

Cara McGuinness

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[LinkedIn Profile](#)

Professional and Academic Summary

Strategic communicator and analytical marketer with expertise in media strategy, brand messaging, and audience engagement. Holds an honors BA in Communication Studies from McMaster University, currently pursuing a MA in Advertising and Public Relations from the University of Alabama. Has a strong academic foundation in research-driven media strategy and applied industry practices. Experienced in leading high-impact communication campaigns, developing data-driven content strategies, and leveraging digital media to enhance audience engagement.

Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in Communications

McMaster University, *(September 2021 – April 2025)*

- Key Courses: CMST 3SC3: Strategic Communication (Dr. Terry Flynn), CMST 3SM3: Building Publics Using Social Media (Dr. Alexandre Sévigny), CMST 4E03: Media and Promotionalism (Dr. Dilyana Mincheva)
- Academic Principles: Application of Communication Theory and Methods, Social Media Auditing (Sentiment/Trend Analysis), Research in Communication Challenges

Publications:

Vrkljan, B., Harvey, K., Tavernesse, K., Petrunti, J., Uthayakumaran, K., McGuinness, C., & Emadi, A. (in review). I/AM: Engineering Agents of Change using the iAM (inclusive aging and mobility) Human Conversation eXchange Digital Platform.

Master of Arts in Advertising and Public Relations (*degree-seeking*)

The University of Alabama (August 2025-May 2027)

- Academic Principles: Thesis track emphasizing communication theory and methods, sentiment and trend analysis in social media, planning to research on the convergence of public relations, sports, and political communication.

Professional Experience

McMaster EcoCAR Team, EcoCAR EV Challenge

Communications Manager *(May 2024 – Present)*

Communications Specialist *(September 2023 – May 2024)*

- Spearheaded internal and external communications strategies, managing stakeholder relations and brand positioning
- Lead content strategy, digital campaigns, and social media analytics (i.e. Sprout Social, Hootsuite Analytics, Meta Business Suite) to expand audience reach across local, national, and international platforms.
- Built a team of communications specialists, ensuring data-driven messaging and audience engagement strategies aligned with organizational goals.

- Anticipate competition expectations, implement feedback loops, and craft targeted communication strategies for stakeholder engagement.
- Collaborated with Dr. Brenda Vrkljan on the I/AM: Engineering Agents of Change initiative, developing audience engagement strategies and digital communication initiatives in tandem with focused research on inclusive mobility solutions.

Projects/Procurement Intern

Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation, (*May 2023 – September 2023, May 2024 – September 2024*)

- Updated and streamlined corporate contracts, ensuring alignment with current projects and needs.
- Demonstrated proficiency in SAP software while navigating legal jargon and adhering to corporate templating standards.
- Gained valuable corporate and workplace best practices through collaboration with cross-functional teams.

Social Media Co-op

McMaster Media Production Services, (*January 2024 – April 2024*)

- Selected by the Communications and Media Arts Department Chair (Dr. Christina Baade) for a permissions-only, semester-long co-op course (CMST 3B03B)
- Designed and executed social media strategies across multiple platforms, enhancing engagement and brand visibility
- Utilized analytics tools to track performance, optimize content, and develop data-driven media strategies
- Led a standalone communications team, producing digital assets and campaign content under professional guidance

Game Day Operations

Hamilton Tiger-Cats (Canadian Football League), (*May 2023 – November 2023*)

- Developed a strong understanding of event marketing strategies, ensuring smooth game-day operations, sponsor activations, and in-stadium experiences
- Assisted in the implementation of promotional activities, connecting with fans to drive excitement, brand loyalty, and community engagement.
- Built valuable industry relationships and gained firsthand experience in sports marketing, fan engagement, and live event coordination.

Intellectual Property Specialist

VI Corporate Solutions Inc., (*May 2022 – September 2022*)

- Provided strategic guidance to independent businesses, organizations, and firms, helping them navigate brand protection and legal considerations in a competitive market.
- Strengthened client relations through clear, professional communication, translating complex IP concepts into accessible insights to enhance brand identity and protection.
- Gained hands-on experience in research, documentation, and administrative processes, honing analytical and problem-solving skills essential for brand management and corporate communications.

Languages

- English (Fluent)
- French (Proficient)

Honors and Awards

- Member, Golden Key International Honor Society (invitation extended to students in the top 15% of their class)
- Recipient, Dr. Harry Lyman Hooker Scholarship (awarded to 80 students attaining a fall/winter average exceeding 3.93 GPA)