

# Lissa M. Cowan

## PERSONAL PROFILE

I am a dedicated, multi-talented communications professional with a focus on writing, editing and translation who brings expertise, thoroughness, a strong work ethic, and sense of purpose to all that I do. I am passionate about engaging the public via communications outreach on issues related to equality for women, food security, and other pressing global issues.

## EDUCATION

**Graduate diploma** (Harvey Southam) in writing and editing, Writing Department (Fine Arts), University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C., 1998.

**MA in English Studies**, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Québec. Graduate courses in translation at l'Université Laval, 1996.

**BA in English Literature**, Concordia University, Montréal, Québec. Courses in East Asian Studies from McGill University, 1990.

## LANGUAGES

English and French

## WRITING & TRANSLATION

- Translate (from French to English) a variety of materials including cultural linguistic translations of global health questionnaires for Mapi Research Institute (2009-2016)
- Translate and proofread product descriptions for Sterno-Home (Present)
- Profiles/articles for Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC) and pitch stories to media about landmark fishing rights trial, alumni profiles/crafting science-and research-based pieces for Emily Carr University of Art + Design (2008-2010), UBC Public Affairs (2008-2009) (i.e., philanthropy, donor and alumni relations) and Natural Resources Canada (Pacific Forestry Centre), profiles for Reliable, Toronto-based company focused on irons and steamers, articles/profiles for Peter Wall Institute of Advanced Studies (PWIAS) (ongoing).
- Journalistic pieces for Huffington Post, Elephant Journal, Globe and Mail, Trek magazine, UBC Reports (UBC Public Affairs, 2009).
- Blog writing/print and digital newsletter writing for governments and corporations (i.e., Natural Resources Canada, 1998, and Toyota Canada, 2012-2013).
- Communications materials (e.g., key messages, briefs, fact sheets, speaking notes, profiles) for NTC and Ministries of Education/Finance, BC (1997).
- Funding proposal writing for organizations, NTC, Burns Bog Conservation Society (1996) and, Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents (2000-2008).
- Book-writing, research, editing. Sterno-Home (Toronto) and Reliable (Toronto).
- Creative advertising copywriting/brand communication for print/online such as real estate: Rennie Marketing Systems in Vancouver, BC (2010-2013) and Concord Pacific (Canada-wide), merchandise: Black's Cameras (2013), and charities: The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Reliable and Sterno Home.

## STRATEGY AND PLANNING

- Develop, implement communications plans for government/not-for-profits including Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council's fisheries program, to continue to focus on developing access to aquatic resources, increasing management role of Nations and building capacity; and, BC Association of Social Workers (2009-2010) to augment membership, create positive image of social workers in public sphere.
- Communications and PR lead for *Resilient People and Climate Change*, a conference on how climate change may affect human psychology, society and culture (2009).
- Project lead on publishing related projects and events; organizing meetings, liaison with stakeholders and vendors as editorial director of Groundwork Press (2007-2011), Vancouver-based publishing house.

Scott Macrae,  
Executive Director,  
UBC Public Affairs  
says,

*I highly recommend Lissa to any organization looking for an excellent and flexible writer who takes charge, is highly creative and fits in well with others.*

Leanne Bernaerdt,  
Associate Director,  
Donor Relations  
with UBC Development  
says,

*I worked with Lissa on the Anthology project as she was interviewing donors/UBC faculty/staff and writing their stories. I am extremely impressed with Lissa's talents, style/approach, timelines for delivery of work, and openness to feedback.*

Vicky Baker,  
Project Coordinator,  
Metroplis BC  
(UBC) says,

*Through Lissa's conscientious work on an outreach campaign to promote our dissemination grants (with a focus on immigration, integration and diversity issues), the number of submissions we received actually doubled!*

- Develop, implement communications plans for government and not-for-profits including the Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council's fisheries program, to focus on developing access to aquatic resources, increasing management role of First Nations and building capacity; and BC Association of Social Workers (2009-2010) to augment membership, create positive image of social workers in public sphere.
- Organize PR and online campaigns for the Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council's Fisheries program, specifically *Enough Already*, a national campaign endorsed by David Suzuki; Terralingua (2010), a UN-recognized NGO focused on biocultural diversity, and Metropolis BC (2011-2012), an international forum for research and policy on migration, diversity and changing cities. Media from Globe and Mail, National Geographic, Toronto Star, Vancouver Sun and others.
- Lead writer and part of communications strategy team at UBC's Development office to research and publish a preeminent Anthology recognizing the university's significant donors over the 100 years of the school's founding.

## LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

- Co-create *Family Groundwork* (2007), a national magazine, and Groundwork Press (2007); hiring vendors; leading marketing campaign for two entities.
- Hire writers, liaising with designers, setting up academic peer review panels as editorial director for Groundwork Press, a publishing house focused on providing books to parents who have children with special needs; manage, train and motivate volunteers, interns and staff as communications specialist at the Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents.
- Create editorial concepts for newsletters and soliciting and curating content for *The Hub* (2012-2013), Toyota Canada's newsletter to contribute to a sense of community and comradery among employees.
- Staff scheduling, budgets and other managerial tasks.
- Project manage for global health questionnaires for France-based Mapi Research Institute (2009-Present); hire translators, liaise with healthcare community.
- Communications lead for global online photography exhibit highlighting work of the United Nations Development Programme in the Global South (2010).

## ADAPTABILITY

- Work in fast-paced environment and adapting to various situations.
- Prioritize multiple work assignments simultaneously such as when I worked in two news rooms, at the Ministry of Education, BC, and at UBC Public Affairs (2011).
- Flexible team playing and thriving in busy work environment based on past experience working at Pacific Forestry Centre as a science writer, and as a reporter.
- Prosper in situations where organizational change occurs regularly based on my experience working in the communications department of the Ministry of Education, BC (1996-1997), and my experience working at the Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents (2000-2008) when, following an 80 per cent funding cut, I co-created three successful social enterprises.

## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Work with colleagues and managing volunteers with diverse backgrounds and approaches.
- Be very personable, helpful, and a good listener.
- Manage very well in a team as evidenced by my work at the Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council, UBC Public Affairs (2009), previous work at Natural Resources Canada and the Minister of Education (1997-1998).

Linda Korbin, Executive Director, BC Association of Social Workers (BCASW) says,

*Lissa took the time to know our association, its culture and our needs. She provided creative, thoughtful guidance during our communications planning and helped us develop our promotional and membership resources.*

Brad Watson, RSW, Executive Director at ACT 2 Child and Family Services says,

*Lissa is an extraordinary writer and editor who took our publications to a greater level of quality and professionalism. She was instrumental in the re-design and re-launch of our magazine, which she helped to transform into a specialized general circulation magazine called Family Groundwork.*

- Workshop facilitate and train community members, volunteers and interns; inspire others to learn new skills and strive for excellence.

## COMPUTER SKILLS

- Proficient working with Excel, Microsoft Office and PowerPoint.
- Research on web browsers (i.e., Chrome, Firefox, Safari).
- Basic HTML coding and web design in Wordpress.
- Proficient working with publishing and graphic design programs Adobe Creative Suite, such as InDesign and PhotoShop.

## BOOKS

*Milk Fever*. Toronto: Demeter Press, 2013.

*Words that Walk in the Night* by Pierre Morency. Montreal, QC: Vehicule Press, 2001. Translated from French.

*Living with Your Grandchildren: A Guide for Grandparents*. Vancouver, BC: Groundwork Press, 2007;

*Living with Prenatal Drug Exposure: A Guide for Parents*. Vancouver, BC: Groundwork Press, 2005;

*Hiking Vancouver Island: A Guide to Vancouver Island's Greatest Hiking Adventures*. Connecticut: Globe Pequot, 2004;

*Adoptive Families are Families for Keeps*. Vancouver, BC: Groundwork Press, 2004. A Children's book.

## WRITING AWARDS

Banff Centre for the Arts Fellowship. Banff, Alberta. 2000.

Harvey Southam Post-Graduate Diploma in Writing and Editing Fellowship. Victoria, BC. 1998.

## COMMUNITY

Director at Large for Creative Non-Fiction Collective (CNFC), Communications/writing advisor for Project Seres, a Guatemala-based organization working with youth to foster local ecological resilience and empowerment.

## REFERENCES

Don Hall  
Fisheries Program Manager (retired)  
Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council  
Cortes Island, B.C.  
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Linda Chu,  
Marketing Director, Rennie Marketing Systems says,

*Lissa takes time to understand each project and writes in a no-fuss, straight forward, simple and concise way. She's a great collaborator, meets her deadlines, and her sincere and kind nature makes her a pleasure to work with.*