A logo for a company

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**NETWORK OF SCHOOLS OF PBLIC POLICY, AFFAIRS AND ADMINISTRATION**

**(NASPAA)**

[**https://www.naspaa.org/**](https://www.naspaa.org/)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**The Organization:**

The mission of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) is to ensure excellence in education and training for public service and to promote the ideal of public service. NASPAA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership association with over 300 institutional member schools at U.S. and non-U.S. universities across 27 countries that award degrees in public administration, public policy, public affairs, nonprofit management, and related fields. NASPAA is the recognized global accreditor of master’s degree programs in these fields.

Through the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA), and in collaboration with the Standards Committee, NASPAA Accreditation is the peer review quality assurance process for graduate level, master’s degree programs in public policy, affairs, and administration. NASPAA’s accreditation process, driven by public service values, is mission- and outcomes-based, and grounded in an in-depth self-evaluation of programs using the NASPAA Accreditation Standards.

NASPAA’s membership is growing and becoming more diverse, consisting of large, mid-size, and small schools, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU’s), minority serving programs, and international programs.

NASPAA holds several Memoranda of Understanding with peer organizations around the world. Cooperative activities that have been undertaken under these agreements include creating a coordinated accreditation process, identifying programs within a region interested in pursuing accreditation, supporting international exchange, and sharing best practices. NASPAA has also conducted conferences with partners outside the continental United States, including China, UAE, Qatar, Mexico, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

**NASPAA’s priority is serving its members. It accomplishes its mission by offering direct services to its member institutions and students, through:**

* **Accreditation.** Developing appropriate standards for master’s programs through its Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation and offering 4 badges for accredited programs to earn, showing their commitment to Inclusion, Civic engagement, Global education, and Sustainability.

* **Advocacy.** Representing to governments and other institutions the objectives and needs of education for public affairs and administration.
* **Curriculum Development and Innovation,** Providing a forum for

publication (*Journal of Public Affairs Education*) and discussion (Annual Conference and regional meetings) of education scholarship, practices and issues; supporting teaching and learning through the activities of the Institute for Innovative Teaching and Learning for Public Service (***Publicases*** and the ***NASPAA Simulation Network***).

o **NASPAA Data Center.** Building a data center that collects, analyzes, and shares data on the field with the goal of becoming the authoritative source for data-based decision making in public affairs education.

* **Internship Opportunities.** Providing internships for students and career resources for graduates by sponsoring the leading job board in the field (PublicServiceCareers.org).

* **Collaboration across the field.** Undertaking joint educational projects with allied professional organizations and collaborating with institutes and schools of public administration in other countries through conferences, consortia, and joint projects to share best practice and learn from each other.

**Position Overview**

NASPAA celebrated its 55th Anniversary in 2025, having evolved into a global network, supporting programs that advance public service values and education across issues, sector, and geographic boundaries.

This is an outstanding opportunity for a leader who is passionate about, and committed to, public service. In this role, they will help NASPAA meet the challenges of social, political, and economic change, guiding NASPAA through its next phase of development and growth ensuring quality accreditation for public policy, public affairs, and public administration programs.

**The Role:**

***Location:*** Washington, DC

***Reports to:*** NASPAA’s 18-member Executive Council and the Executive Committee

***Staff:*** 9 direct reports including those in the areas of finance, accreditation, membership development, events and education, Institute of Innovation, and Data Center.

The Executive Director will collaboratively develop a vision and strategy, supporting and guiding an exceptional team of professionals during a time of change. They are responsible for driving the success of NASPAA’s mission by focusing on the following priority areas:

* Market the value of NASPAA membership and accreditation to current member- institutions as well as institutions with academic programs well-suited to support NASPAA in broadening its membership base.
* Expand, maintain, and diversify revenues to ensure financial sustainability, and the availability of necessary resources to deliver the highest quality programming to the membership.
* Refine the business model, capitalizing on blended approaches (e.g., virtual, in-person, and on-demand) to accessing and participating in conferences, seminars, gatherings, and accreditation site visits.
* Capitalize on alliances with organizations in other countries to further internationalization efforts. Invest in strong partnerships with government, nonprofits, and businesses.
* Promote innovation in public service teaching and learning through quality accreditation and compliance monitoring.
* Support programs in addressing the need for high-demand skills in public service that are responsive to complex societal changes.

**Key Responsibilities:**

# Leadership and Strategy

* Lead and manage staff. Build and nurture an organizational culture that is grounded in a shared vision, respect and accountability, the pursuit of quality programming, services, and support of the membership and its students.
* In partnership with staff, prepare a performance plan for each staff member that aligns their duties and responsibilities to NASPAA’s mission, strategic goals, and objectives.
* Work collaboratively with the Executive Council to implement the 2023 strategic plan to achieve NASPAA’s mission, next level of impact, and sustainable organizational growth.
* Facilitate strategic discussions about how to make public affairs education relevant for our world. Challenge traditional approaches and explore transdisciplinary approaches in NASPAA’s work.
* Continue an ongoing commitment to embed cultural competence in NASPAA and across the field.
* Assist the Executive Council in monitoring and evaluating NASPAA’s relevancy to the field, staying ahead of where public policy, administration, and affairs are going, to effectively support members and continuously strengthen the public affairs education of our students.

# Executive Council and Committee Relations

* Participate as a member of the Executive Committee of the Council, together with the President, Vice President, and past President of the association.
* Build a trusting and transparent partnership with the Executive Council and committees in order to achieve the mission, vision and goals of NASPAA.
* Work with the Executive Council to ensure a strong, transparent, and high-functioning governance role. Support the Board in its role and responsibilities and that of its committees.
* Partner with the Executive Council in providing regular oversight of NASPAA’s budget and personnel matters.
* Inform the Executive Council and its committees about policy trends, challenges, and opportunities in order to facilitate discussion, deliberation and policy making. Recommend policy positions.
* Serve as a thought partner to the Executive Council and committees to ensure that relevant, accurate, and timely information is provided to inform and guide strategic level thinking.

***External Relations and Fund Development***

* Advance public service through the expansion of partnerships with other organizations and by promoting cooperation among member institutions with similar purposes domestically and in other countries.
* Serve as champion and spokesperson to enhancing NASPAA’s reputation.
* Advocate strategically at the federal and state levels of government for policies that impact public affairs education, our programs, and our schools. Work with legislators, executive branch officials, partner organizations and regulatory agencies at the highest levels to further strategic advocacy priorities.
* Manage relationships with existing and potential donors and create development strategies that expand the donor pool and establish new creative partnerships for fundraising.

**Infrastructure and Team Leadership**

* Provide general oversight of all NASPAA activities. Assure the effective management of day-to-day operations, and a high-functioning, efficient organization.
* Together with the Chief Financial Officer, prepare an annual budget for review and adoption by the Executive Council. Oversee the fiscal status of the association including monitoring the budget, reporting and audits. Prepare monthly budget reports for review by the Executive Council.
* Continue to invest in, prioritize and build the internal capacity of NASPAA staff.
* Inspire, coach and develop a high performing team with multiple responsibilities and talents. Motivate and collaborate, actively seeking input. Assure a process for recruitment. Develop appropriate salary structures, and consistent evaluation of staff and volunteers.

# Accreditation and Programming

* Work collaboratively with the Chief Accreditation Officer and the Standards Committee in their development of appropriate standards for educational programs and their review of the quality of programs.
* Grow and diversify the volunteer network of NASPAA site visitors domestically and globally, providing volunteers the opportunity to use their expertise to support the development of public service education programs, and the field.
* Ensure the advancement of equality of opportunity of all persons to education for public service and the careers to which it leads.
* Encourage innovation in education and provide a forum for the discussion of educational issues at conferences, committees, seminars, workshops and in all student engagement activities.
* Amplify the importance of curriculum, teaching and learning through continued support of the use of cases and simulations, as well as other creative teaching tools.
* Refine data collection efforts and build a robust data warehouse in public affairs education to enhance understanding and competitiveness of the sector.
* Promote programs and services that are produced in a cost-effective manner. Assure program quality and organizational stability through the development and implementation of standards and controls, systems and procedures, and regular evaluation.

**Candidate Profile:**

***Professional Experience:***

* The equivalent of 10 years of strategic leadership experience, including at least three years at the executive level in membership, national/affiliate, geographically dispersed, or complex model organizations.
* International experience and strong cultural competence;.
* Familiarity with professional accreditation; knowledge of higher education space is preferred.
* Some familiarity with NASPAA’s sister organizations including the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the National Governors’ Association (NGA), and the National Association of Counties (NACO).
* Broad general management experience across finance, human resources, operations/technology, data management, marketing, program, fund development, and working with volunteers and boards.
* Track record of working collaboratively on multi-year strategic planning, advocacy and quality improvement.
* Demonstrated achievement in high growth and/or change environments, bringing to scale complex organizations and putting technology to work; adept at assessing infrastructure/operational requirements necessary to support sustainable growth and healthy organizational culture.
* Proven ability to communicate and work effectively with multiple internal and external stakeholders to achieve mutually agreed upon outcomes.
* Track record of innovative and sustainable fundraising from individuals, corporations, foundations, academic institutions, and other donor organizations.
* Superior mentoring, professional development, people management and leadership skills; evidence of leading change with positive outcomes; an inspiring team builder who engenders trust and builds group commitment to goals and objectives.
* Professional experience may have been gained as a public policy practitioner, in a membership, nonprofit, governmental, international NGO, social enterprise, and/or large multi-site advocacy organization.

***Personal Attributes:***

* Passionate about the importance of public service and NASPAA’s mission; familiar with the accreditation process, working with academic institutions; knowledge of the domestic policy landscape.
* A servant-leader who communicates a clear and compelling vision for the future of the association, applies creative solutions to organizational problems, anticipates situations and needs, and responds appropriately to emerging situations.
* Multi-cultural management experience and a high level of emotional intelligence.
* Skilled at coordinating the work of a high performing team in a central office environment but can also coordinate many different committees and groups.
* Proven change manager: Ability to influence and enable others to work collaboratively in service of members, students, and graduates.
* Systems thinker who is focused on the membership; helps to define goals and establish priorities to ensure results.
* Exceptional written, verbal and presentation skills; ability to inspire and motivate people at all levels within and outside of the organization.
* Displays the highest levels of personal and professional integrity and models exemplary behavior.

**Education:** A Bachelor’s degree is required; a Master’s degree in Public Administration, Public Policy, Public Affairs or similar graduate degree is preferred.

Compensation: $160,000 to $180,000 (commensurate with experience) and a generous

benefit package.

The Executive Director is a full-time position located in downtown Washington, DC. The Executive Director is expected to live within the commuting areas of Washington, DC (typically within 50 miles). The Executive Director is required to have 4-5 days of in-office presence.

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NASPAA is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities and employment without regard to race, creed, religion, color, gender, national origin, disability, age, veteran status or military liability, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law.

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***For best consideration please submit a cover letter and resume by October 30, 2025, to:*** [***naspaasearch@gwu.edu***](mailto:naspaasearch@gwu.edu). Review of applications will begin October 31, 2025.

***Questions? Please contact search committee chairs: Kathryn Newcomer (***[***Newcomer@gwu.edu***](mailto:Newcomer@gwu.edu)***) and Rosemary O’Leary (***[***oleary@ku.edu***](mailto:oleary@ku.edu)***)***