



**Name:** Elena Walker

**Major:** International Affairs; Spanish

**Title:** Deputy Scheduler to the Governor & Executive Assistant to the Senior Advisor/Director of External Affairs

**Organization:** State of Tennessee - Governor's Office

### What are your day-to-day job responsibilities in this role?

My job is split between my two main roles. They are described below:

a. *Deputy Scheduler:* In this role, I assist the Director of Scheduling with all of her duties.

I manage the influx of scheduling requests for the Governor's time (including meetings, speaking engagements, summits, conferences, calls, site visits, etc.), correspond with points of contact, organize requests for review with staff and the Governor himself, and coordinate logistics for events/meetings in which he decides to participate.

b. *Executive Assistant:* For this role, I provide support in many different capacities to the Governor's Senior Advisor & Director of External Affairs, Alec. Alec wears many hats in the office with duties that include overseeing the external affairs office, advising the Governor on policy issues, working with the Comms office to manage the Governor's outward facing media, and serving as the office's federal affairs liaison. I mainly help Alec in two ways: assisting him with his calendar (scheduling meetings, helping him manage his time, booking travel, etc.) and being a sounding board to help him execute strategic projects for the Governor.

### What do you love about your job?

I always tell people my main goal in my job (which also happens to be my favorite part of it) is to provide the necessary support for my bosses to excel at their jobs which in turn means the Governor is able to operate efficiently and the whole of the State benefits. It is the most fulfilling feeling knowing that I am a small part of that.

### What is challenging about your role?

The most challenging part of a job like mine is that it is incredibly fast-paced, and I have to be on my toes at all times. I've become accustomed to plans suddenly changing and had to learn how to adapt quickly and smoothly. It also requires a lot of organization and multitasking as I want to absorb most of the hecticness and tedious tasks for Alec so he can worry about higher-level issues.

### What are the benefits of working in this field?

There are so many benefits! The networking opportunities are incredible, the people I work with are some of the top practitioners in their respective fields, and I love that I get a birds eye view of all of the amazing things that Tennesseans are accomplishing in this state.

**What types of activities were you involved in at Lipscomb or during college that helped develop your skills?**

Many of my classes in college required me to write a lot of papers and give presentations in front of classmates. Effective oral and written communication is essential to my job so I am grateful I had a chance to hone those skills before stepping into this role. I also had opportunities through a few leadership roles (President of IJM and Social Coordinator for Phi Nu) at Lipscomb to help plan and execute small events which helped me get a small taste of what event coordination was like.

**What do you see happening in the future for these types of careers?**

Even with the proliferation of AI usage, there is no replacement for an effective, efficient, and highly adaptable executive assistant. Scheduling, communicating with external contacts, and working out the exact details of events is tedious work and requires precision which is something I don't think AI can fully replicate. Even if it does take over some of these responsibilities, a good executive assistant includes being a place your boss can come to to process, talk through their creative ideas, and ultimately aid them in bringing their bold visions to life.

**What advice do you have for a student considering a career in your profession?**

It is important to find your method of organization. It looks different for everyone, and that's ok, but find what works for you.

You need to learn to be assertive and voice your opinion (in a respectful way of course). A good executive assistant is not afraid to help their boss grow and be better...and oftentimes avoid bad decisions or situations. You have to learn to speak up....because at the end of the day if something goes wrong and you could have prevented it, that's on you.

Give yourself grace when you make mistakes...because that's inevitable. You can always learn from them...don't dwell, just grow.