Position Specification

National Association for College Admission Counseling

Chief Executive Officer
Our Client

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) is a member-based organization dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. NACAC provides counseling and admission professionals with the expert advice and tools they need to better serve students and improve the college transition process. NACAC’s membership includes representation from a wide range of global stakeholders whose work intersects with the transition to postsecondary education including, but not limited to, professionals from a broad array of public and private colleges, universities and secondary schools, independent college counselors, community-based organizations (CBOs), and corporate partners.

In the midst of a rapidly changing higher education landscape that include shifts in student demographics, the cost of education, and equitable access, NACAC serves as the authority in college admission counseling by defining professional standards and by providing leadership, knowledge, advocacy, research, and a forum for collaboration and support to admission and counseling professionals. Through this mission, NACAC is dedicated to:

- **Advocating for access, diversity, and inclusion** to ensure that all students have access to higher education.
- **Establishing professional standards** that safeguard students as they transition into and throughout their experiences within postsecondary education.
- **Serving as a trusted source of professional development opportunities, research, and knowledge** that are accessible, forward-thinking and relevant to diverse audiences.
- **Investing in its organizational effectiveness** and its capacity to innovate and act boldly.

NACAC’s rich history includes 82 years of commitment to establishing and maintaining the high standards that foster ethical and social responsibility among those involved in the process of students transitioning to postsecondary education. This long-standing dedication and active pursuit of best practices is embedded within NACAC’s Code of Ethics and Professional Practices. Notwithstanding recent challenges to the Code of Ethics and Professional Practices, NACAC continues to provide admission and counseling professionals with the tools to improve their skills and consider the ethical implications that arise in the field of higher education.

NACAC’s vision to empower “admission and counseling professionals to champion the opportunity for all individuals to pursue higher education and aspire to lives of personal achievement and contribution to the public good” is realized in the active participation of more than 15,000 members and 23 regional and international affiliates. The association’s principal revenue generating activities include a national conference that attracts more than 6,000 participants, and college fairs, held throughout the country, that reach over 675,000 students and 1,800 postsecondary institutions annually. While based just outside the nation’s capital in Arlington, Virginia, NACAC has an expansive reach in its efforts to support students and professionals engaged in admission counseling across the United States and globally. NACAC’s activities include:

- **Advocacy**: From its support of key policy initiatives to its engagement with relevant policies and legislative action, NACAC advocates for the best interests of students and its membership. NACAC represents an impactful voice and thought leader in the ethical practice of admission counseling.
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- **Professional Development:** NACAC unifies thousands of college admissions professionals through its conferences and educational resources. Member participation in conferences, special interest groups, and association or affiliate leadership provides meaningful networking opportunities and the engagement of a broad range of topics, such as inclusion and affordability, that are essential to the profession.

- **Education:** NACAC produces valuable insights and resources for professionals, students, and parents in its online Knowledge Center. These resources provide clarity on the admissions process and emerging issues that sharpen admission and enrollment professionals and better prepare students and families.

- **Outreach:** NACAC holds 97 events through its national college fair, performing and visual arts, and STEM college and career fair programs. Fairs are free and open to the public to encourage students to learn more about their college options.

NACAC employs approximately 60 staff members in its northern Virginia office. The Association is primarily funded by revenue generated from membership dues, conferences, and college fairs and has annual revenues of approximately $17M.

With the impending retirement of its long-time Chief Executive Officer, Joyce E. Smith, NACAC seeks to recruit a successor who will build upon NACAC’s strong foundation and legacy and work with the staff, board, and membership to shape a compelling vision for how NACAC can innovate and evolve to meet the needs of a profession in the midst of great change and then lead the organization to achieve greater impact within the field of higher education.

For additional information on NACAC, please visit: [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org).

**The Role**

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will provide leadership and vision to strengthen NACAC as one of the most powerful voices in higher education and the preeminent authority on college admission counseling. The CEO reports to the Board of Directors of NACAC and is responsible for the overall management and leadership of the activities and business of the association. The CEO will develop and implement strategies to meet the current and future needs of the admission counseling profession, its professionals, and the students it serves. They must partner with the Board, Affiliate Presidents, staff, and membership to set a clear and compelling vision for the future, with the important goal of positioning NACAC to proactively confront the changes in college admission. NACAC is committed to hiring a dynamic leader who can lead the organization at this important time of transition.

The successful candidate will have leadership responsibility, along with the Executive Committee and Board, for the development and implementation of NACAC’s advocacy and professional standards. The CEO will be called upon to act as an external spokesperson and representative for the organization to a wide range of key constituents and the public and will be expected to be actively engaged in the public policy issues facing college admissions.
The CEO will also be responsible for the overall management and effectiveness of the organization. They must develop and build consensus around a proactive, forward-looking strategic plan for NACAC and ensure the appropriate translation of the strategic plan into operational goals, milestones and objectives. The successful candidate will diversify, manage and grow NACAC’s revenue streams and deliver financially sound operational and budget execution. They must also evaluate NACAC’s value proposition and make recommendations for new and enhanced events, products and services to continually strengthen NACAC’s brand and the value of the affiliation with NACAC. The CEO must effectively oversee NACAC’s resources, both personnel and fiscal, in an efficient and competent manner. They will lead, recruit, develop, inspire and motivate a diverse staff to manage and administer NACAC’s programs and services in support of the strategic plan and priorities, and encourage successful and productive interaction between NACAC and its internal and external constituencies. Finally, it is critical that the successful candidate set the pace and tone for the organization and inspire performance of employees through personal leadership and the highest ethical standards.

Candidate Profile

For this pivotal position, NACAC is seeking a practical visionary and strategic leader. The successful candidate will be a person with stature and executive presence, capable of increasing the association’s impact. An inspiring leader, they will have demonstrated strategic planning abilities and be skilled at executing to deliver results on established goals and objectives.

The new CEO will excel at working with an Executive Committee and Boards to articulate and create an evolving vision for the future of an organization and how it can better serve the needs of its constituents, help its members and the profession, generate consensus around that vision and its priorities. They must have creative and innovative ideas and be able to lead the Board and members in setting an advocacy and policy agenda, as well as a plan for continued and enhanced partnerships across national higher education associations – all designed to help lead the college admissions profession into the future. They must be an accomplished change agent with an open and entrepreneurial mindset to embark on a process of refining and redefining the organization so that NACAC provides continued value to its diverse membership.

The ideal candidate will be respected for their expertise in college admission counseling and/or higher education as well as demonstrated management capabilities. Ideally, they will possess association leadership experience or other experience in a nonprofit environment. Moreover, the new CEO will be a poised and energetic servant-leader who is down-to-earth and approachable. The individual must have outstanding interpersonal acumen and communication skills. They will be a strong listener who engages all constituencies in a meaningful and respectful manner, and be an outspoken champion for access, equity, and inclusion. The successful candidate must be a diplomat who is skilled at building bridges and developing relationships in a variety of settings with diverse constituencies with a track record of successfully leading and building consensus in complex environments. A strong emphasis will be placed upon the proven ability to deal with a broad range of individuals, backgrounds, and perspectives in a collaborative, strategic, and consensus-driven manner. The successful candidate will be able to build strong relationships and coalitions with key partners and constituencies.
In addition to the critical, externally focused competencies, they must also possess outstanding leadership skills that will enable them to oversee the management of the internal team, serving as a collaborative colleague and mentor to staff at all levels. The successful candidate must be able to provide strategic direction for the NACAC team, prioritize and define clear goals for staff, and manage performance toward achievement of those goals. The CEO will be an effective communicator, who empowers staff members and inspires mutual trust. Further, they must have the executive skills to manage a Board and an Executive Committee in an efficient manner.

The successful candidate will be a person of the highest integrity who is gracious in manner and comfortable in any situation and with any audience. The CEO should possess self-confidence, but also be humble, with the dynamism and passion necessary to represent this important professional group.

*In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:*

**Strategic Leader and Visionary Capability**
- The successful candidate will be a strategic thinker who will work with NACAC’s Board, its members, the Executive Committee, and the Affiliate Presidents to create a strategic framework for the future of the organization that reimagines its role and ethical responsibility in college admissions.
- Cares deeply about the mission and is persuasive in making the case for the importance of NACAC’s work.
- They will have a proven track record of setting priorities and leading organizations or teams to success.
- The successful candidate will have a growth mindset and the demonstrated ability to conceptualize new products, services and/or programs that will help NACAC meet its goal to diversify its revenue sources.
- The CEO will be able to articulate the vision and value of NACAC. They will develop creative strategies, including technology solutions, to enhance its current platform to more effectively and efficiently engage NACAC’s current stakeholders, and better educate and prepare future generations of students.

**Relationship Builder and Unifier**
- The CEO must be skilled at developing relationships and collaborating with others in a variety of settings.
- The successful candidate will have a style that is collegial, approachable, direct and diplomatic.
- A strong listener, who genuinely solicits the ideas and opinions of others, and is comfortable with the healthy exchange of opinions, to make well-informed, decisive decisions.
- Effective at establishing equity, diversity, and inclusion excellence as core values across all aspects of the organization; practices and actively supports of NACAC’s commitment to an inclusive environment for all stakeholders.
- They will be decisive, accountable for their actions, as well as the work of the broader team.
- Consultative, forthcoming, and develops trusted rapport.
Ambassador for College Admission Counseling

- NACAC’s CEO will have strong communication skills, both written and verbal, and will be extraordinarily comfortable and effective in public speaking, in front of the media, and in all other aspects of public communication.
- They will have the ability to capture the attention of a wide variety of constituents and to effectively convey NACAC’s issues, important role within the field of higher education, and positions on policy matters and relevant societal issue.
- The successful candidate will have demonstrated stature and presence and the ability to compellingly convey the importance of the college admission process. They will ideally domain expertise in the field college admissions counseling, or, more broadly, higher education.

Managing Teams and Budgets

- They will have the operational management skills to effectively lead the organization and ensure that NACAC’s goals are met.
- Financially savvy, adept at setting and managing budgets, an excellent steward of financial and human resources.
- A leader who is self-reflective and aware of their limitations; leads by example and drives the organization's performance with an attitude of continuous improvement by being open to feedback and self-improvement.
- The successful candidate will have a style that fosters a culture of engagement and empowerment, openness and mutual respect with both staff and members.
- A leader who selects and supports exceptional talent, is committed to performance review, and promotes development of human capital throughout the organization.
- A person who aligns the leadership team in a unified pursuit of NACAC’s vision and strategies.
- The CEO will have, ideally, successfully run organizations or teams of comparable scale from a fiscal and personnel standpoint.

Instructions for Applications and/or Nominations

If you are interested in being considered for the role or wish to nominate someone for consideration, please email NACAC.CEO@russellreynolds.com by Friday, November 15, 2019.