# Communication Plan

CMN 2148

Professor Zaky

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Damage Control Consulting

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# Introduction

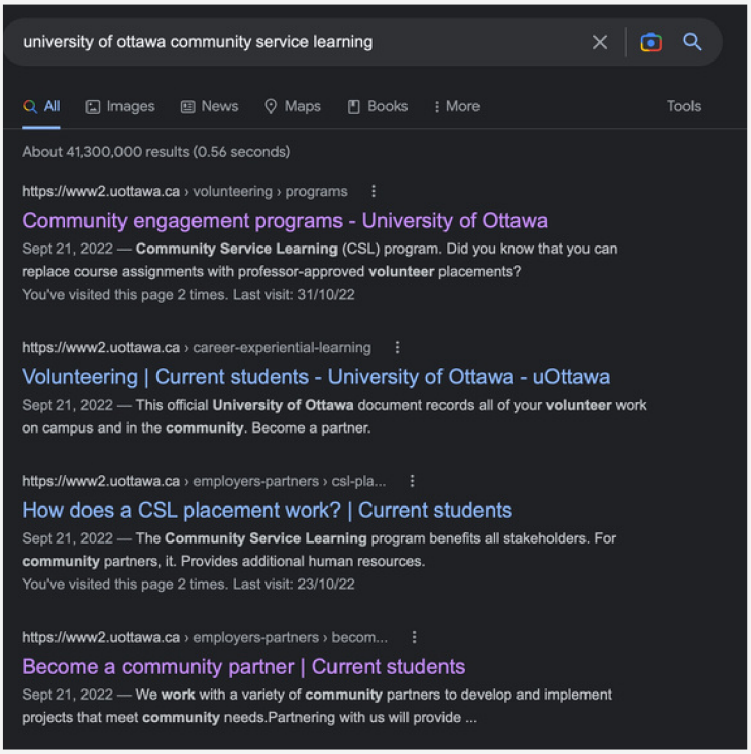


CSL could benefit from the help of our communication expertise to adjust their communication plan in a way that entices community partners to team up with the program. After taking a look into the survey results provided by CSL, we have determined some flaws with CSL's action plan that could easily be fixed with the help of our proficiency.

Many community partners believe that students lack supervision or accountability. This was the most prominent feedback mentioned in the Community Partner Survey – Winter 2022 (1-51). Community partners could garner a larger amount of volunteers by joining forces with CSL. However, CSL's reputation could be damaged by promising their partners help from students only to have students be unresponsive or unmotivated by the volunteer work. CSL needs to provide more information about students to community partners. Community partners should have knowledge of the rules and restrictions students should be following during a volunteering term so that they can be aware if a student isn't respecting the hours or timeline they should be following. They should also know the key dates during school terms such as reading weeks and exam sessions. Sharing with community partners what they should expect out of volunteers will help prevent disappointment or dissatisfaction on their end.

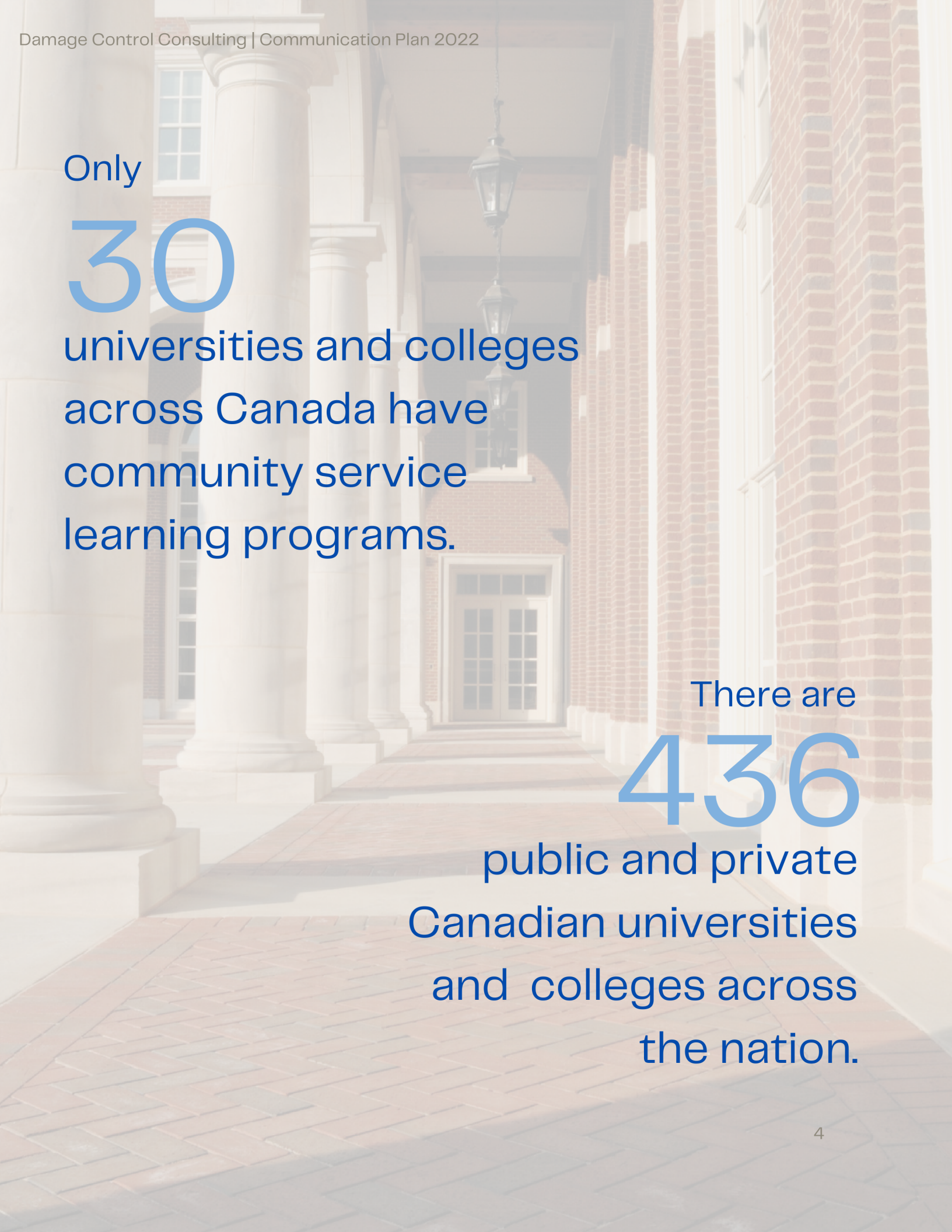
Community partners have a difficult time accessing information about CSL since they do not have an official website or social media platform. Efficiency is appealing to community partners who are looking for a simple way to gain new volunteers. This is why our team believes that the creation of a website and social media platforms providing all the essential information about the program would lead to an increase of awareness of the program and its benefits. We took a look at Canadian universities' CSL programs like Wilfrid Laurier University and Mount Royal University and observed that the only readily available information for any university's Community Service Learning program is on the university's website and not directly under CSL's name. Thus, we believe that a general CSL website should be created to encompass all these universities. The website would feature a tab that community partners can press to access a list of all the different universities collaborating with the program. They can then click on a university and then be redirected to a section of the website dedicated specifically to offering information about the selected university.

A general website would make information about CSL more accessible to the general public. An issue that comes across when searching University of Ottawa Community Service Learning in the Google search bar is an overload of websites available that include the name CSL in the title. As we can observe in the screenshot to the right, the first three search results that come up are dedicated to giving information for students, and thus are not relevant to community partners looking to gain knowledge on CSL. Only the fourth website is directed towards community partners.




When we take a further look into the website, the information featured is spread out in a way that makes it difficult to quickly gain understanding of CSL. There is a brief list of possible tasks that students could accomplish to help the organization available but according to the surveys, most community partners want specific and personal information on the students. Some community partners in the Community Partner Survey – Winter 2022 (1-51) suggested requiring a resume from students to know if they are a good fit for the organization. An FAQ section would also be a great add-on to answer potential questions that could arise within community partners without having to search aimlessly.

Overall, the changes that need to be applied to guarantee CSL successful growth when it comes to its network of community partners are fairly simple, but require open-mindedness and effort in order to completely turn around the current methods used as of now. It is far from impossible, and this communication plan gives CSL a great head start as to how they should approach this transition.



Only

30

universities and colleges across Canada have community service learning programs.

There are

436

public and private Canadian universities and colleges across the nation.

# Main Objectives



### Improve nonprofit organizations' understanding of Community Service Learning (CSL) and how the program works

Through our research using the surveys provided from CSL, we discovered a common theme based on the feedback from community partners. Community partners often found it difficult to understand how the program ran, when the students were in class, and what the important dates for students were. We want to alleviate this issue and ensure that all partners are fully equipped with the information they need to be fully informed without having to find the information themselves. This will ensure the volunteers and community partners get the most out of the program. We want to improve the communication from CSL to nonprofit community partners. This will be done by creating a timeline and work plan of the year and providing it to all community partners.

### Increases awareness of Community Service Learning (CSL) among nonprofit organizations in the Ottawa area

According to CanadaHelps, there are 1,751 non-profit organizations in the Ottawa area. With so many potential partners, we must put the CSL program in the spotlight. The first step to gaining excellent community partners is making them aware of our CSL program. Brand awareness is key to building trust, interest, and engagement among target audiences. Since brands engage in social media and marketing advertisements in different ways than the individual consumer, we will implement a new approach to improve visibility of CSL in the area. We want to revitalize the CSL's social media platforms and have dedicated spaces for community partners to engage with us. This will be done in the first month of the implementation of the communication plan. We also want to create a website solely for CSL, to make navigation for information on the program easier for community partners. This will be done in the first four months of the implementation of the communication plan.

### Increase nonprofit organizations' engagement with the Community Service Learning (CSL) program

Engagement is the key in order to turn reach into conversion. Because of the importance of engagement, many social media companies have built-in analytic trackers such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook while tools like Google Analytics help people see traffic online. We hope that by introducing new fun and exciting ways to engage with CSL, more nonprofit organizations will join the CSL program in its mission to create a better community. We will utilize the tools we are given to monitor engagement. With the statistics obtained, we can further increase engagement with our audiences and develop lasting relationships between Community Service Learning and nonprofit community partners.

# Key Messages



- CSL runs all year around, as it follows the University of Ottawa's trimester model. The fall term runs from September to December with a reading week in October. The winter term runs from January to April with a reading week in March, and the summer term runs from May to August with no reading week.

- CSL is a trustworthy organization that provides helpful service to nonprofit organizations through their database of students interested in volunteering.

- CSL provides organizations additional human resources, aids organizations to increase services and accomplish goals they may not otherwise accomplished, offers them knowledge that students have gained through their university studies, and attracts new, loyal volunteers.

- CSL lessens nonprofit organizations' employees' workload by providing them with the opportunity to expand their organization by employing new volunteers eager to help.

# Target Audience

Our target audience are the nonprofit organizations in the Ottawa area who are capable of including students in their work for community service learning opportunities but have not done so yet.

# Stakeholders

### Internal Stakeholders

Our internal stakeholders consist of all employees and volunteers in the Community Service Learning program at the University of Ottawa who are trying to expand their organization to get more community involvement to allow for more students to have the opportunity to learn in the community rather than in the classroom.

### External Stakeholders

Our external stakeholders include the directors and employees who work for nonprofit organizations in the Ottawa area. They need to be ready, willing, in need, and excited to include university of Ottawa students into their meaningful community work.

# Benefits of Community Service Learning for Nonprofit Community Partners

- Keeps costs low
- Expands on their mission and impact
- Gives access to new ideas coming from young modern minds
- Increases staffing and visibility
- Fosters new relationships, partnerships and resources
- Inspires a new generation of volunteers

# Communication Channels



## Offline Presence

### 1) To host around-the-year networking events, including guest speakers from the board of CSL.

Objectives:

- To plan and implement networking events for the community partners at the beginning of every semester
- To be able to attract 4-5 nonprofit organizations per semester to work with CSL

Purpose:

- The idea is to motivate and inspire non-profit organization owners to reach out to CSL
- To increase the nonprofit organization's social circle and to provide them with volunteers

### 2) Raise awareness about CSL by sending volunteer representatives to nonprofit organizations.

Objective:

- To have volunteers sent out to the organizations and spread the main goals of CSL.

Purpose:

- Volunteer representatives to raise awareness, provide and answer questions about CSL through embedding themselves within the nonprofit organizations

### 3) To send out a total of 1000 pamphlets to non-profit organizations.

Objective:

- To send out 83 pamphlets every month, for 12 months to different nonprofit organizations through the mail and by using networking events

Purpose:

- To let the organizations know about the different roles that CSL can do for them and what benefits will come with the services that CSL provides

## Online Presence

### 1) To increase the CSL website views

Objectives:

- To gain 50% of the nonprofit organizations to view the CSL website
- For nonprofit organizations to view and have an idea of what CSL is and what they will gain by working with CSL

Purpose:

- CLS would provide non-profit organizations with the necessary tools and volunteers to help them grow. Additional resources could be posted.

### 2) Create interactive ads that include surveys for community partners.

Objective:

- To get in contact with a minimum number of five community partners through the use of interactive ads, such as surveys. This objective is to be reached within a year and then repeated

Purpose:

- Ads will be sent through emails and the CSL website. Nonprofit organizations will get access to information that would be set as reminder ads to have constant knowledge of CSL and its benefits and know that CLS is equipped with the necessary to help them grow.

# Key Performance Indicators

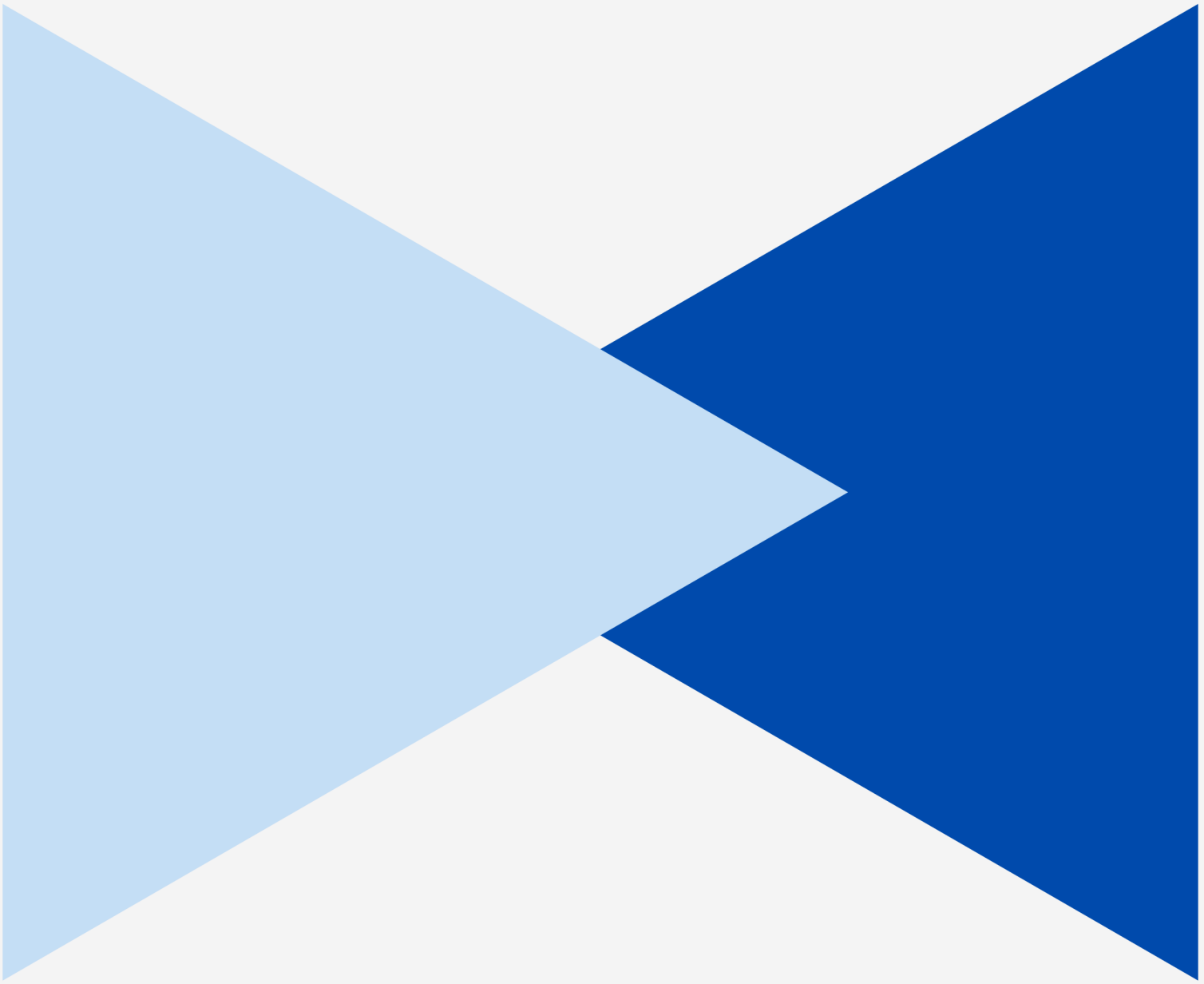
- 10 nonprofit organizations attend our events which will be hosted once per semester (in-person and virtual)
- Have 2,500 hundred views (100 per week) on the new CSL website
- Reach and add 250 local non-profit organizations to a mail list for CSL to utilize within 6 months of adopting the communication plan (virtual)
- Print and distribute 1000 informational pamphlets to potential partners over 1 year (in-person)
- Boost social media engagement (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat) by 50% after 6 months (virtual)

**In the 2020-2021 school year, the University of Ottawa had:**

- **1,700+ Community Service Learning volunteer placements as part of a course**
- **3,100+ extra curricular volunteer placements**
- **115,000 volunteer hours logged**

**The University of Ottawa had 37,449 students during the 2020-2021 academic year with only 1,700 in course-related volunteer placements.**

**We strive to increase this number.**

# Thank You!

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