

30 September 2011

Dr. Gordon Gow, Program Director
Communications and Technology Graduate Program
University of Alberta
10230 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4P6

Dear Dr. Gow,

I submit this statement of interest as one requirement element of my application for admission to the Masters of Arts in Communications and Technology (MACT) program at the University of Alberta. I am excited about the opportunity to enter a program that will allow me to continue to develop new skills and informed leadership to build on my current work practices.

I have twelve years of practical communications experience that spans across my career and volunteer efforts. For the past 21 months, I have been working as a Public Affairs Officer with the Essex County Health Region. Prior to this, I worked as a Public Relations Ambassador with the Recycling Council of Ontario and as an Assistant Communications Officer for the Health Canada.

I spent one year abroad as a youth ambassador for the Rotary International Youth Exchange Program in Brazil. During this time, I made monthly public presentations to local Rotary clubs, wrote several articles that were published in Canada and in Brazil and provided input into Rotary youth development programs. I have also accumulated seven years of student volunteer experience as a press correspondent, marketing coordinator and coordinator for Health Promotions.

I believe that I have found an excellent fit for myself in health communications as it challenges my interest in issues management and in the application of communications technologies/strategies to target remote populations from urban centres.

My current health communications portfolio includes accountability for a large urban acute care centre and accountability for the majority of the suburban and rural acute care and community health services. The inclusion of suburban and rural health services in Essex Health is a recent development that poses new communication challenges for Essex Health, an organization with strong urban roots. In December of this year, the provincial government announced a significant move towards regionalization that reduced the number of Regional Health Authorities in Ontario from 17 to nine. In Essex Health, the change in boundaries meant more than doubling the geographic region and the addition of 202,000 primarily rural residents. It also included the addition of four acute care centres and a range of community health services outside of the urban core.

The challenge for the organization has been successfully integrating a new demographic of clients into Essex Health. There is an opportunity for Essex Health to adapt our current communication strategies so that we may effectively integrate our new audience.

This example of organizational growth is not limited to the Essex Health region nor is it limited to health care. As technologies improve, organizations are leaping across regions, nations and the globe to improve efficiencies and serve larger and more diversified populations. In countries such as Canada where rural residents represent a sizeable portion of our population, there is a large demographic of citizens that may not have access to adequate consumer information.

In healthcare, access to personal health information is critical. While health authorities have implemented innovative programs to improve regional access to informational health services, such as an online provincial health link, the uptake of such services is significantly impacted by rural culture.

As the communications advisor for Essex Health's suburban and rural communities, I would like to focus my research project on a specific population of at-risk remote residents that have a high need for accessible health information. Residents recently diagnosed with health complications will have a variety of questions that they will be looking for answers to. In these situations, it is important to determine where and how this population is accessing health information and how the health region can facilitate this process. By providing at-risk populations with up to date, easily accessible information there may be an opportunity for our residents to take a role in improving their health potentially reducing their reliance on acute care services.

In my current position, I feel that I have adequate access to resources to develop a feasible communications project focusing on the health information needs of rural Ontarians. I believe that this is a practical concept that has the potential for application in Essex Health and other health authorities in this province and across Canada.

I am submitting my application for the MACT program because of the specific focus on informed leadership in the management and use of information and communications technologies. I am interested in working with an academic team that will assist me in channeling my creativity and ideas into a positive educational experience as well as practical applications at my place of work. I am seeking a learning environment that will expose me to a variety of working professionals with a wide range of experience. As a communications professional, I find that I learn best in environments that encourage open-dialogue and a collaborative approach to exploring new ideas.

Thank you for considering my application. I am looking forward to the opportunity to begin a professional development program relevant to my chosen career path.

Sincerely,

Applicant Name

Address
Address
City, Province Postal Code

Telephone number
Fax number
Email address