Exempt Support Job Description

Position Title: Executive Assistant
Department: Vice-President Research
Position Number: 997404
Salary Grade: Level 4
Reports to: Vice-President Research
Last Updated: January 2020

A. Summary Overview of Work Unit

The Vice President Research (VPR) portfolio includes the Office of the Vice-President Research (OVPR), Office of Research Services, Animal Care Services, and the Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization Unit, and is responsible for UVic research centres and research entities. The OVPR provides guidance for UVic’s research agenda at the institutional level, including setting strategic research priorities and developing initiatives to support research to ensure that UVic research continues to grow and prosper.

The role of the VPR is to promote and facilitate research and creative activities at the University of Victoria. To do this, the VPR:

- develops and implements strategic plans to support a rich research environment;
- creates and oversees sound research policies and procedures that meet the highest ethical and regulatory standards;
- works with potential research funders to enhance available resources;
- promotes the mobilization of knowledge created through research for societal benefit;
- seeks to enhance the reputation of the university through the excellence of the research conducted by its faculty and students.

The OVPR staff support the VPR, Associate Vice-Presidents Research, Directors and all of the activities of the portfolio to accomplish the missions and goals set out in the University Strategic Framework and individual unit plans.

B. Summary of Position’s purpose/ function

Reporting to the VPR, the Executive Assistant provides executive-level support of a confidential nature to ensure the efficient management of the VP’s time and to maintain the effective operation of the OVPR office. The Executive Assistant is one of the first points of contact for the public on all aspects of research at UVic and must maintain a keen awareness of ongoing issues and concerns; demonstrating at all times discerning and independent judgment of the highest professional standards.

The Executive Assistant keeps the VPR well informed through ongoing communication, alerting the VPR to any situations that require attention, often under strict timelines that require triaging and constant adjustment of ever-changing priorities. This position leads an administrative team, requires extensive knowledge of departmental and University policies and procedures, particularly as it relates to research and interacts with corporate executives, presidents, CEOs and Directors of major research institutions, executive level
administrators of the federal and provincial government, senior university executives and administrators, community leaders, faculty members, and students.

Responsibilities include the management of the VP’s complex and ever-changing calendar, committee and working group/project support and maintaining the effective operation of the VP’s office through the coordination and supervision of daily operations and support staff. In addition, this position provides administrative and calendaring support for the Director, OVPR.

C. Primary Responsibilities & Accountabilities

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<th>Responsibility/Accountability: Executive level support to the VP</th>
<th>50% Of time spent</th>
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<td><strong>Duties:</strong></td>
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<td>• Assesses a high volume of requests for the VP’s time, using knowledge, professional judgment and experience to prioritize, assess, respond and, where necessary, suggest alternate or more appropriate channels for addressing issues, and/or facilitate decision-making.</td>
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<td>• Analyzes and responds, where appropriate, to issues presented to the VP’s office and uses knowledge, professional experience and judgement to ensure the most positive outcome.</td>
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<td>• Proactively manages the VPR’s electronic calendar by screening, scheduling, and monitoring a high volume of often sensitive meetings and committee obligations by applying knowledge of issues to distinguish those meetings that are a priority; ensuring the appropriate and accurate inclusion of other executives, committee members, boardroom and equipment.</td>
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<td>• Manages and maintains a bring-forward system and anticipates when internal pre-meetings are required and schedules with the appropriate lead-time, ensuring efficient calendar organization to maximize the VPR’s time.</td>
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<td>• Liaises with senior university and government officials, faculty, staff, students; members of the public, community organizations (locally, nationally and internationally) and ensures smooth flow of information to coordinate meetings, visits, award presentations, announcements or to obtain and provide information. External agencies may be local, national or international and include federal and provincial granting agencies and foundations, provincial ministries and health authorities, community organizations, private industries and consultants as well as other post-secondary institutions. Arranges dignitary visits, and related travel and accommodation requirements, etc.</td>
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<td>• Organizes daily briefing and planning sessions with the VPR and reviews material in advance of the VPR, highlighting information that requires attentions or action, researching background information, making recommendations and executing action items as required to ensure the VPR is fully briefed and prepared for meetings, conferences and project sessions.</td>
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<td>• Prepares, proofreads and edits confidential correspondence and other documents for VP signature to ensure standards with regard to tone, clarity, technical structure and presentation are reflective of an executive office.</td>
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<td>• Writes and edits internal and public presentation materials and other communications (e.g. speaking notes, Power Points, handouts).</td>
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<td>• Develops minutes, agenda packages and presentation materials, plans and executes pre-event coordination and logistical details for VP meetings, and tracks action items on behalf of the VP following meetings.</td>
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<td>• Provides assistance to the VPR for tracking and monitoring issues and items that require response, recommends appropriate delegation to staff within OVPR or other units and follows up to ensure that response deadlines are met.</td>
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- Initiates local, national and international travel arrangements for the VPR, prepares travel documents (Visas) and itineraries.
- Organizes, coordinates or oversees special events, (i.e. public and university community forums, award presentations, announcements) including preparing posters, presentation materials, distribution of information, accommodations and travel if required; bookings, catering, required equipment. Delegates responsibilities when required.
- Provides assistance and coordination with administrative matters related to supporting the VPR in conducting confidential senior executive searches, including liaison with external search consultants.
- Is responsible for Confidential Security Clearances for the PWGSC Federal Government for university signing authorities, (President and VP’s). Obtains confidential/personal information, completes applications and forwards to Ottawa for approval. Receives approvals and maintains files.
- Facilitates and tracks the performance planning and review process for the VP’s direct reports, ensuring the timelines are synched with the annual service plan cycle.
- Advises faculty, staff and external groups or agencies on a variety of University and research policies and procedures requiring clarification, interpretation, and application.
- Must be responsive to the needs of the VP when changes are required to meet new requirements or requests from stakeholders.

### Responsibility/Accountability: Committee and working group/project support

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<th>30% Of time spent</th>
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#### Duties:

Provide committee and secretariat support to the VPR for a large and diverse group of internal and external committees and ad hoc working groups for which the VPR chairs or sits on. These committees and working groups deal with complicated, sensitive and sometimes political issues that affect the campus community and have a direct impact on university operations. For example: VPR Executive; President’s Advisory Council; Senate Committee on Planning (SCP), Senate and Board of Governors, Deans’ council, President’s Advisory Committee, President Executive Council, Council of Centre Directors, Research Advisory Council, etc.

- Organizes and attends meetings; inviting necessary attendants; books meeting rooms.
- Prepares agendas and gathers necessary materials, ensures accuracy and completeness prior to meeting.
- Liaises with committee members and secretariats; organizes visiting Board Meetings, receptions and events as required. (TRIUMF BOM, CANARIE).
- Orders and provides refreshments as needed.
- Takes and transcribes minutes and action items; follow-ups on actions where appropriate.
- Maintains membership lists and manages communications on committee activities on behalf of the VPR.
- Sets-up and maintains secured shared sites (Connect/SharePoint) with relevant committee materials.
- Creates and maintains e-filing systems, databases and paper-based filing systems.
- Monitors action and bring forward agenda items and ensures committee membership renewal/replacement is done in a timely manner.
- Acts as contact and resource person with respect to enquiries from committee members. These duties require an understanding of a wide variety of ongoing committee issues and their impact on university operations and considerable judgement in managing issues that arise.
- Keeps the VPR up-to-date and apprised of new information/situations that may arise on committees to which he/she is an ex-officio member. Follows Connect (SharePoint) site for
working groups of which the VPR is connected; prints agendas, related documents and tracks notifications for the VPR.

• Liaises with UVic Communications and OVPR Communication team with respect to articles, and publications, press releases, speeches.

• Assists with project support as required.

Prepares the VPR for meetings by:

• Preparing meeting materials and background information for the VP’s review prior to meetings. This includes final preparation of minutes, agenda packages, presentation materials, pre-event coordination and logistical details.

• Accessing information on secured shared sites and ensuring all documents required for meetings are printed or electronically accessible to the VPR in advance, updating Outlook calendar entries to include relevant meeting information.

• Conducting any research that may be required for meeting preparation.

| Responsibility/Accountability: Supervision of general OVPR office administration | 15% Of time spent |
| Duties: | |
| • Develops, maintains and co-ordinates an administrative organizational structure, office systems, protocols and procedures on own initiative that supports the day-to-day operations of the VPR office including: | |
| o Using working knowledge of human resources policy or relevant legislation to recruit, supervise, mentor, coach and train OVPR Exempt Support staff; | |
| o Assigning tasks to ES staff in accordance with their duties, responsibilities and level of training to ensure service delivery and operational requirements are met; | |
| o Establishing effective staff scheduling practices that ensure service delivery and other operational requirements are met; | |
| o Completing performance reviews for all supervised staff under the leadership of the Manager, Personnel and Administration; | |
| o Ensuring assigned work is completed and performance concerns are escalated to the Manager, Personnel and Administration; | |
| o Coordinating office and workstation moves and renovations in order to accommodate hiring and space needs with the Manager, Personnel and Administration; | |
| o Ensuring that administrative and professional staff have appropriate systems access related to their role; | |
| o Creating and managing a confidential filing system for electronic and hardcopy information, and determines appropriate handling and storage of documents in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act regulations; ensures compliance with University Records Management Policy IM7700 and indexes retained documents according to Directory of Records guidelines; coordinates annual destruction of records in accordance with university policy and procedures; | |
| o Documenting workflow/procedures as part of business continuity planning; | |
| o Maintains the OVPR website to update staff directory and screens materials prior to posting to ensure material are appropriate, accurate and presented in a professional manner. | |

| Responsibility/Accountability: Administrative support to the Director, OVPR | 5% Of time spent |
| Duties: Recognizing that the VPR is the first priority, the Executive Assistant may provide calendaring and administrative support to the Director, OVPR related to project initiatives undertaken on behalf of the VPR, such as: | |
| • Providing electronic calendaring support; | |
• Organizing meetings, inviting and liaising with attendees, coordinating meeting rooms and materials, and preparing agendas as required;
• Assisting with presentation materials.

D. Supervision

**Supervisory Responsibilities (if applicable):**
• Provides direct supervision and/or training to 2 regular full-time Exempt Support employees and temporary staff in the daily coordination of normal OVPR office operations.
• May occasionally serve on hiring committees as required.

E. Finance

**Financial Responsibilities (if applicable):**
• Holds/reconciles department Purchasing Card
• Holds signing authority of $2,500.
• Completes web requisitions, and FMIS requests as required.
• Prepares and reviews travel, business expense and hospitality claims on behalf of the VP; reviews all expense claims submitted for VP signature; ensures claims adhere to the University Travel Policy and the Hospitality policy.
• Administers petty cash fund.

F. Human Relations

**Nature of service provided and contacts served:**
• As the first point of contact for all levels of VPRE internal and external contacts and visitors, this position plays a role in advancing the objectives and positive image of the OVPR and the university through daily interactions with, and handling issues and project work that impact:
  o Senior university administrators including the President, Executive, Deans;
  o Senior officials including federal/provincial granting agencies, foundations, provincial ministries, health authorities, private industries, politicians and senior public servants;
  o Senior university volunteers including the Board of Governors;
  o Faculty, researchers, students and staff.
• Represents the OVPR at events and functions.
• Responds, when appropriate, to enquiries or complaints from faculty, centre staff, agencies, industry and the general public.
• Deals with materials of a confidential and sensitive nature.
• Serves on hiring committees.

G. Minimum Qualifications

**Skills:**
• Exceptional and attentive organizational and time management skills including the ability to work as a team member or independently, deal effectively with non-routine matters and coordinate multiple activities with critical deadlines, take responsibility, display initiative, exercise good judgement, and make independent decisions.
• Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively as part of a team; facilitate the work of groups; build and sustain office morale; and show respect and sensitivity in all dealings.
- Superior verbal skills required for relating effectively with all levels of the University community and responding to enquiries from external stakeholders such as government, industry, granting agencies and the general public.
- Strong written communication skills are necessary for minute-writing and preparing sensitive and confidential correspondence on behalf of the VPR.
- Demonstrated capacity to manage projects, units and/or teams to produce desired outcomes
- Ability to plan ahead to ensure unit has human resources capacity to carry out OVPR office operations (for example, proactively ensure coverage for employee absences or during peak periods).
- Ability to use sensitivity, tact and diplomacy, take a flexible, creative and collaborative approach to problem-solving in a team setting, considering as many aspects of the situation as possible.
- Ability to clearly interpret and convey policy and procedures.
- Ability to research and assess new information, quickly identify the heart of new problems or issues, and diplomatically and knowledgeably suggest solutions.
- Strong understanding of the university’s organizational structure and of the VPR’s priorities, with ability to look ahead and do advance planning and preparation. Demonstrated attention to detail and a commitment to quality and accuracy in carrying out responsibilities.

**Specialized Knowledge/ Education:**
- High school graduation or equivalent.
- Completion of a two-year post-secondary certificate or diploma in Office Administration preferred.
- High level of proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite particularly with Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint and SharePoint (Connect) is required; Adobe Suite (Acrobat, InDesign ) experience would be an asset.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the unit, the university senior reporting structure, and university policy and procedure.
- Working knowledge of FAST Finance including basic account reconciliation, WebReqs, and the Cascade website management system.
- Thorough knowledge of best practices and methods of office procedures including records management and retention.
- Knowledge of HR best practices in managing a work group and developing office procedures.
- Familiarity with research policies, and government and granting agencies would be preferred.

**Experience:**
- Minimum five years’ experience in a senior level administrative position, preferably in an academic research or scientific-based large or complex work environment.
- Minimum two years’ experience with advanced calendaring, word-processing, spreadsheet, SharePoint (Connect) and presentation applications.
- Experience with:
  - drafting and editing high quality business communications and documents;
  - working with confidential and highly sensitive information;
  - with event coordination;
  - the work of others;
  - overseeing office administrative operations.
- Previous university experience at the executive level is preferred.
- Previous experience with project management highly desired.
- An equivalent combination of training, education and/or experience may be considered.
H. Organization Chart - REQUIRED

(Attach)

Job Holder's Signature ________________________________

Supervisor ________________________________

Supervisor's Signature ________________________________