

CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER (CCO)

THE SEARCH

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) seeks a strategic, highly motivated, and creative professional to lead its communications program to a new level of excellence and impact as its inaugural chief communications officer (CCO). Reporting to NACAC's chief executive officer (CEO), [Dr. Angel B. Pérez](#), and serving on the executive team, the CCO will work in partnership with the CEO, the senior leadership team, and the [Board of Directors](#) to clarify and advance the association's national and international standing with members and other constituencies as NACAC pursues its new vision and strategic direction. The CCO will build an innovative and strategic communications approach; develop and oversee a new association brand and message; drive forward outreach that engages and inspires members; advise the CEO and senior leadership on communications, marketing, and public relations matters; and effectively address communications crises that may emerge. The CCO will lead a growing communications office in applying the full range of digital, print, and media relations assets to advance the association's work at a time of momentous change, including through skillful and thoughtful collaboration with colleagues across the association.

The ideal candidate will:

- Thrive in providing vision, leadership, and direction for strategic communications and related practices to carry forward the mission of an association that embraces change.
- Be inspired by, and inspire, the members of a mission-oriented association providing a fundamental service during a dynamic era in higher education.

THE ASSOCIATION

NACAC is the world's largest association supporting professionals who serve students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. The association works to expand access to higher education through policy, advocacy, convening, education, and training. It has a [membership of more than 23,000](#), comprised of postsecondary admission professionals, high school counselors, independent educational consultants, professionals at community-based organizations, and others throughout the United States and 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](#). These "micro communities" nurture the growing diversity of interests across the association.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

NACAC is in the process of reinventing itself during a time of disruption for both the college admission profession and higher education institutions. New [strategic vision](#), mission, and values statements, as well as a new organizational structure, will ensure the organization becomes a cutting-edge influencer, leading and supporting the transformation of the profession.

NACAC commits to:

- Leading important initiatives resulting in a more diverse and inclusive student population
- Boldly influencing higher education policy
- Serving as a clearinghouse for readily accessible knowledge sharing, transformative professional development opportunities, and cutting-edge research
- Creating a membership that is reflective of the changing demographics among students

To ensure the organization's success, NACAC is committed to being innovative, nimble, and meeting the moment—working swiftly to stay ahead of the curve and lead meaningful and impactful change.

Recently, NACAC staff members participated in strategic visioning sessions to reaffirm, as well as reimagine, its organizational values and guiding principles. The newly developed vision statement and values direct the CEO, the senior leadership group, and staff in their work together as they seek organizational and cultural transformation to better serve NACAC's membership and external stakeholders, in service of the college admission counseling profession.

Staff Vision Statement

We are the trusted source of information and resources for NACAC members and the students they serve, providing exceptional service and stewardship to meet the evolving needs of the college admission counseling profession.

Staff Values

Trust
Integrity
Sustainability

Excellence
Inclusivity

Accountability
Innovation

LEADERSHIP

[Dr. Angel B. Pérez](#) became CEO of NACAC in July 2020. Prior to joining NACAC, he served as the vice president for enrollment and student success at Trinity College in Connecticut, where he also taught in the educational studies department. A recognized thought-leader on issues of equity and access in American education, he is a tireless champion for underrepresented communities and a creative advocate for reform. Named by a *Forbes* article in 2019 as the most influential voice in college admission, he strives to build an educational ecosystem that better represents today's America. Dr. Pérez's expertise has been sought by key policy influencers. In 2016, the governor of Connecticut appointed him to the New England Board of Higher Education, and he was chosen by the Gates Foundation and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators to serve on Forward50, a group of higher education leaders presenting solutions to Congress. In 2019, the *New York Times Magazine* profiled his story in a cover feature, and he is a frequent contributor and commentator in national media outlets, including the *Washington Post*, NPR, CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, *Forbes*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Highlights of Pérez's first seven months were featured in a recent [article](#), "A New CEO's Strategy for Building the Plane While Flying It," in *Associations Now Daily News*, the daily newsletter from ASAE, the Center for Association Leadership.

POSITION OVERVIEW & DESCRIPTION

Reporting to the CEO, the CCO will be an instrumental adviser to the CEO and a critical partner with leadership in advancing the association's national and international outreach, strengthening member engagement and pride, inspiring students and families, and driving NACAC's leadership role amid momentous change in higher education. As a key member of the leadership team, the CCO will oversee the association's brand, communications and marketing strategies, internal and external communications, and digital and print portfolios as well as media relations and crisis communications. With vision, leadership, and creativity, the CCO will make the most of a growing team and use best-in-practice knowledge of educational outreach to elevate the association's effectiveness as a communicator, service organization, and voice for positive change.

Advisor to the CEO

- Serve as senior support to the CEO and strategic member of the senior management team; raise critical issues with the CEO and advise in decision-making; and partner with the CEO and other leadership as needed to strategize and deliver effective crisis communications.
- On behalf of the CEO, lead and support the collaborative effort to build and advance a strong and compelling new NACAC brand and related communications, marketing, and public relations strategies and applications.
- Serve as the CEO's senior-most communications executive, with responsibility for oversight and direction of those functions and staff.
- Work closely with the CEO on his extensive communications and public relations obligations to ensure they most effectively deliver value for NACAC and its membership.
- Serve as the CEO's and association's media spokesperson as needed with clarity and assurance.

CONTINUE

Leadership Collaboration

- Work closely with the Chief Experience Officer and other leadership as appropriate to build and deploy communications and marketing of maximum value to members and NACAC's standing with them.
- Work closely with the incoming Chief of Staff and other leadership as appropriate to ensure strong and consistent outward messaging from the CEO as well as internal communications that keep staff informed and engaged in association developments and plans.
- Work closely with the Chief Education and Policy Officer and other leadership as appropriate to advance awareness of NACAC's research and policy work on behalf of the profession and related association priorities.
- In collaboration with senior leaders, draft and edit correspondence, speeches, proposals, reports, presentations, and other communications of organizational and strategic importance.
- Interact with all levels of leadership and administrative divisions to ensure organizational focus and alignment around the NACAC brand and related standards, priorities messages, and essential communications practices.
- Through appropriate research and collaboration with senior leaders as well as other association colleagues, assess critical communications needs and identify strong messages and comprehensive tactical plans, including for segmented outreach to key audiences.
- Drive and support outward-facing initiatives, including consulting with other leaders on public relations matters, member engagement, policy and research developments and opportunities, and more.
- Partner with the CEO and Chief Financial Officer to track and adapt investments in communications and marketing to ensure the efficient and effective deployment of related association resources.

Communications Leadership and Management

- Lead the team, and outside agencies and consultancies as needed, in researching, identifying, building support for, and implementing a compelling and authentic new NACAC brand, creating or revising association media as appropriate thereafter, and driving an enduring strategic and dynamic approach to messaging and outreach.
- Lead the communications team in expanding and strengthening strong, productive collaborations with colleagues, members, students, families, partners, and other stakeholders, including by setting an example of innovation, strategic-thinking, creativity, and partnership.
- Lead the team and outside consultancies as needed to develop and implement a comprehensive new website that advances NACAC's mission, brand, and value to members and other audiences.
- Oversee and guide a proactive and strategic approach to the news media to secure regular coverage that advances the reputation, knowledge, understanding, and awareness of the association and its work.
- Provide the leadership, perspective, and coaching skills to recruit, retain, and continually boost the abilities and commitment of the communications staff at a time of change and growth to make the most of their potential to shape the standing and engagement goals of the association. This priority includes setting clear benchmarks for high performance, providing insight into best-in-practice work across the full set of media tools used today, and charting a path to comprehensive and potent digital outreach.
- Participate in key meetings with staff and/or external stakeholders to represent the mission, strategies, and plans of the Office of Communications.
- Manage the flow of communication from the Office of Communications to ensure consistent and responsive message delivery to key stakeholders.

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QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will have a clear record of strategic impact and high-level skill as a leader, creative thinker, shrewd problem-solver, and executor of communications that produce significant results. Minimum requirements include:

- Bachelor's degree.
- Demonstrated success in the field of communications with at least 10 years of leadership experience and a career showing progressive responsibility. Experience in higher education or a nonprofit membership association preferred.
- Extensive leadership experience designing and executing creative, impactful strategic communications plans in an organization with varied priorities and a wide range of stakeholders.
- Deep understanding of digital and new-media communications and marketing strategies and extensive experience applying or leading their application successfully.
- Outstanding management and planning skills, including the ability to simultaneously handle the pressures of crises and the regular demands of intersecting projects with poise and good humor.
- Proven experience managing crisis communications with skill, speed, and poise for complex organizations.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills and social-emotional intelligence, including proven experience earning the trust and confidence of a diverse set of professional peers and leaders.
- A self-starter with a strategic mindset, bias toward creativity in action, high attention to detail and organization, and deep curiosity for new knowledge and skills that advance organizations.
- Proven abilities managing, motivating, and supporting staff of varied levels and talents and leading them toward increasingly stronger performance as a team with positivity and confidence.
- Exceptional skills in interpersonal and professional communications, including in writing and public speaking.
- Interest and experience in contributing to organizational effectiveness and cultural change.
- Flexibility to quickly shift and respond to new priorities.
- Commitment to supporting diverse populations through diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

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 and 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.