About the Institute of Politics and this Position:
Created in 2013 by University of Chicago alumnus David Axelrod (AB’76), the mission of the Institute of Politics (IOP) is to ignite in University of Chicago students a passion for politics, public service and civic engagement and to provide a forum for the debate and discussion of public issues. By bringing practitioners from the public arena to campus, and providing extracurricular opportunities in politics, policy, government and journalism, the non-partisan Institute seeks to open pathways for engagement and leadership to students across campus.

The Director of Communications works closely with the Institute director, executive director, and other directors to showcase the wide range of student opportunities and public events programming to a local, national, and international audience. This position leads and oversees the development and implementation of the IOP’s communications strategies, including, but not limited to, media relations, brand management, event publicity and outreach, and all digital and social media efforts. This position also plays a key role in leading special pan-IOP projects such as the Campaign Journalism Conference and the Iowa Project. As such, this position requires an in-depth knowledge of communications, media relations, marketing strategies, social media campaigns, and a passion for politics at the local, national, and international levels. The ideal candidate must possess a wide range of skills, from the ability to work under tight deadlines to writing to leading a diverse team, while at the same time photography to editing to graphic design, as well as the ability to work under tight deadlines and the vision and creativity to bring the IOP’s work to life. The position reports to the Institute’s executive director and manages two staff members and two paid interns.

There are four primary programmatic components of the Institute:
- The Speaker Series hosts nationally and internationally recognized speakers on a wide variety of issues related to the mission of the IOP, with more than 1,200 speakers coming to campus from across the political spectrum, a testament to the IOP’s non-partisan commitment to elevating public conversation around important contemporary issues.
- The Fellows Program presents an opportunity for political practitioners, policy makers, journalists, and others engaged in politics, to be in residence at the University of Chicago for an academic quarter.
- The IOP sponsors a robust, paid internship program for undergraduate and graduate students, placing them in high-level settings overseas, in Washington, D.C. and at the state and local levels.
- The IOP’s Civic Engagement programs provide pathways for students to take an active role in shaping politics and policy in their communities, via three main pillars: 1) Leadership Development Programs; 2) Student-Led Civic Engagement Projects; and 3) Political Exploration Treks.
Unit-Specific Responsibilities:

- Develop and execute key internal (IOP and University) and external communications to reach the IOP’s student audience and wider local and national audiences.
- Work closely with the Institute director and executive director to grow the IOP’s reach.
- Oversee the effective branding and delivery of marketing strategies that increase engagement with the IOP and its program areas.
- Oversee the IOP’s media relations, including outreach to an extensive press list, increasing media coverage of IOP events and fellows, and handling any media requests for the IOP in a timely manner.
- Oversee the IOP’s website, including making the site as up-to-date and engaging as possible for all IOP audiences.
- Design and lead social media campaigns across all platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.
- Oversee all content creation at the IOP, including audio, video, and written content related to Speaker Series events, Fellows seminars, Civic Engagement programs, local treks, workshops, and more.
- Help conceive of and lead a variety of special pan-IOP projects such as the Campaign Journalism Conference, the Iowa Project, and UChiVotes, and run point on partnerships involving Google, Snapchat, Harvard, NBC, ABC, FOX, CNN, and CBS News.
- Facilitate the development and execution of promotional materials around events, outreach, and special initiatives, including the IOP’s annual report and Board of Advisors packet.
- Support IOP leadership as needed with the development and presentation of visual materials for special events, meetings, and development efforts.
- Provide thought leadership and best practices on how to respond to internal and external communications situations, including any crisis communications incidents that arise.
- Oversee the IOP’s contracted camera crew on the coverage, live-streaming, and distribution of Speaker Series events.
- Assist on other pan-IOP projects with extensive Communications involvement such as UChiVotes.
- Train, oversee, and monitor Communications’ teams two staff and two interns and work closely with IOP student leadership to boost the IOP’s reach and engagement with the UChicago student body.
- Work closely with the UChicago News Office on stories and pitches involving IOP guests.

Unit-Specific Competencies:

- Passion for the IOP’s mission of working with young people to inspire the next generation of political and public service leaders.
- Comfort and experience with working with members of the media.
- Knowledge of and experience with online tools and social media platforms required.
- Ability to handle multiple tasks and assignments simultaneously required.
- Creativity and an ability to think outside-the-box required.
- Project management skills required.
- Knowledge of grammar, punctuation, spelling and style required.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills required.
• Strong interpersonal and leadership skills required.
• Problem-solving skills required.
• Ability to work independently with a high degree of initiative required.
• Ability to work as a member of a team required.
• Attention to detail required.
• Organizational skills required.
• Ability to set priorities, and meet deadlines required.
• Knowledge of MS Office Suite required.

Preferred Qualifications:

Education:
Bachelor’s Degree required; advanced degree preferred.

Experience:
• Proven success in communications and/or public relations
• Experience in political or non-profit organizations preferred
• Exceptional time management and organizational skills required
• Demonstrated ability to influence diverse people to meet goals and deadlines, build and manage teams, and work collaboratively with senior leadership, Board members, consultants, colleagues, students, and volunteers
• Expert knowledge of Communications best practices including technology

Required Documents:
• Resume
• Cover Letter
• Reference Contact Information

Optional Documents:
• Portfolio of prior Communications work, including writing samples or media clips, may be requested during the interview process

Note: When applying, all required documents MUST be uploaded under the Resume/CV section of the application.