

2026–2027 Research Support Fund Communications Plan

Overview/Purpose

As a requirement of receiving instrumental [Research Support Fund](#) (RSF) funding from Canada’s tri-council of granting agencies—NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR—the University of Prince Edward Island must develop an annual communications plan, which outlines measurable communications goals, strategies that will help us achieve them, and tactics that acknowledge RSF assistance.

Audiences

1. University and research communities
2. Policy makers/external stakeholders
3. General public

Objective/Strategies

Our objective is to promote the RSF’s value and impact on our various audiences by conveying UPEI research success and acknowledging RSF support across our many communications channels. Our strategies include:

1. To write 20 feature articles and/or news releases to share across UPEI channels such as the e-newsletters Campus Connector (general UPEI and beyond audience), Panther Connections (alumni), and AVC News Brief (Atlantic Veterinary College); UPEI’s institutional website, upei.ca; traditional media; and social media. While there is some overlap in the audiences for the three e-newsletters, the target audience for each is different enough to warrant inclusion.
2. To develop eight “spotlights” (may also be video) highlighting RSF-supported projects/programs and their success for use on social media channels and upei.ca
3. To build the number of assets in digital photo gallery for use across communications channels
4. To update and improve a list of research experts that UPEI Communications uses to provide media with possible commentators

Tactics, Tools, and Timelines

- *Mass Media / Campus Connector / Social Media / UPEI.ca (on average, one per month)*

The communications team will write 20 news releases/feature-style stories about the projects and programs supported by the RSF. The 250- to 500-word stories will include acknowledgement of RSF funding and link to the RSF website.

News releases/feature-style stories will be pushed out to our media list for possible amplification and also published on upei.ca, the University's website. They will also be published in UPEI's weekly electronic newsletter, the subscription-based *Campus Connector*, which reaches approximately 1,300 subscribers from the campus community and beyond, including policy makers/external stakeholders. They will also be shared in the Panther Connections (target audience of 8,500 per issue) and AVC News Brief (target audience of about 1,700 per issue) e-newsletters when appropriate. Both of these newsletters are published monthly. They will also be pushed out across UPEI's social media channels, i.e., Facebook, which reached about 30,000 followers, and Instagram, which reaches about 16,000. UPEI is no longer using X (formerly Twitter).

- *Video content and photo capture*

The communications team will coordinate with the members of the content marketing team (web writer, videographer, and photographer) to capture marketing/digital content.

UPEI will develop eight spotlights (may include video) that highlight RSF-supported projects/programs for use on social media channels and upei.ca. RSF funding acknowledgement will be included in either the video notes or credits.

The photographer will be commissioned to capture photos for use in news articles, videos, and on upei.ca. This coordinated effort will allow us to build the number of up-to-date research stock photos in our digital photo gallery.

- *RSF web page*

UPEI maintains a [dedicated RSF web page](#) that includes RSF impacts, plans, and reports. UPEI will update the site on an annual basis (by September 2026) to reflect current data and objectives.

- *Pitch UPEI researchers to the media as experts for topical subjects in the news (ongoing)*

UPEI maintains Island Scholar, a database that features faculty profiles and their research expertise/interest. In addition to using news releases as "pitches," the UPEI Communications team will continue to identify topical research areas and proactively pitch as well as reactively offer researchers to serve as expert opinions in the media.

Evaluation and Monitoring

The effectiveness of our communications activities will be determined through media monitoring and consultation with the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Research.