#### Trent University LogoEXEMPT JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Senior Manager, Convocation & Alumni

**Job Number:** X-214 | VIP: 1036

**Band:** EXEMPT-7

**Department:** Alumni Engagement & Services

**Supervisor Title:** Director, Alumni Engagement & Services

**Last Reviewed:**  June 21, 2024

#### **Job Purpose:**

The Senior Manager, Convocation & Alumni supports the advancement of Trent’s mission through the planning, implementation, and oversight of convocation, and other high-profile institutional and donor events such as President and Chancellor installations, anniversary events and donor-funded lectures. These impactful and auspicious events strengthen the University’s reputation while fostering future alumni engagement and potential donor cultivation. In addition, the position advises the Director, Alumni Engagement & Services on alumni relations matters to strengthen alumni engagement with the University.

#### Key Activities:

##### Strategic Planning

* Develop the long-term calendar of convocation ceremonies and events for incorporation into the University’s annual events calendar.
* Create plans, practices and standards for convocation and donor events.
* Oversee the implementation of special event strategies, procedures, processes, and materials to maintain and improve engagement with internal and external partners.
* Research industry-wide best practices, incorporating analysis and feedback from partners to develop plans for subsequent ceremonies and events, recommending changes and improvements to the Director, AVP and PVP that contribute to more inclusive ceremonies and align with Trent’s EDI strategy.

##### Convocation

* Oversee the planning, execution and evaluation of the annual convocation ceremonies and related events for Trent University in Peterborough and Durham, in association with the Senior Manager, Community Engagement for Trent Durham GTA. Ensure the effective management and delivery of ceremonies that reflect student preferences and expectations, balanced with university traditions, policies, best practices, and institutional strategic priorities.
* Develop the detailed schedule of ceremonies while coordinating with post-secondary partners on convocation dates.
* Hire, train and manage a Convocation Assistant and student team as necessary to deliver events. Recruit, train, supervise and recognize more than 100 volunteers consisting of staff of all levels, alumni, faculty, students, retirees, and external community groups.
* Develop and manage the Convocation budget; strike meetings of the Convocation sub-committee of the Colleges and Student Services Committee (CASSC) for budget discussions. Petition and report to CASSC annually regarding the Convocation fee. Seek to maintain reasonable and appropriate costs and mitigate increases where possible.
* Negotiate contractual agreements in the tens of thousands of dollars, act as primary contact, and maintain professional and productive working relationships with external contractors, vendors, and organizations.
* Lead the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, procedures, and operational plans for convocation. Identify issues for consideration and improvement each year, reporting to the President’s and Vice President’s Group.
* Create risk management contingency plans including emergency response plans to ensure the safety and security of all students, guests, faculty, and staff at the ceremonies. Trouble-shoot issues on site and make immediate decisions, working closely with campus safety to adapt to unforeseen circumstances.
* Prepare and co-ordinate all communications material for Convocation (website, programs, information for visitors and university community, invitations). Write the stage directions and speaking notes for the President, Chancellors, Senior Administration, Deans, and faculty.
* Attend the Honours Sub-Committee of Senate, providing resources to inform the decisions on choosing Honorary Degree recipients and seeking approval for changes to the convocation ceremonies.
* Collaborate with key university stakeholders including the Dean’s and Provost office, academic departments, Secretariat, Registrar’s Office, Facilities Management, Colleges, Campus Safety, student groups and ancillary operations (athletics, conferences, food services, bookstore).
* Manage extensive inventory of regalia for students, President, Chancellor, Board of Governors and special guests and the gown rental service for faculty. Recommend hood colours for new degrees and order new regalia as required.
* Coordinate student award presentations at ceremonies working with artists, Registrar’s Office, President’s office, and departments on medals.
* Arrange hospitality for honorary degree luncheons and volunteers.
* Monitor trends and best practices through regular meetings with provincial, national, and North American counterparts through the North American Association of Commencement Officers. Implement improvements as appropriate.

##### Institutional & Donor Events

* Organize significant institutional events to further the University’s mission and promote the University’s reputation and raise profile, balancing university policies, participant expectations and organizer requests.
* Manage, plan, execute and evaluate institutional events such as Chancellor and Presidential installations major anniversary events, and key public lectures funded by donors.
* Develop and manage budgets for events. Monitor many endowed and expendable funds, advising the donors and department chairs on amounts available for the lectures.
* Review and ensure donor agreement compliance.
* Determine the staffing needs and hire, train and manage casual help. Recruit, train, oversee and recognize adequate volunteers to ensure the events are successful.
* Build and maintain effective relationships with donors, academic chairs, faculty, and external and internal stakeholders to execute donor funded events.
* Create risk management and emergency response plans to ensure the safety and security of all participants. Respond to issues as they arise.
* Coordinate communication materials for events, collaborating with Marketing & Communications to raise event profiles.
* Provide leadership, training, and support across the University for event processes.
* Oversee all logistics to ensure successful events.

##### Alumni Advising

* Provide strategic advice and support as needed to the Director, Alumni Engagement & Services.
* Contribute to the development, implementation, and overall vision for strategic operational plans for Alumni Engagement & Services. Identify and make recommendations on opportunities for strategic change.
* Provide information and advice on alumni volunteer management.
* Contribute to the development and review of the organizational design to support future sustainability.
* Work with the Director to review space and make recommendations on allocation to ensure efficient room and office usage.
* Act as Director of Alumni Engagement & Services in the absence of Director.

##### Administrative and Managerial Duties

* Responsible for the hiring, training, discipline, supervision and performance appraisal of the Convocation & Events Assistant as well as casual assistants, student staff and volunteers.
* Organize and assign regular duties and special projects and oversee daily activity of the events team.
* Set formal and informal office policies and procedures, ensuring tasks are completed within deadlines.
* Maintains positive office morale under stressful and heavy workload conditions.
* Manage and oversee all financial and administrative functions for convocation, institutional events and donor funded lectures.
* Advise and make recommendations on matters related to convocation to the Honours Sub-Committee of Senate, CASSC, participate in university managers meetings, External Relations and Development meetings, and cross university committees for institutional functions such as presidential transitions and milestone anniversaries. Report on convocation to the President & Vice President group.

#### Education Required:

* Honours University Degree (4 year) in a related field required.
* Postgraduate certificate in event management preferred.

#### Experience/Qualifications Required:

* Minimum of eight (8) years’ experience in special event management, especially with large, complicated events, including three plus (3+) years’ experience in alumni and donor relations.
* Superior organization, project, and time management skills. Able to prioritize workloads and balance competing demands in a high-volume environment, managing details, meeting deadlines, and handling stressful working conditions with high attention to detail.
* Demonstrated ability to take initiative, problem-solve and make decisions using good judgement in a complex, fast-paced environment with rapidly changing priorities.
* Excellent verbal and written communications skills.
* Keen attention to detail, accuracy and confidentiality required.
* Able to interact comfortably with a wide range of stakeholders in a positive and professional manner, using tact and diplomacy.
* Strong leaderships skills. Able to remain calm under pressure and effective in a crisis.
* Budgeting experience.
* Knowledge of, academic traditions, volunteer management practices, university regulations, policies, and procedures
* Able to work independently or part of a team. Creative and resourceful.
* Excellent customer service skills; commitment to excellence in execution.
* Intermediate proficiency with MS office, e-mail, and internet; familiarity with Raiser’s Edge an asset.
* A valid Ontario driver’s license with access to own vehicle preferred.
* Availability to work early mornings, evenings and weekends when required.

#### Supervision:

* Convocation & Events Assistant

**Job Evaluation Factors:**

##### Analytical Reasoning

*Position requires an issues management mindset and ability to project how shifting priorities will impact the work and ultimately the reputation of the department/university. The complexity of the role is tied to the many events and projects that must be managed simultaneously, with tight deadlines that cannot be changed. Once the event date(s) is set it must be met successfully and with the highest degree of excellence to ensure the reputation of the University does not suffer. Thus, the output of work is very public in nature. Intense conceptual thinking is required to determine the most efficient path for successfully managing these projects, analyzing the whole to break it down into the many different components, each with its own deadline and budget line that must be met to execute the events. Each component requires working with numerous internal and external partners, services, and contractors. All components are inter-dependent and time sensitive. Additionally, contingency planning must be considered at every point along the way. There are few if any policies or procedures to follow.*

##### Decision Making

*The position is responsible for the formulation of strategies and work plans on important, complex multi-faceted events with limited guidance from the Director or VP. Most decisions are made independently after analyzing the situation. There are very few clearly defined policies, procedures, or precedents to follow. Decisions are made on commitment of resources, contingency and emergency planning and reacting to difficult issues. Position is required to use sound judgement often dealing with the difficult and urgent situations that arise at large, public events like convocation, where superiors are sometimes unavailable for advice. The day-to-day decisions are made without referral to senior administration, except where the image of the University is involved. When working on all events, decisions are regularly made that determine the overall look and nature of the event - what the audiences of hundreds to thousands will see and experience when they come to a Trent University event.*

##### Impact

*Decisions or actions taken by the Manager directly impact the University’s public image and reputation. Events managed by this position are broadcast and shared in the public domain. Decisions made at large events have the potential to resolve a situation or create an issue or controversy. The scale and organization of events impacts public safety, university reputation and future philanthropic support. Relationships with donors could be adversely affected, having an impact on current or potential future donations to the University. Costs may be incurred due to poor planning or insufficient or ineffective contingency planning. Security of confidential information, and safety and wellbeing of participants and visitors are also factors under control of the Manager. Poor decisions may have negative effects on relations with the donors, alumni, faculty and staff groups, student body, external stakeholders, or the broader community. Every event the Manager is responsible for is in the public eye and supports the profile and reputation of the University. The manager must have the knowledge and understanding to ensure the event considers the social and political aspects in the planning process.*

##### Responsibility for the Work of Others

*Direct Responsibility for the Work of Others:*

* *Convocation & Events Assistant- Full time, permanent OPSEU employee. Nature of supervision: hiring/dismissal, schedule, assign work, monitor progress, evaluate, supervise, train, discipline, provide guidance and instruction, motivate, mentor.*
* *Student staff to support convocation and events.*
* *Event Volunteers- 150+ volunteers consisting of staff of all levels, faculty, students, retirees, and external community groups. Nature of supervision: recruit, train, schedule, assign work, develop work plans, provide guidance and instruction, motivate, supervise, evaluate.*
* *Paid Casual Assistance for convocation and other events. Nature of supervision: hiring/dismissal, schedule, assign work, monitor progress, supervise, evaluate.*

*Indirect Responsibility for the Work of Others:*

* *Community Relations Officer, External Relations & Development*
* *Executive Assistant, External Relations & Development*
* *Alumni Engagement & Services Coordinators (2)*
* *Alumni volunteers for events*
* *Audio Visual Technicians and event materials suppliers -. (Harcourts Regalia staff, Miranda Studios Photographers, Canadian Hearing Society, etc.)*

##### Communication

*This position requires regular communication with diverse contacts both inside and outside of the University, including senior staff, significant donors, the community and general public, government representatives and the media, honorary degree recipients. Diplomacy, tact and discretion are always required and conciliation, persuasion and negotiation skills are often required, often in stressful and time sensitive situations.*

*Internal:*

* *President, Chancellor, PVP, Board*
* *Academic Deans, Chairs, Faculty*
* *Alumni*
* *Donors*
* *Student government leaders and students*
* *Staff at most departments: Colleagues in External Relations & Development, Marketing & Communication, Registrar’s Office, Campus Safety (Security & Parking), Conferences, Student Affairs, Facilities, IT, Finance, etc.*

*It is difficult to think of internal departments that this position does not require a strong working relationship with.*

*External:*

* *Donors*
* *The families and guests of students*
* *Government Representatives*
* *Media*
* *Trent Retirees (Trent University Association of Retired Persons)*
* *Audio visual technicians*
* *Many external companies such as the, Gervais Party Rental, Photography companies, Harcourts (regalia), Canadian Hearing Society*
* *Community groups*
* *General public*
* *Post-secondary partners*
* *Counterparts at other universities and colleges*

##### Motor/ Sensory Skills

* *Working at workstation throughout day, responding to telephone calls, large volume of e-mails*
* *Engaged in extensive verbal communication in customer service role*
* *Attention to fine detail and overall presentation of professional-looking collateral materials*
* *High level of active listening, comprehension, and two-way communication skills. Ability to articulate messages clearly, both verbally and in writing.*

##### Effort

*Mental:*

* *Multi-tasking - Requirement to advance assignments and meet multiple critical deadlines in a fast paced, changing environment*
* *Diplomacy - Required in meetings, interactions with all internal/external audiences*
* *Concentration - Required in the face of constant interruptions, requests, and emerging issues. Necessary to ensure accuracy of written materials, accurate budget recording and attainment of work goals. Interruptions and distractions during events are constant and decisions must be made on the spot.*

*Physical:*

* *Work schedule my require extended hours due to events and preparation for them.*
* *In preparing for events, sitting for extended periods of time with freedom to move about, some walking, standing, stretching/reaching, and lifting/moving.*
* *During events the position involves considerable amount of standing and walking, moderate amounts of lifting/moving, some stretching/reaching and bending/kneeling with ongoing visual demands that cause considerable fatigue*

##### Working Conditions

*Work schedule often requires extended hours and sometimes requires travel.*

*Physical:*

* *In preparing for events: Standard office environment with limited exposure to disagreeable elements.*
* *During events: moderate to noticeable disagreeable working conditions (depending on conditions during outdoor events) includes dealing with crowds, possible poor weather and disagreeable outdoor conditions, large disruption to personal life. Has some consequences on wellbeing.*

*Psychological:*

* *Exposure to disagreeable elements such as complaints, public criticism, time pressures, interruptions, multiple competing demands that have a minor impact on wellbeing.*
* *Moderate exposure to disagreeable elements – in addition to above also dealing with angry, frustrated, confrontational people, lack of control over pace of work, conflicting work priorities that have some consequences on well-being.*