



Director of Programs

Position Overview

The Director of Programs is the manager for all of our academic debate activities and a motivational leader, who inspires program staff, coaches, volunteers, and other partners to support the mission of Chicago Debates and to collaborate to better students' lives through our debate programs. The Director of Programs plays an essential role in the daily management of our relationship with Chicago Public Schools, individual schools, and the delivery of our core programs. The Director of Programs is a visionary leader, always thinking of ways to innovate our debate program and ensure it remains accessible to our highest-need students and schools. The Director of Programs reports to the Executive Director and manages 5 - 6 full-time staff and part-time program contractors.

Core Responsibilities

Program Strategy, Curricula Design & Evaluation

- Stay apprised of best practices in the field of urban debate, college access, and professional development for teachers.
- Oversee the consistent audit and updating of our debate curriculum and resources to ensure it remains current, effective, and in line with industry standards.
- In collaboration with the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues, develop, manage, and modify the development and production of instructional resources like the Core Files and Public Forum topic files.
- Lead our work with the Coaches Council and Debater Leadership Council on league and tournament processes and improvements.
- In alignment with organizational annual goals, establish annual program team goals and strategies to achieve them.
- Lead the strengthening of new debate and speech offerings, expand the Middle School Public Forum debate league, and oversee the rollout of Debate En Español.
- In collaboration with the Executive Director, develop new professional development debate opportunities for local businesses, school districts, and corporations.

Coaching & Management

- Manage and coach a team of 5-6 direct reports, including hiring, onboarding, bi-weekly 1:1's, and annual reviews.
- Provide strategic direction to ensure team members achieve all duties and goals assigned, including regular check-in meetings.

- Build a cohesive team that works well collaboratively and can excel individually.
- Manage and coach Program Staff to effectively support a caseload of schools/coaches/debate teams (i.e. site visits, email, phone, and other communications, etc.).
- Empower and encourage team members to pursue professional development opportunities to improve and enhance their contribution to the team and themselves.
- Advocate for the needs of the Program Team and ensure they are supported and properly equipped to perform their duties.

Data Collection, Analysis, Quality, Evaluation, and Reporting

- Identify and recommend key programmatic indicators and outcomes.
- Manage the collection and organization of data to evaluate and measure program outcomes and impact (e.g. tournament reporting, technical assistance tracking, surveys, stakeholder feedback, etc.).
- Utilize and interpret data for program and process evaluation and decision-making so as to make recommendations for continuous improvements.
- Translate findings from outcomes, survey data, and stakeholder feedback into actionable insights.

Project Management

- In collaboration with the Executive Director, set and manage program budgets.
- Work with CPS staff on finances and funding for debate, including the management of our vendor status and program expenditures by CPS.
- Oversee and support the recruitment, training, experience, and retention of all program stakeholders, including students, coaches, and volunteers.
- Oversee the planning and delivery of the annual Chicago Debate Summer Institute (CDSI).
- Oversee the planning and effective delivery of all tournaments. (i.e. tabulation, scheduling, sites, meals, tournament registration, preparation of materials, training of students, coaches, judges, use of Tabroom website, etc.).

Collaboration

- Maintain principal responsibility for our partner relationship with CPS staff, including Academic Competitions and School Principals.
- Recruit and onboard new schools and teachers to the debate league.
- Explore new community outreach efforts to expand program partnership opportunities and relationships with university debate teams, urban debate leagues (including NAUDL), and other partners for support and involvement.
- Ensure that program outcomes and information requests are disseminated to internal and external organizational partners (e.g. CPS, NAUDL, Development Team, etc.).
- Participate in the development of grant proposals and reports, as needed.
- Participate in Development meetings and events, as needed (e.g. Tournament Tours, Donor Site Visits, etc.).
- Prepare Program reports and participate in quarterly board meetings.

Other duties as assigned.

Core Competencies

- Demonstrated ability to work at a high pace, prioritize multiple assignments, communicate about challenges, plan, and, most importantly, follow through to meet deadlines and objectives.
- Ability to remain flexible and adapt to changing needs and priorities.
- Problem-solving and critical thinking: Ability to break down tasks into manageable sections to make informed decisions to tackle a larger problem.
- In-depth knowledge and understanding of how to lead and mentor a team of young professionals.
- Ability to perceive and resolve a gap between a present situation and a desired goal.
- Ability to track and interpret data for decision-making and program and process evaluation.
- Strong interpersonal skills with an ability to work independently and collaboratively in a diverse team environment.
- Exceptional organizational skills with close attention to detail.
- Must have the utmost integrity and an ability to process, protect and exercise discretion in handling confidential information and materials.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required. Master's or higher preferred.
- Previous debate experience is not required but strongly preferred.
- A minimum of 5-10 years of relevant professional work experience in debate, college access or success, teaching, or other related educational areas.
 - Experience with case management techniques is desired.
- A minimum of 2 years of management experience with direct reports.
- Strong experience using data to achieve programmatic outcomes and demonstrate impact, including survey design and analysis.
- Experience as a teacher or direct experience working with teachers, curriculum, and public school districts.
- Chicago Public School or Urban public school experience is a plus.
- Experience with curriculum design is also a plus.
- Extensive computer skills, including Microsoft & Google Suite products.

Characteristics

- A strong work ethic and commitment to Chicago Debates' mission.
- Enterprising, outgoing communication style that draws people to our mission.
- Leadership and motivational skills.
- An evaluative approach and lens to ensure continuous program quality controls.
- Positive, solution-oriented approach in a team working toward common goals.
- Strong cultural competency in operating with a diverse population with various needs and challenges and communication styles.
- Entrepreneurial-minded, a self-starter, creative, and forward thinker.

COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement

- Chicago Debates works in partnership with Chicago Public Schools. Much of that work requires in-person activities inside school buildings and in direct contact with students. All Chicago Debates employees are required to be fully vaccinated and boosted (as applicable) against COVID-19. If you cannot receive the vaccine for medical or religious reasons, you may request approval for an accommodation supported by proper documentation.

Compensation

Salary Range: \$70,000 - \$85,000. Salary is to be determined based on experience and skills. Full-time employees are eligible for health, dental, and vision insurance, Retirement, PTO, Professional Development Allowance, Sick Days, and Holidays. As a member of the Program Team, you would also be eligible for compensatory time and travel reimbursement for work-related meetings. Chicago Debates is seeking a commitment of at least two years.

To Apply

Submit a cover letter, resume, and salary requirements to Anthony Bolden, Executive Director at abolden@chicagodebates.org. **Cover letters without salary requirements will not be considered.**

Hiring Process

The position will begin as soon as **March 1, 2023**, pending the candidate's availability. Qualified candidates must be available for the following:

- A Round 1 group interview on **Thursday, February 2, 2023**.
- Candidates who advance to a Round 2 interview should be available on **February 7, 2023**.
- Candidates who advance to a Round 3 interview should be available between **February 14 & 16, 2023**.

Chicago Debates is an equal-opportunity employer.