

# Nikky Luna

Morgantown, WV | [nikkyluna.com](http://nikkyluna.com)

Strategic communicator, connector, and writer with 18+ years of experience in communications, marketing, development and recruitment.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Project Coordinator, September 2024-July 2025

West Virginia University Healthspan Nutrition Lab, Morgantown, W.Va.

- Supported the project planning and implementation as a contracted, grant-funded project manager for a \$969,631 USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture research study
- Helped lead and organize protocol and workflow development, participant recruitment efforts, collection of data using REDCap software, and the development and dissemination of internal and external communications
- Led provider recruitment efforts, introducing the study and coordinating communications, meetings, and the formalization of collaborative partnerships with physicians, office administrators, nurse practitioners and physician assistants, resulting in an increase from three to 77 total collaborating healthcare providers
- Led the development of a 30-page patient education handbook, coordinating with study researchers and a cross-functional marketing and communications team while providing writing, proofing, editing expertise
- Led the launch of the lab's website, closely coordinating with university professional technologists and photographers, and maintained website updates
- Wrote, proofread, and edited a wide-range of study-related documents, including patient education and recruitment pieces, research manuscripts, PowerPoint presentations, and procedural documentation
- Drafted press releases and internal news announcements as needed
- Developed and managed interim reports and assets for principal investigators' research publications and presentations
- Liaised with project team and internal and external study stakeholders

Director of Development, September 2023-August 2024

The American Pops Orchestra, Washington, D.C. (remote position)

- Developed and implemented fundraising goals and strategy in conjunction with annual budget and financial needs
- Collaborated with Founder, Board President, and Board members to identify existing and prospective individual and corporate donors
- Developed/implemented the strategy for the cultivation and solicitation of new and current donors
- Managed development software (Neon CRM), implementing system audits and more regular database maintenance

- Oversaw comprehensive development approach while managing one full-time development coordinator
- Coordinated with colleagues and external contractors to develop and implement in marketing/communication deliverables
- Managed communications and all development-related logistics for eight APO donor events, with attendees ranging from a dozen to 200 and supported overall event strategy, planning, and implementation
- Ghost-wrote and/or edited approximately 5-10 messages a month for APO leadership, targeting prospective and current corporate/individual donors

Director, Marketing and Communications, August 2019-August 2023  
West Virginia University School of Public Health, Morgantown, W.Va.

Directed the overall communications and marketing strategy to supporting the school's enrollment, fundraising, and service/outreach goals. This included:

- Developing and implementing integrated marketing communications plans to support the school's strategic planning goals and objectives
- Fulfilling the role of both 'doer' and director/manager, including the management of one full-time communications specialist and providing ongoing coordination and strategic collaboration with communications, marketing, and enrollment colleagues throughout the WVU System
- Writing, proofing, and/or editing various types of content for multiple platforms and audiences; e.g., news stories, pitches, media advisories; e-newsletters for both internal and external constituents; leadership messaging to internal/external stakeholders; and website copy
- Helped plan and execute the School's 10-year anniversary, producing and/or coordinating a wide range of deliverables, including an interactive website; suite of brand assets; printed collateral and branded giveaways; an event series; and news/website stories
- Oversaw school's social media channels, providing planning/strategy guidance to the comms. specialist, as well as creating/posting directly to the school's channels
- Provided operations and budgetary oversight to the marketing/communications office and served as liaison to university-wide partner

Senior Marketing Strategist, October 2018-August 2019  
WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute, Morgantown, W.Va.

Spearheaded the organization's marketing and communications efforts, elevating the organization at the state, national, and international levels. This included:

- Planning, promoting, and executing the organization's inaugural summit, 'Breaking Barriers,' that brought together hundreds of experts from around the world, as well as the dedication of the RNI's new 60,000 sq.-ft. Innovation Center

- Elevating the RNI through writing, proofing, and editing news stories, marketing collateral (print and digital) and talking points and leadership presentations that highlighted multiple research breakthroughs
- Directing and supporting the development of marketing assets to support patient acquisition, including design/layout of print/digital deliverables, including brochures, digital signage, and video
- Supporting RNI strategic initiatives through active, ongoing participation in strategic planning sessions, departmental and administrative meetings

Communications Manager, January 2016-October 2018

WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design, Morgantown, W.Va.

Supported the college's recruitment and development goals through identifying, developing, finalizing and promoting content for print and digital platforms aimed at a various audiences, including prospective/current students; prospective/current donors; faculty/staff; alumni; government officials; and community stakeholders. Key projects/highlights:

- Helped plan and implement the school's 150th birthday celebration, which included a series of events and communication and marketing deliverables
- Served as editor and primary project manager for the [Davis College's 150th anniversary magazine](#), a 100-page, special edition publication
- Served as editor and writer for College's biannual magazine
- Wrote and edited various news stories, media pitches, and internal news announcements
- Planned and created content for the College's social channels

Director of Donor Relations and Campaign Manager, August 2013-December 2015

WVU Foundation, Morgantown, W.Va.

Supported the cultivation and stewardship efforts to further engage WVU donors, friends, and partners by providing direction and strategic oversight of the donor relations program. Highlights of the role include:

- Developed and implemented integrated marketing communication plans, tailored to unique audience segments
- Managed the stewardship process of donors who supported WVU and its affiliates, with a special emphasis on donors at the major gift level (\$25K) and higher
- Oversaw the planning and implementation of internal and external events and special programming, including pre- and post-event communications

Institutional Advancement (various roles) and Admissions, July 2005-July 2007; July-2009-July 2013 | Alderson Broaddus University, Philippi, West Virginia

Vice President for Institutional Advancement, July 2011-July 2013

- Oversaw all development, alumni relations and advancement-related activities, including donor/alumni-related communications, and managed a team of five full-time professional staff and four full/part-time support staff.
- Led the university in raising over \$15 million in gifts and pledges in FY 2012, including a one-time \$8.5M gift-in-kind, and an increase in alumni participation rate
- Developed and wrote multiple gift proposals and stewardship reports
- Identified, qualified and cultivated supporters, including prospective Board members
- Served on the President's Cabinet and various committees, including the university's Strategic Planning Task Force

Major Gifts Officer/Dir., Foundation and Government Relations, Aug. 2010-June 2011

- Responsible for a portfolio of approximately 125 prospects and donors whom I qualified, cultivated and/or solicited at the annual/major gift levels
- Developed grant-writing skills and collaborated with other stakeholders to identify funding needs and help prioritize and communicate organizational needs to potential supporters
- Assisted with the planning and implementation of alumni and donor-related events on- and off-campus
- Promoted to VP for advancement during organizational reorganization

Director of Alumni Relations, July 2009-August 2010

- Engaged alumni and friends with the institution through the planning and implementation of on- and off-campus events and the development and execution of multi-tiered communications
- Tasks ranged from writing stories to developing alumni newsletters and content for the website to recruiting and organizing volunteers and event sponsors to facilitating regular meetings and ongoing work of the 25-member Alumni Council, the governing committee of the Alumni Association
- Established the university's first Student Alumni Association
- Promoted to Major Gifts Officer/Dir. of Foundation and Government Relations

Admissions Counselor, July 2005-July 2007

- Grew the applicant pool by 25% within the first six months of inception and maintained applicant growth within assigned territory, evidenced by a 54% increase in deposited students in the second year.
- Planned and executed quarterly communication plans, targeting prospective students and families
- Planned individual campus visits, coordinating with faculty, coaches, and university administrators and serving as primary campus liaison for prospective students and their family members
- Represented the university at approximately 80-100 college fairs and high school visits per year, engaging students, teachers, financial aid counselors, and prospective students' families through formal presentations and Q&A sessions

## **EDUCATION**

Master of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications, August 2012  
West Virginia University, Morgantown, W.Va.

Bachelor of Arts in Communications and Applied Music/Vocal Performance, May 2005  
Alderson-Broaddus College, Philippi, W.Va.

## **VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

Communications Volunteer, April 2024-January 2025  
WV Faith Collective

Helped plan, develop and execute communication and community-building initiatives on behalf of the WV Faith Collective, with a focus on a storytelling project featuring Black women in West Virginia. Recruited and managed seven marketing/comms professionals who served as volunteers. Assisted with a search for a prospective communications position, helping to develop job description and interviewing/vetting candidates.

Mentor, CreateAthon@WVU, April 2018  
West Virginia University Reed College of Media

Served as a mentor for this annual student-driven event, during which teams develop a comprehensive implementation plan and deliverables for local nonprofits within a 24-hour period. Provided guidance on planning and strategy; helped facilitate work sessions; and provided proofing and editing support.

Member, Board of Directors, October 2015-January 2018  
Libera, Inc. (<https://www.liberawv.com/>)

Served on the fundraising committee and helped with the planning and execution of events and communications. Fostered connections between the Executive Director and fundraising advisors and prospective supporters.