

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Washington Student Achievement Council

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL (WSAC)

NOVEMBER 2012

CONFIDENTIAL POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title:	Executive Director
Company:	Washington Student Achievement Council
Reports To:	Council of WSAC
Team Size:	94 FTEs
Location:	Olympia, WA
Website:	http://www.wsac.wa.gov/

ABOUT THE WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL:

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

The nine-member Council of the WSAC 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 reports to the Council and is charged with the day-to-day management of the Agency's resources, including the staff of nearly 100 people and an annual budget that exceeds \$300 million. These resources are dedicated to strategically enhancing higher education attainment goals that begin with more inclusive, focused, collaborative efforts that cover the full gamut of learning.

MAJOR FUNCTIONS

- Developing and implementing a 10-year roadmap for higher education, including 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, legislative and appointed officials on policy and funding solutions to enhance the State's educational attainment achievements.
- Providing college savings opportunities through the Director of the Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program and the Director of Student Financial Assistance.
- Preparing under-represented 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 Council of WSAC 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 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 nine direct reports reporting to it: Executive Deputy Director (vacant), Director of the Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program, Director of Student Financial Assistance, Director of Public Relations, Director of Government Relations (vacant), Planning & Policy Coordinator, Director of Research & Planning, the Director of Academic Affairs & Policy, and an Executive Assistant. The ED has ability to structure the agency for maximum effectiveness.

The ED has the opportunity to develop WSAC as a fully realized voice for higher education with a highly aligned visible presence within the educational community and with other stakeholders. 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 has the stature to command respect from educational leaders, elected leaders, the corporate and philanthropic communities. 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 intellectual strength 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 in that arena.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES:

The ED:

- Builds and fosters close working relations with WSAC's Council, cultivating and maintaining trust and an ethos of transparency.
- Ensures the timely development of the 10-year education attainment strategic plans and leading the charge of effectuating its implementation.

- Serves as the CEO of WSAC, providing visionary political strategy and advocacy for higher education in Washington. S/He works diligently to position the organization as the primary higher education spokesperson to the citizens of Washington.
- Serves as a high-visibility builder of support and key alliances with the business community, the legislature, the community and technical college system, the public and private four-year colleges and universities, workforce training, and the K-12 system.
- Ensures proper fiscal management and efficient use of available be instrumental to the effective implementation of the 10-year education attainment strategic plan.
- Manages and nurtures a strong team of professionals. Oversees recruitment, management, 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, entrepreneurship, and accountability, and brings strategic focus to WSAC.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Graduate degree preferred in the areas of Public Administration, Education, Management or a related field.
- A minimum of eight years of successful leadership and management of a significant size professional staff in a results-oriented environment.
- Experience in strategic planning that is inclusive of a broad range of stakeholders; Collaborative in nature; articulate a bold but realistic vision; provide linkages to management systems and measurable outcomes; and emphasize comprehensive, continuous improvement.
- Demonstrate senior leadership experience working within large, complex mission-driven agencies/organizations.
- Extensive knowledge of education trends, practices and policy that provide the context for bold, realistic programmatic pursuits.

- Interaction and work with a Council is preferred. Demonstrated leadership skills that derive from the experience of having implemented a vision, engaged and won support from a governing body, as well as a variety of other key stakeholders.
- Excellent organizational and strategic skills, combined with expansive thinking, insight and creativity in identifying opportunities for collaboration.
- Financial acumen including a clear understanding of budgeting and financial reporting.
- 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.
- Higher education related experience including: strategic planning and policy development, knowledge of industry issues from a national and the state of Washington perspective; overall expertise that will gain credibility with higher education officials and administrators.
- Government experience including: "political savviness," demonstrated and preferably hands-on experience with legislatures and the process; and proven ability to work with multiple and competing constituencies.
- Understanding of the big picture relationship between higher education and the economy/business community and knowledge of/experience with enterprise development, public-private partnerships or other alternative support mechanisms.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The ideal candidate is an intelligent, well-rounded, energetic and confident individual. (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; persuasive charm; a good sense of humor; and the ability to function at peak in a fast-paced, high expectation environment.
- Strong skills in diplomacy; unimpeachable 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 thinker who synthesizes complex policy matters, identifies related business impacts and develops/executes 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.

MEASURES 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.

- The development and advocacy of 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 new 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 development of the 10-year strategic plan; effective leadership in advancing the plan.
- Outreach/visits to build and strengthen relationships with and WSAC's key stakeholders, including at least four of the primary centers of the state.
- Analysis of potential legislation that will support financing of ideas reflected in the strategic plan.

COMPENSATION:

In keeping with the critical nature of this position, WSAC will offer an attractive career and compensation package commensurate to match candidates' passionate interest in its mission and operations. The package will consist of a competitive salary and an array of benefits.

WSAC is an equal opportunity employer.



ABOUT DIVERSIFIED SEARCH

Diversified Search has provided the highest quality executive search services in the industry with experienced and successful professionals for over 37 years. As the largest woman-owned search firm in the world, Diversified is consistently ranked among the top retained search firms in the industry. Our Managing Directors/Partners have had long standing prior careers in the sectors they serve, covering a diversity of functions and industries. This enables us to provide a highly consultative service, conveying insights and assessments drawn from years of experience. For further information about Diversified Search, visit www.diversifiedsearch.com.

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This search is being conducted by our team of search experts including Lonnie P. Taylor, JD, Gregory Miller and Vickie West. All interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and salary history, along with five professional references, by email directly to greg.miller@divsearch.com or vickie.west@divsearch.com. Telephone inquiries are welcome at (215-732-6666).

DIVERSIFIED'S SEARCH TEAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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