

Jon Parsons, PhD

Strategic communications leadership
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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Strategic communications leader with extensive experience advising senior administrators and executives in complex, research-intensive and mission-driven organizations. Proven ability to translate strategy, research, and institutional priorities into clear, credible public narratives; lead communications functions through change and constraint; and align teams, messaging, and governance with leadership objectives. Background in journalism, consulting, and academia brings strong editorial judgment, analytical rigor, and ethical clarity to executive decision-making.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Waterloo

Director, Strategic Communications

June 2023 – Present

- Lead strategic communications for the Faculty of Mathematics at a top-ranked research university, advising academic and administrative leadership on narrative, positioning, and reputational risk.
- Direct and develop a multidisciplinary communications and events team; set priorities, clarify decision rights, and align capacity with faculty and institutional strategy.
- Design and oversee integrated communications strategies for research, leadership initiatives, and public-facing priorities in a fast-moving, high-stakes environment.
- Serve as a trusted advisor to senior leaders on media engagement, issues management, and leadership communications, emphasizing judgment, discretion, and credibility.

University of Waterloo

Manager, Integrated Communications

June 2022 – May 2023

- Led integrated communications and publications for University Relations, with a focus on research communications and institutional messaging.
- Oversaw planning and execution of multi-channel communications initiatives supporting university-wide priorities and leadership objectives.
- Strengthened editorial standards and coordination across decentralized communications functions.

University of Waterloo

Communications Officer

June 2021 – May 2022

- Supported media relations, leadership communications, and internal communications at the institutional level.
- Prepared senior leaders and subject-matter experts for media engagement through briefing, messaging, and strategic counsel.

KeynoteCSR

Communications Consultant (Freelance)

January 2017 – May 2021

- Advised organizations on corporate social responsibility communications, stakeholder messaging, and research-informed positioning.
- Conducted research synthesis and message development to support leadership decision-making during periods of change or public scrutiny.

EARLIER CAREER

Freelance Journalist — Published reporting, interviews, and analysis with outlets including *CBC*, *Ricochet*, and *Independent NL*.

Researcher / Instructor — Memorial University; research and undergraduate teaching in literature, ethics, and critical analysis.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Literature
Memorial University

Master of Arts (MA), Critical Theory
Brock University

Bachelor of Arts (BA), Political Science and Literature
Memorial University

ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Board Member & Communications Officer – Social Justice Co-op of Newfoundland and Labrador

Academic and Athletic Coach – Urban Squash Toronto

Selected leadership and communications work is summarized at jonparsons.ca/selected-work. Additional details are available upon request.