideas and possibilities; you add your personal wisdom and experience to come to the best solutions. You understand the challenges, complexities and pace of a larger organization and have the patience to shepherd changes through to realization.

**Complex Problem-Solving:** You are grounded, have common sense and are a practical decision-maker and problem-solver. You glean meaning from whatever information is available and add personal wisdom and experience to come to the best conclusion and solution. You have multiple problem-solving techniques in your toolkit and can make informed decisions quickly, without hesitation. You are confident in negotiations and conflict resolution, focused on finding the "win-win" in every situation.

**Leadership:** You are a self-confident leader, able to hold your colleagues accountable and motivate staff with vision and innovative thinking. You build and foster successful relationships and you enjoy managing differing perspectives and opinions. You mentor, coach and develop staff and foster a healthy work environment. Your stature, gravitas, and confidence gain the credibility and respect of high-performing Board of Directors.

**Communication:** You are able to communicate your ideas persuasively and confidently in order to capture the imagination of the team, senior management and Board of Directors. You cherish honesty and transparency when interacting with staff, colleagues and stakeholders. You make time to listen carefully to others in order to fully appreciate alternate perspectives.

**Resilience:** You understand that change can sometimes be slow and not always linear. You are respectful of “the way it’s been” but willing to patiently usher in appropriate changes.

**Innovative:** You enjoy bringing innovation and creative thinking to every problem. You are creative and thoughtful on how new media technologies can be utilized and comfortable considering alternative futures without having all the data at your fingertips. An innovative thinker, you have a record of accomplishment for translating strategic thinking into action plans and output.

**Relationship-oriented:** You are authentic and quick to find common ground and you treat differences fairly and equitably. You have a strong sense of what is right, and you can convey your viewpoint to different types of people without ruffling feathers. You are skilled in proactively building relationships with top tier reporters and editors, and in successfully positioning subject matter with the media to achieve high- impact placements.

**Autonomous:** You know how to maneuver to get things done, and you know where to go to get what you need. An effective leader, your energy, flexibility, collaboration and proactivity ensure that you impact both strategic and tactical financial and administrative initiatives.

*We understand and appreciate our clients’ ever-increasing desire for candidates to reflect the communities in which they work and live. The Vogel Group is committed to inclusivity and diversity as we search for outstanding leadership talent for our clients.*

If you have any questions, or would like to apply for this opportunity, please contact us or send your resumé and cover letter (as one PDF) to:

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