



National Association for
College Admission Counseling

DEI DIRECTOR

“The call for systemic change in society and organizations has never been louder. People are no longer satisfied with superficial or inauthentic intentions of change by their leaders. Bold actions are needed to communicate clearly to all stakeholders how adamant organizations are in addressing discrimination, inequity, and exclusion.”

— The Centre for Global Inclusion

THE SEARCH

The National Association for College Admission Counseling ([NACAC](#)) seeks an energetic, innovative leader to serve as Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI Director). Reporting to NACAC's Chief Education and Policy Officer, the DEI Director will be a creative thought leader, strategist, and savvy collaborator with expertise in creating and cultivating a top-class DEI experience for association members and staff, and a passion for revolutionizing the college admission role in making postsecondary education accessible, inclusive, equitable, and affordable. Armed with foundational documents that include the [report](#) of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of Leadership in College Admission, recently refreshed mission and vision [statements](#), and equity-focused [advocacy](#) and research, NACAC seeks to take another step toward our vision of a sustained, long-term commitment to DEI as a core principle for the association and the profession. In that spirit, the DEI Director will ensure that all areas of the association are unified in their commitment to diversity, access, and inclusion in both the internal and external operations of the association.

THE ASSOCIATION

NACAC is the largest association in the world for professionals who serve students during the transition from secondary to postsecondary education, with a membership of more than 26,000. The association works to expand access to higher education through policy, advocacy, networking and convening, and education and training. NACAC's membership is comprised of postsecondary admissions professionals, high school counselors, independent educational consultants, and others throughout the United States and, increasingly, around the world. NACAC is fortunate to partner with 23 state and regionally based [affiliate organizations](#) that share a common mission to serve and support the needs of admission and counseling professionals. In addition, the organization cultivates [special interest groups](#) (SIGs). These "micro communities" nurture the growing diversity of interests across the association.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

"The weight that exclusion carries limits the growth and development of students, professionals, and organizations."

– NACAC MEMBER COMMENT ON THE GOALS OF THE ASSOCIATION'S APPROACH TO DEI

NACAC is resolute in its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As such, we are committed to authentic integration of DEI into all aspects of the organization's work, which we intend to maintain and consistently improve. Moreover, intersectionality remains central to the organization's understanding of DEI and to its development of appropriate resources and services for members.

Framing DEI at NACAC

At NACAC, DEI initiatives are broadly inclusive of three distinct areas of organizational interest, including (1) students in the transition to postsecondary education, (2) professionals in the college admission counseling field, and (3) NACAC staff. We acknowledge that conversations about DEI can be complex, multi-faceted, and often difficult. In speaking with our members about this position, they emphasized that each concept—diversity, equity, inclusion—possesses distinct depth, opportunities, and challenges. Our members similarly recognize the depth and breadth of the work ahead of us: combatting anti-blackness, ensuring inclusion of Hispanic/Latino and Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, recognizing and lifting up the experience of Native and Indigenous Peoples, combatting discrimination against LGBTQ+ students and professionals, protecting and hearing religious minorities, raising awareness of neurodiversity, and generally remaining attuned to those who have been excluded or marginalized.

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Organizational DEI Objectives

The work of DEI director will encompass three primary objectives. First, the demographic complexity of the United States, as well as the global population, demands a different approach to student advising and recruitment. As a profession, college admission counseling is looking for ways to work towards a more equitable and inclusive future through changing professional standards, policies, and practices. The director can expect to work closely with NACAC's research, advocacy, and communications departments to meet this objective.

Second, the recognition, acknowledgement, and celebration of NACAC member identities is a fundamental element of the association's strategy to attract and retain members. Ensuring that we are inclusive in all phases of our work—convenings, education, communication, collaboration, leadership, and more—will comprise an important element of the DEI director's work. Equally importantly, the DEI director will assist programmatic staff in the development of resources to address professional challenges related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The director can expect to work closely with NACAC's membership experience and communications departments to meet this objective.

Third, NACAC strives to maintain and improve its sustained commitment to the DEI director will work with NACAC leadership to develop and sustain internal policies and practices that prioritize and center diversity, equity, and inclusion. The director will be able to build on successful initiatives such as the DEI staff working group, intentional staff training, and a preliminary internal DEI strategy.

Operationalizing DEI at NACAC

"Finding a safe space to explore ideas with others; having a network of people with whom I can talk through DEI issues beyond my immediate circle; feeling exhausted (or sometimes fearful?) of engaging in some of these conversations; lack of time to take on or further educate myself about some of these issues; feeling too small and insignificant to affect large scale change especially regarding policies practices that are so accepted in the mainstream."

– NACAC MEMBER COMMENT ON THE GOALS OF THE ASSOCIATION'S APPROACH TO DEI

Our members encourage an exploratory approach, probing and curious about revealing and addressing barriers and inequities, as well as raising awareness of influence of privilege. Moreover, they have prioritized the need to adopt a systems approach, consistent with the Ad Hoc Committee on Leadership in College Admission, to focus on large-scale challenges that the association is uniquely positioned to address. To do that, the organization must understand the campus/school perspective of DEI as a pillar for organizational culture and practice. Members have emphasized the importance of setting goals, collecting data, and using metrics to define clear expectations and outcomes for the organization. In addition, we will regularly strive to make NACAC more accessible is important, as well as communication and open-mindedness on staff.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The director of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) occupies a critical position at the center of the association to emphasize the centrality of diversity, equity, and inclusion to NACAC, both internally and externally. The role of the director is to ensure that all NACAC activities reflect the association's core commitment to DEI and that the organization is committed to continuous improvement on DEI outcomes. As such, this position includes a wide range of responsibilities across multiple programmatic areas. The director of DEI will report directly to the chief education and policy officer.

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The DEI Director will report to with the Chief Education and Policy Officer, who oversees Education and Training, Research and Grants, Advocacy, and DEI initiatives. The DEI director will also have the full support of the organization to ensure that DEI concerns are represented at every level of programming and decision-making. As such, the DEI director will frequently work with the NACAC leadership team and with departments across the organization. Further, staff around the organization will commit to supporting the work of DEI initiatives.

The position description includes responsibilities in the following core areas: (1) advocacy, (2) education and training, (3) community building, (4) research and development, and (5) staff development and practice evaluation.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

"I think NACAC has the opportunity to train our trainers about what it means to build an office and an operation where DEI is the habit, and not the afterthought. I think we have great thought leaders, but not enough solid tactical managers and leaders who can ensure the vision and thought are carried out in the DEI-centered spirit we imagine it. For instance, in many offices/operations/departments, we can pledge commitment to DEI all along, but is that commitment reflected in staff salary? Is it reflected in hiring practices? Is it reflected in the way folks from historically silenced backgrounds would describe working for your office/operation? I think there's still a gap in the thought and the action, and I hope NACAC can help bridge that gap."

– NACAC MEMBER COMMENT ON THE GOALS OF THE ASSOCIATION'S APPROACH TO DEI

NACAC members and staff contemplated the opportunities and challenges related to DEI work at NACAC, including (but not limited to) the following:

Opportunities

- **Thought Leadership:** Provide thought leadership for a national membership organization of 25,000 members and more than 3,000 educational institutions in the progressive work of equity, access, and inclusion.
- **Teaching and Entrepreneurialism:** Create innovative learning opportunities for college admissions professionals to make sustained advances in our collective understanding of DEI principles and practices. The director will have room the freedom and support needed to innovate within an established membership organization.
- **Leveraging a Supportive and Energetic Staff:** The NACAC staff is entirely committed to the advancement of DEI policies and practices. The director will have the ability to work across departments and with the assistance of departmental staff to implement new and ongoing initiatives.
- **Leadership Support:** The director, with the full support of the NACAC leadership team, will have the opportunity to create and implement initiatives to achieve the association's DEI goals and objectives. The position also affords the long-term opportunity for advancement as a leader.

Challenges

- **Individual Needs of Members and Staff:** Staying current with DEI practices and concepts, combatting burnout and exhaustion, particularly among professionals of color and other marginalized communities, and seeking networks for further learning and discussion
- **Environmental Challenges:** Dealing with varying mindsets when approaching DEI work, creating a common understanding of DEI that is aligned with clear goals and outcomes, navigating power dynamics can create tension and challenges, coping with microaggressions, and communities continuing to feel excluded.
- **Process and collaboration:** Getting stakeholders to the table and creating safe space and time to discuss, the need for greater understanding of the process involved in building DEI practices, bridging differing perspectives, and translating individual willingness into collective, coordinated action

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

Success in the role will be defined by ensuring NACAC is able to attract new members and retain existing members, and that members have a positive experience in every interaction with NACAC staff from their initial joining to annual renewals, registering for and attending events, accessing research and information, being provided information relevant to college admissions that is timely, cutting-edge, and moves the profession forward, and ensuring members receive support for their unique and evolving concerns.

The successful candidate will be an inspirational and effective leader who enjoys processes and strategy and is comfortable working across multiple areas of the association. The DEI Director will have experience revolutionizing and driving positive outcomes for members or customers. Candidates coming from outside of education and association management must be curious, fast learners.

NACAC members with whom we spoke about this position noted the following attributes as particularly important:

- To make noticeable and felt advances, the candidate should have a ton of audacity and “nerve”
- Demonstrated ability to listen and observe with keen detail
- Fundamental belief that students’ lives are improved through access to higher education
- Willingness to guide people through leaning into discomfort
- Patience and determination to see initiatives through even in times when progress may be slow

The successful DEI Director will possess the following qualities and qualifications:

- An educator with an entrepreneurial spirit who can recognize professional challenges related to DEI and respond with creativity
- A strategic thinker who can connect dots across the organization to ensure that DEI is represented in all facets of the organization
- An effective communicator who can provide a high level of member care and responsiveness
- A professional who is comfortable in an educator role and who has experience with and a passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Familiarity with and willingness to contribute to grant-seeking from foundations and other sources

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DEI DIRECTOR

- A leader who is inclusive and collaborative
- Experience leading DEI initiatives, including but not limited to experience leading DEI initiatives in educational or association settings
- An understanding of the specific DEI issues that exist in college admissions

A Bachelor's degree is a minimum requirement for the position.

TO APPLY

To inquire further, or apply for this role, please email your cover letter and résumé to recruiting@nacacnet.org.

NACAC is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic protected by law.

NACAC offers competitive compensation, an excellent benefits and retirement package, and a convenient location in the Washington, DC metro area.

Salary commensurate with experience.