

Executive Director, Washington State Student Achievement Council *Recruitment Announcement*



ABOUT THE WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL

The **Washington Student Achievement Council** (WSAC) is a cabinet-level state agency that provides strategic planning, oversight, and advocacy to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington State.

The nine-member Council provides overall strategic direction of the organization. It consists of four citizens, a current student, and one representative from each of the state's four major educational sectors. The Executive Director is charged with the day-to-day management of the agency's resources, including the staff of 105

and an annual budget of more than \$ 377 million. These resources are dedicated to strategically enhancing higher education attainment goals that begin with more inclusive, focused, collaborative efforts that cover the full spectrum of learning.

To learn more about WSAC please visit:

<http://www.wsac.wa.gov/>

To learn more about the WSAC Council please visit:

<http://www.wsac.wa.gov/council-members>



MAJOR AGENCY FUNCTIONS

- Implementing a 10-year Roadmap and its Strategic Action Plan for higher education, including developing recommendations for initiatives and resources needed to increase educational attainment.
- Improving student success by setting minimum college admission standards and identifying ways to help students better transition through all phases of education.
- Ensuring the quality of state financial aid programs and services that support educational access and affordability.
- Working effectively with the Governor, Legislature, public and private higher education institutions, the K-12 system and appointed officials on policy and funding solutions to enhance the State's educational attainment achievements.
- Providing college savings opportunities through the Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program.
- Providing equity, access, readiness and other support to underrepresented middle and high school students for postsecondary education through early outreach and success programs such as College Bound and GEAR UP.
- Protecting education consumers by authorizing out-of-state institutions to operate in Washington, and monitoring program quality and finances.
- Representing the broad public interest above the interests of the individual institutions of higher education.

WSAC provides a diverse work environment and promotes a culture of innovation, collegiality, excellence, respect and accountability. Employees are highly valued and encouraged to contribute to the organization's decision-making and operations.



ROLE SUMMARY

The Washington Student Achievement Council seeks a mission-centric, accomplished executive to work collaboratively with the Council and staff in the achievement of specific educational programmatic goals in the areas of student readiness, access, affordability, college success and completion, new opportunities for learning, student transitions through the education system, and stable and accountable funding.

This individual is a visionary, strategic, entrepreneurial leader - someone who is an energetic, enterprising manager and a creative problem-solver with a commitment to excellence.

Reporting to the Council, the ED is responsible for assisting in the development of the Agency's 10 year strategic plan, and will be charged with its tactical implementation. S/He is accountable to the Council for all aspects of the Agency's programmatic, business and financial operations. S/He provides leadership for the integration of the mission and vision of WSAC.

The office of the ED currently has eleven direct reports: Deputy Director, Director of the Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program, Director of Student Financial Assistance, Director of Communications, Director of Policy & Government Relations, Director of College Access and Support, Senior Fiscal Policy Advisor, Director of Human Resources, Director of Research, the Director of Academic Affairs & Policy, and an Executive Assistant. The ED has ability to structure the agency for maximum effectiveness.

The ED serves as the spokesperson, advocate, and public persona of the agency, representing the organization and its primary stakeholders to the larger world of higher education, national educational forums and professional associations, and the philanthropic community. S/ He participates in national conferences and creates sustaining partnerships with other organizations that share WSAC's mission.

The ED needs to be an energetic and articulate leader with the skills to implement the vision, the financial acumen to maximize resources, and the management skills associated with a good chief executive, including the ability to hire and develop staff and to interact effectively with the Council.

The ED has the intelligence and communications skills to present WSAC's activities to a broad audience and to interact with academic presidents, elected officials, Council members, and other leading figures. S/He needs to be sensitive to identifying and anticipating issues of concern to the agency's constituents. The ED must also have the interpersonal and relationship-building skills to work effectively with elected and appointed officials in government at the local, state and national levels. Above all, the ED must demonstrate a passion for education and learning that is backed by extensive policy knowledge.



SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

The ED:

- Builds and fosters close working relations with WSAC's Council members, cultivating and maintaining trust and an ethos of transparency.
- Ensures the timely development of the 10-year Roadmap and Strategic Action Plans and leads the charge of effectuating its implementation.
- Serves as the CEO of WSAC, providing visionary political strategy and advocacy for higher education in Washington. Works diligently to position the organization as the primary higher education spokesperson to the citizens of Washington.
- Serves as Chair to the GET Committee.
- Serves as a high-visibility builder of support and key alliances with the business community, the Legislature, labor, the tribes, the community and technical college system, the public and private four-year colleges and universities, workforce training, and the K-12 system.
- Ensures efficient use of available resources, proper fiscal management, risk assessment and controls.
- Manages and nurtures a strong team of professionals. Oversees talent management, human development, and retention of professional and support staff within the organization. Evaluates staff, develops a strong sense of teamwork, and establishes an environment of mentoring and support. Coaches the team; instills a spirit of ambition, entrepreneurialism, and accountability, and brings strategic focus to WSAC.



TO PERFORM SUCCESSFULLY, CANDIDATES SHOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Appropriate education and training; terminal degree from an accredited institution of higher education. Advanced degree in Public Administration, Education, Management or a related field is preferred.
- Strong organizational and analytical skills with substantial executive management experience at a state/governmental agency, in higher education, or with significant private or non-profit organizations.
- A minimum of eight years of demonstrated transformational leadership ability with leadership style characterized by integrity, candor, and sensitivity to collegial responsibility.
- Demonstrated senior leadership experience working within complex mission-driven agencies/organizations.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with a proven track record of building internal and external partnerships.
- Extensive knowledge of education trends, issues, practices and policies.
- Established credibility and reputation are essential, as is the ability to efficiently and effectively interact with appropriate constituent groups, including but not limited to: public officials in the executive and legislative branches of government, higher education institutional presidents, other key education and community partners, and the public at large.
- Interaction and work with a Council, Commission or Board is preferred. Demonstrated leadership skills that derive from the experience of having implemented a vision, engaged and won support from a governing body, and other key stakeholders.
- Demonstrated ability to work cooperatively with key constituencies to develop and communicate a clear vision for higher education in Washington.
- Excellent organizational and strategic skills, combined with expansive thinking, insight and creativity in identifying opportunities for collaboration.
- Knowledge of state government service delivery to its citizens and government structures within Washington or other states.
- Demonstrated success in strategic planning and oversight of budgeting processes. Competence in academic programming and policies is preferred.
- Excellent oral, written and listening communications skills. A highly professional image with the ability to interact with individuals at all levels. An engaging manner and the capacity to inspire and motivate others, with the ability to build and maintain relationships key to WSAC's mission.
- Experience in implementing and using leading technology.
- Strong work ethic and ability to inspire and lead a talented and dedicated staff in carrying out the role and mission of the Washington Student Achievement Council.
- Government experience including: political savvy, and demonstrated experience working with legislators and the legislative process. Proven ability to work with multiple and competing constituencies.
- Understanding of the big picture relationship between K-20, higher education and the economy/business community. Knowledge of/or experience with enterprise development, public-private partnerships or other alternative support mechanisms.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate is an intelligent, humble, well-rounded, energetic, servant leader. S/he must be a team player who works well with peers and members of the Council to achieve its goals and objectives.

Other personal characteristics include:

- A visionary for improving standards of operational efficiencies.
- A self-starter with a sense of urgency, a clear set of priorities, and a strong work ethic.
- The ability to adapt to changing circumstances in an entrepreneurial environment; must have a creative approach to problem solving; and the ability to take advantage of emerging opportunities.
- A heightened level of energy and self-confidence, a positive “can-do” attitude, a good sense of humor, and the ability to function at peak performance in a fast-paced, high expectation environment.
- Strong skills in diplomacy; integrity and trustworthiness.
- Outstanding communication, presentation, organizational and interpersonal skills – all critical to impacting and influencing stakeholders and key decision makers.
- Ability to transition into WSAC’s culture, effectively assimilating into its organization and encourage its continual improvement.
- Analytical thinking skills. Ability to synthesize complex policy matters, identify related business impacts and develop and execute communications strategies.
- Strong judgment and focused decision-making skills, with a blend of intelligence, knowledge and understanding of people.
- Flexibility as a team player; willing to grow with the organization.



MEASURE OF FIRST YEAR'S SUCCESS

- Specific, measurable progress towards the achievement of the programmatic goals in the areas of student readiness, access, affordability, college success and completion, new opportunities for learning, and stable and accountable funding.
- Build a strong and effective coalition that stands behind sound recommendations to the legislature and governor that would make the difference in the attainment of these programmatic goals.
- Hands-on efforts in enhancing WSAC's reputation and being a leader in Washington's higher education community.
- Management of an organizational review with an eye toward developing an infrastructure key to the achievement of WSAC's mission and strategic plan; aligning the policy staff to key goals and metrics.
- Establishment of strong, effective working relations with the Council.
- Outreach to the Governor, members of his team and key stakeholders in the Legislature. Building identity with government officials and being responsive to legislative inquiries and the biennial budget.
- Active assistance in the implementation of the 10-year strategic plan and effective leadership in advancing the plan.
- Outreach/visits to build and strengthen relationships with WSAC's key stakeholders, the four primary sectors of the state.
- Analysis of potential legislation that will support funding of ideas reflected in the strategic plan.



APPLICATION PROCESS

Persons interested in this position must submit a cover letter, salary history and a current resume.

If you have questions regarding this announcement, please call Marissa Karras at 360-956-1336. The position will remain open until filled but the screening process will move quickly. The salary for this position is competitive. In order to be considered for the first round of interviews please submit your application materials no later than Friday, August 5th, 2016 by visiting www.karrasconsulting.net.

The State of Washington is an equal opportunity employer and is strongly committed to enhancing the diversity of its workforce. We will provide assistance in the recruitment, application and selection process to applicants with disabilities who request such assistance.

LIVE AND WORK IN A GREAT STATE

Washington State offers a total work/life package of pay, benefits, flexibility and workplace opportunities to help you get the most out of your career and out of life. Washington State is a great place to work, play, and be a part of a community. Washington offers a quality of life that is unsurpassed. From the high-energy urban center of Seattle, one of the nation's top-ranked cities, to the more relaxed pace of our rural communities, Washington's distinctive Northwest lifestyle blends a progressive, creative culture with a casual nature.

The position is located in Olympia, the capital city of Washington State. Olympia is a vibrant city with a small-town feel conveniently situated between Seattle and Portland, Oregon. Mount Rainier and the rugged Cascade Mountains provide majestic scenery to the east while Washington's Pacific Coast is just an hour's drive to the west. Olympia enjoys the benefits of an engaged and educated community and a well-supported school system, augmented by two universities and a community college.

