



Director of Communications and External Affairs

As the Director of Communications and External Affairs, you will lead the strategy development and execution of all our communications and external engagements. Working with our president, you will strengthen and build awareness of IHEP's mission to advance our agenda. Through your efforts, our reputation as a trusted resource for higher education equity issues will grow even stronger among a wide variety of nationwide stakeholders including researchers, policymakers, practitioners, institutions of higher education, and advocates.

Your success will be driven by your ability to ensure that our work is landing in the hands of federal, state, and institutional policy leaders and that the impact of our work is recognized for future funding opportunities. Your passion for college access and success will strengthen IHEP's mission and impact by helping us find new and creative ways to tell our story.

Using both online and traditional strategies and mechanisms, you will be responsible for increasing awareness of the critical importance of improving education outcomes for all students. As a partner to internal staff, you will be involved in project planning stages so that you can influence the vision and story from the beginning. Creating and maintaining relationships with the media, you will arrange for press releases, blog posts, and other promotions. We will look to you to translate information into content with broad appeal for maximum impact.

Organization Overview

For 25 years, the [Institute for Higher Education Policy](http://www.ihep.org) (IHEP) has been a leading voice championing a vision in which all people, regardless of background or circumstance, have the opportunity to reach their full potential by participating and succeeding in higher education. Established in 1993 as a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, IHEP is committed to promoting access to and success in higher education, with a special focus on low-income, minority, and other historically underrepresented populations. We develop innovative policy- and practice-oriented research to guide policymakers and education leaders who develop high-impact policies that will address our nation's most pressing education challenges. Our staff includes some of the most respected professionals in the fields of public policy and research.

Responsibilities

- Manage the day-to-day operations of IHEP's communications function, including branding, planning, and maintaining a communications calendar; proactively planning end-to-end workflows; and remaining knowledgeable and informed about the status of all tasks that fall under the communications function.
- Lead IHEP's media outreach efforts, including initiating media contacts, press briefings, and interviews; providing talking points and other materials as needed for senior staff; and responding to media inquiries quickly and effectively.
- Manage and coordinate the production of a diverse range of products (including research reports, policy briefs, videos, infographics, etc.) tailored to specific audiences to help tell



our story.

- Collaborate with staff to craft press releases, official statements, opinion pieces, and blog posts; devise strategic dissemination strategies; and create and manage innovative advocacy campaigns and related events.
- Develop, implement, and effectively manage a social media strategy and presence for IHEP.
- Oversee the process of updating, refining, and evolving IHEP's website regularly to maintain fresh content and a user-friendly design.
- Establish metrics and regularly evaluate the results and impact of our communications efforts; report internally on developments and trends within the industry.
- Manage the department budget and ensure efficient use of organization resources.
- Coordinate the strategy, planning, development, and implementation of IHEP's communications and advocacy work.
- Support the implementation of policy and advocacy strategies designed to advance IHEP's policy priorities and vision through legislative, regulatory, and non-regulatory work with government agencies; at the federal, state, and local levels; and in partnership with other organizations.
- Develop strategic partnerships with key constituencies to elicit support for and maximize the impact of IHEP's research and other initiatives, including serving as the principal communications and advocacy liaison to media organizations, government agencies, national groups, education organizations, etc.
- Provide advice and expertise to senior leaders and other staff on a range of communications and outreach issues, methods, and approaches.
- Supervise a direct report and cultivate their professional growth; work with external consultants and manage outside vendors, as needed.

Qualifications

- Unwavering commitment to IHEP's mission of using research to inform policies that improve postsecondary opportunities, access, and success for low-income students, students of color, and other underrepresented groups.
- At least 10 years of professional experience, with significant experience in a communications role. Experience working in a nonprofit or advocacy role is preferred.
- A minimum of a bachelor's degree in communications, policy, or a related field; a master's or other advanced degree is preferred.
- A foundation of knowledge around higher education policy and landscape is a plus.
- Must have established relationships with media, as well as a demonstrated ability to develop, maintain, and build upon strong media and partner relationships.
- Experience successfully positioning subject matter with national, regional, and local media



to achieve high-impact results.

- Ability to synthesize and communicate complex issues and information to diverse audiences in innovative and creative ways.
- Excellent verbal, interpersonal, and written communication skills with strong attention to detail. Management experience is a plus.
- Adaptable under pressure and able to reprioritize and delegate work among the team in response to shifting goals or priorities.
- Able to anticipate and forestall problems, proactively seek solutions, and push projects to completion.
- Empathetic and collegial, with the ability to develop positive internal and external relationships.
- Strong analytical, critical, and strategic thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.

Attributes

- Curious. You like learning new things and collecting and sharing information. You ask questions, listen, and learn. You are naturally inquisitive.
- Organized. You bring order to competing priorities and keep things running smoothly. You have command of both the process and the details. You get it done right the first time.
- Polished communicator. You understand the importance of tone and how to communicate clearly, whether it's in an email, over the phone, or face-to-face. Your writing, speaking, and presentation skills are excellent.
- Project manager. You can juggle multiple tasks, allocate and optimize resources, and manage timelines. You enjoy creating and implementing processes and procedures that uphold rigorous standards. You also enjoy people management.
- Creative. You think strategically and develop thoughtful messaging.
- Collaborative. You have a collaborative and inclusive work style with people at all levels, respectfully listening and learning to understand their goals. You are sensible, realistic, and matter-of-fact.
- Gravitas. Colleagues respect you for your expertise and appreciate how you evaluate issues from both an individual and organizational perspective.
- Self-starter. You are highly motivated and are able to follow through on plans. You work well independently. You easily juggle multiple detail-oriented projects and always meet deadlines.
- Mission-driven. You understand the big picture and can easily translate our objectives into social impact.
- Diplomatic. You are willing to listen and articulate a clear vision.



What's Attractive to the Right Candidate?

- This is an exciting time to join IHEP. We have a strong foundation and you will have the opportunity to set forth a vision for IHEP's communication and advocacy work for years to come.
- Managing a broad portfolio of responsibility, you will have the opportunity to make a substantial impact in a core area of the organization.
- You will be a critical member of a collegial team that holds each other accountable for results. We are forward-thinking and will allow you to do innovative long-term planning. You will be responsible for managing staff members and consultant relationships.
- We are financially strong and growing.
- We are mission-driven. Our higher education reform work significantly impacts issues of college access, success, and equity, particularly for underserved populations.
- We are dedicated and we work hard, but we also respect each other's lives outside of work. That is why we offer a comprehensive benefits package, generous leave policies, and opportunities to develop and grow.

To Apply

Simply email your resume to Ellen Greenwood at resumes@staffingadvisors.com with "**IHEP – Director of Communications #2018-2429 CW**" as the subject of the email.

Staffing Advisors has been engaged to find the right candidate and is committed to helping create a diverse work environment for our client. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. This position may require pre-employment screening potentially including a criminal background check, verification of academic credentials, licenses, certifications, and/or verification of work history.