

Position Description

Position	High School Policy Debate – Head Coach
Organization	University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
Location	Chicago, Illinois – Hyde Park neighborhood
Reporting Relationship	Reports to the High School Dean of Students
Position Start Date	August 1, 2023

School Background

At the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, students experience a world-class educational journey. Founded in 1896 by John Dewey as a place for educators to develop and explore novel approaches to pedagogy and curriculum, Lab continues to provide excitement and imagination in learning to this day. Academic rigor, experiential learning, and intellectual discourse are hallmarks of a Lab education. Families who choose Lab care deeply about curiosity, inquiry, and creativity. No less than scholarship, Lab’s mission prioritizes honoring diversity and exhibiting kindness. We are committed to building and supporting a teaching and learning community where young people see aspects of their backgrounds and identities reflected around them, where they feel a deep sense of belonging, and where they discover and use their voices to full effect. The culminating experience of this four-divisional journey is University High School, or U-High, boasting 625 diverse and inspiring students. For students learning at U-High is a stimulating and rigorous experience, and yet one that can be tailored to a student’s unique interests and needs. More information is available at: <https://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/about-lab>.

Position Summary

The Head Debate Coach leads the Laboratory School’s high school (U-High) **policy debate** program, with the support of the Assistant Coach. This person provides most administrative leadership for the program and must be comfortable coaching at both the entry-level for novices, as well as an advanced level for varsity students. This person will balance supporting individual/pair progress and success while simultaneously fostering a culture of improvement and developing a team ethos. Both coaches are expected to travel with the team to attend local and national debate tournaments. At tournaments both coaches provide feedback and coaching to students and judge debates per the requirements of the tournament. This person communicates frequently and professionally with the Travel Coordinator, the Director of Finance, the Manager of Procurement Services, the High School Dean of Students, the Secretary in the high school Dean of Students’ office, and others. This person supervises an Assistant Coach who is typically responsible for the entry-level coaching and support tasks; not the administrative. Mature, responsive, and responsible student interaction is central to this

role, along with a commitment to upholding the school's policies and procedures, including attending required trainings (e.g. Title IX). This person meets regularly (2-3x/weekly, in person) with individual and small groups of debate team students and leads after school debate team practices. This person is responsible for managing the debate budget and maintaining frequent communication with the Dean of Students around the tournament schedule (keeping in mind both the number of absences from school, as well as the cost to families), and any student or team concerns that arise at any point.

Key Responsibilities

The successful candidate for Head Debate Coach will be a collaborative and attentive leader who brings previous policy debate experience, strong emotional intelligence, and demonstrated success in fostering a climate of inclusion and belonging with high school age students.

Administrative

- Must attend practices, tournaments, meetings, etc. in person
- Obtain necessary parental permission, insurance and school participation forms from students' families
- Communicate in a timely manner with the Manager of Procurement Services and the Secretary in the Dean of Students' office in order for tournament registration fees to be paid
- Communicate in a timely manner with the Travel Coordinator in order to maximize securing reasonable flight and hotel rates for tournaments
- Work with the Dean of Students in the appointment, evaluation, and dismissal of the Assistant Coach
- Have frequent meetings with the Assistant Coach to coordinate coaching methods at different levels; assign duties
- Conform to Laboratory Schools' financial policies (i.e. ordering supplies, reimbursable expenses, etc)
- Ensure that safety and school handbook policies are understood and upheld by students (e.g. enforcing curfew while traveling)
- Report tournament outcomes to the Dean of Students
- Maintain tournament expense records and submit expenses for reimbursement and billing to families within 5 days of returning from a tournament
- Regularly communicate with Debate families with updates about the team's progress, travel permissions, itineraries, estimated costs, etc.
- Submit recommendations for the schedule for the next school year in June of each year
- Collaborate and effectively communicate with students, the Assistant Coach, debate families, faculty, staff, and administrators to promote the best interests of the U-High Policy Debate program and to continue to build and develop the program

Debate Coaching

- Attend after school practices in person (2-3 times per week, after school)
- Plan, conduct and supervise policy debate practices and drills to reinforce and assess skill development
- Stay informed on rules, procedures and judging standards for policy debate tournaments
- Foster skills in research, organization and filing of evidence for building cases

- Read students' arguments, cases and evidence to assess for convincing messages
- Nurture novice students while challenging experienced students
- Set standards required for students to be entered into tournaments and determine best pairings for each competition
- Determine which tournaments to attend based on students' skills and which tournaments will provide the best debate experience for our students
- Review judge evaluations and motivate students to constantly improve
- Assume responsibility for conduct of students at tournaments
- Accompany and supervise the team to and from all tournaments (generally 12-14 weekends per year)
- Assess strengths and weaknesses of the program to improve the program from year to year
- Maintain records of the team and individual accomplishments

Required Qualifications

- A bachelor's degree
- Previous high school or college **policy debate experience**
- A driver's license and willingness to be screened to receive approval to drive a Lab minibus for local tournaments (up to 3 hours away)
- Ability and availability to work nights and weekends, including frequent travel

Preferred Qualifications

- Previous high school **policy debate coaching** experience

Terms of Employment

Employment is on a conditional basis pending completion of a state and national background check. Re-appointment for each subsequent year is possible with positive review/evaluation.

This is a contract position over 9 months that is paid a stipend which is dictated by the Lab faculty collective bargaining agreement. This is not a full-time position and is not benefits eligible. Additional compensation is paid for weekend and/or overnight travel and judging obligations.

Required Application Documents

- Resume
- Cover Letter
- Three Professional References Contact Information, at least one must be from the policy debate world

Contact Information

For additional information, or to apply with a cover letter, resume, and three professional references, please contact Ana Campos, High School Dean of Students, at acampos@ucls.uchicago.edu.