

"TEACHER YOU" TRAINING INSTITUTE

Position: Founding Chief Academic Officer

Location: New York, NY

Background

The "**Teacher YOU**" Training Institute is a groundbreaking Masters Degree program in the field of urban education which represents a radically different approach to the preparation of teachers.

The newly-launched, evolving, and yet-to-be-named Institute is the result of an unprecedented collaboration between visionaries in public K-12 education, public higher education, and the non-profit community. Specifically, the program was conceived by the founders of three of the nation's top non-profit charter management organizations – Achievement First, KIPP, and Uncommon Schools – who collectively observe that traditional teacher preparation programs are not training and supplying enough of the quality teachers needed to provide transformative educational experiences for urban students. They are united by the conviction that teacher quality is the number one predictor of student achievement. The lack of great teachers for our neediest students is the greatest obstacle to closing our nation's shameful achievement gap.

These leaders sought a strong and innovative partner in higher education to host and help design a pioneer degree program designed to alleviate this talent dilemma and found senior administrators at New York City's Hunter College who were eager to contribute to a solution. Finally, leading philanthropists Larry and Amy Robbins, along with NYC's Robin Hood Foundation, shared the vision of this compelling model and provided essential operating support.

The result is a fully-funded program and an evolving curriculum which uses innovative methods to model, teach and reinforce the attitudes, skills, and content knowledge required to be a great teacher. These techniques are based upon the notable and proven success of Achievement First, KIPP, and Uncommon Schools, each of which operate on the frontier of U.S. K-12 public education in under-resourced communities.

The mission of the Institute is to teach teachers how to develop in all students the academic skills and strength of character needed to succeed in college and life. Our hope is that this new generation of continuously-improving, results-focused teachers – and the dramatic, measurable success of their students – will inspire transformational change in teacher education and student achievement, which, in turn, will help build the better tomorrow we all believe is possible.

The Program

The Institute has worked with Hunter College to launch a two-year program that begins with certification and culminates in a Master's degree from Hunter. The dynamic 450-hour curriculum is delivered by a team which includes the best teachers and leaders from the highest performing charter schools (who are appointed adjunct faculty members by Hunter) as well as several top-notch Hunter professors. While the content and course methodology are being designed in collaboration with Hunter College, the curriculum represents a new direction within the School of Education and reflects a significant commitment of energy and intellectual capital from the Dean of the School of Education. The approach is based largely on the combined practices of teachers in Achievement First, KIPP, and Uncommon Schools. Similarly, the Institute's admissions process and requirements differ somewhat from that of the mainstream program. Finally, the program is designed to accommodate and complement the rigorous schedules of public school teachers who, in order to earn their degrees, must demonstrate actual in-class student growth and achievement.

Despite the fact that curriculum and program design are ongoing, the Institute's pilot cohort has been recruited and coursework for these students began in July 2007. Comprised of 40 promising teachers mainly from the three founding charter management organizations, this pilot cohort will continue in the program over the next two years. They will be joined in the fall by a new cohort of approximately 100 participants. Ultimately, the goal is to serve an annual cohort of 500 public charter and district school teachers which will, in turn, mean an enrollment of 1,000 public school teachers at any one time.

The Organization

The Institute is a non-profit entity which is formally separate from Hunter College. It is a start-up that will open and operate much in the spirit of Achievement First, KIPP and Uncommon Schools: optimistic, entrepreneurial, focused on excellence, and full of urgency about bringing about meaningful change for its students and the world around them. Much like its name, curriculum, and program design, the Institute's organizational structure is a work in progress. Several recent developments include:

- *Senior-level staffing:* The Institute has identified its founding Chief Executive Officer and will make a public announcement in January 2008. Additionally an outstanding Chief Operating Officer has been hired and is already on board.
- *Growing pipeline:* The leadership of the New York City Department of Education has indicated its intention to direct as many as 350 of its NYC Teaching Fellows to this program annually and the Institute is exploring partnerships with historically black colleges and universities in hopes of establishing itself as a selective option for graduates.
- *Numerous systems still in development:* The Institute's accounting, for instance, is being handled by staff at the Robin Hood Foundation until the 501c3 is completed.

Having captured the attention of the academic, philanthropic, and education reform communities and established itself as a cutting-edge alternative to traditional professional development for teachers, the Institute must now build its core. It must crystallize its curriculum and academic strategy, fine tune its operations, determine how best to leverage its considerable resources, and build its team in order to have the greatest possible impact on teachers and their students.

The Search

The fact that the Institute was able to launch successfully in the absence of much formal infrastructure is largely a reflection of a small team of passionate and mission-driven individuals from each of the various organizations involved who are working beyond the specific scope of their own job descriptions. The job description of the founding Chief Academic Officer (CAO) will be similarly fluid. Although the CAO will have an opportunity to shape, clarify, and solidify the curricular and programmatic components of the Institute, there is no precedent for this model so there is no existing "road map." Therefore, the Institute seeks a self-directed, take-charge leader to implement the next exciting phase of the program's evolution -- one in which it will build upon the foundation laid by its groundbreaking launch.

The Position

Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Curriculum

The CAO will lead the ongoing design, planning, delivery, and assessment of the Institute's curriculum.

Programming

The CAO will oversee and coordinate all academic programming and related support services for both students and instructors in the Institute.

Talent

The CAO must identify, recruit, supervise, evaluate and retain a high quality faculty at the Institute.

Standards

The CAO must foster a culture of high standards, commitment, and urgency within the Institute.

Assessment

The CAO must measure the learning outcomes of both graduates *and their students* and assess the need for related changes in the program to ensure that Teacher YOU realizes its full potential as a premier teacher training program.

Collaboration

The CAO will work with a diverse group of stakeholders, including the founding CMOs, Hunter College, the State accrediting agency and other prospective partners.

Requisite Skills & Experience

This is an outstanding and unique opportunity to play an integral role in public education reform. Therefore, first and foremost, the CAO must share the founders' sense of urgency about the need to improve teacher training and student achievement.

Additionally, candidates for the position *must* have:

- The ability to recognize transformational, results-oriented teaching;
- Demonstrable and tested experience in curriculum development;

- Tested experience in an urban school environment or, minimally, demonstrated commitment to the improvement of public education;
- A high level of hope, gratitude, grit, confidence, decisiveness, social intelligence, empathy and enthusiasm;
- Excellent organization, project, and people management skills; ability to implement programs, manage details, and work independently; ability to develop, revise, and implement procedures and systems; and ability to manage multiple projects with multiple deadlines and set priorities accordingly;
- Experience in meeting rigorous standards of excellence, definitely as an employee and ideally as a manager;
- Persuasive strategic communication skills and the ability to lead meetings, deliver presentations, give speeches, and represent Teacher YOU to external audiences;
- Proven leadership skills with the ability to inspire, develop and evaluate a diverse team;
- The ability to thrive in a fast-paced, unstructured, entrepreneurial environment without formal training or orientation;
- Sharp intellect;
- Creative problem-solving skills;
- A sense of humor; and
- A minimum of a Bachelor's Degree.

Compensation

Teacher YOU offers competitive salaries commensurate with experience. Full benefits package offered.

Ideal Start Date

On or, ideally, before March 15, 2008

Application Process

The Search Committee is soliciting nominations and expressions of interest **immediately**. Nominations or applications (with current resume and letter of interest) should be sent electronically and **ideally before January 15th, 2008 to:**

Monisha Lozier

President, Cobbe Place Consulting

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The founders of Teacher YOU have a proven commitment to diversity and actively seek a diverse pool of candidates in this search.