



Director of Student Programs

*Fall 2021 | Location: Greater Boston**

WPS seeks a Director of Student Programs to join a dynamic team and lead the research, design, and delivery of WPS's student programs, with an initial focus on the College Transition Program in the summer of 2022. This role is ideal for a student-centered leader excited to take an R&D approach to creating meaningful and impactful learning experiences for students from historically marginalized backgrounds. Strong candidates will bring entrepreneurial energy, intellectual boldness and a passion to support students navigate their academic and life journey.

ABOUT WPS

WPS is a non-profit education organization committed to honoring students and educators. We believe that teaching and learning are the most transformative of human endeavors and that this is especially true when students are invested in their own learning and have the agency and support to embark on a journey of self-actualization.

Building on this philosophy, WPS seeks to design and pilot innovative programs to serve students from high need communities. WPS's goals for our student programs are two fold. WPS seeks to deepen students' competencies to become deliberate and collaborative thinkers, while also helping them develop a constellation of highly integrated non-cognitive skills. Over the next year, WPS is also beginning to explore new student programming to pilot that aligns with our mission. The College Transition Program, WPS's first student program, is a six-week summer program designed to help First Gen high school graduates successfully and confidently navigate the transition to college and beyond.

WPS's student programs, including the College Transition Program, have the potential to serve as labs to adapt, apply and iterate WPS's learning principles within a student context. Our student programs always seek to meaningfully support the growth, development and life trajectory of the students we serve. WPS is based on a campus located near Boston (in Newton, MA) with access to public transportation (MBTA Green Line).

A set of learning principles guides the design and execution of all WPS programs. WPS believes that learning is most powerful when it is:

- **Participant-Centered:** Learning experiences are based on theory that places learners at the center, playing an active role rather than being presented to and requires participants to share their perspectives, engage in activities, and be accountable to their peers by fully engaging.
- **Inductive:** Learners draw inferences and make meaning for themselves based on analysis of problems, moving from the specific to the generalized principles "organically," which strengthens the connection between lived experience and theory.



- **Intensive in Peer-to-Peer-Exchange:** Learners clarify their thinking by interrogating their perspectives, beliefs, and assumptions through deliberate debate and exchange of ideas across lines of difference.
- **Metacognitive & Mindset Shifting:** An intentional space and process for self-reflection and analysis of one's thinking and learning, rather than just 'doing', allows for participants to make meaning of a given learning experience.
- **At the Nexus of Theory and Practice:** Program design and pedagogical approaches should be grounded in academic research across a range of disciplines and sectors; learning experiences should be designed in ways that allow learners to better understand the principles/theory/research that undergird the content or skills they are exploring.
- **Able to move the "Heart and Mind":** Attends to social, emotional and cognitive development, such that participants are transformed in how they view themselves, their practice, and the world around them.

WPS utilizes a set of pedagogies with both educators and students that reflect the above learning principles, including: the case study method, experiential-based learning, hands-on learning, discourse-based approaches, field-based research projects.

ABOUT THE ROLE

The Director of Student Programs will oversee WPS's efforts to conceive, design, deliver, and refine WPS's student programming, building on the work done to-date through the WPS College Transition Program. This individual will oversee a team of seasonal staff, including instructors, peer mentors and interns, to plan and run WPS's summer program beginning in 2022. To this work, you will bring leadership, instructional, and curriculum development expertise and a passion for innovative learning that is student-driven, inquiry-based, and cross-disciplinary. The program is still in the pilot phase, aiming to explore inductive approaches to learning and cultivate student capacity to successfully navigate college. Students are equipped with the skills to overcome challenges common to college students, particularly First Gen students. Success in this role will require genuine thought partnership and ongoing collaboration with WPS staff, seasonal staff, program alumni and students. The Director of Student Programs will play a significant role in shaping how WPS expands our student programs in ways that align to our mission. The Director of Student Programs reports to the Chief Program Officer.

Responsibilities

Program Design

- Work closely with the Chief Program Officer to create a strategic approach for WPS's student programs that aligns with WPS's mission, values, and learning principles. Develop student program learning goals that build upon insights from previous program pilots and serve the target audience of students.



- Work with the Executive Director to establish a budget to support delivery of student program pilots, including the College Transition Program.
- Develop program partnerships that leverage external experts in the fields of financial literacy, college persistence, STEM and social emotional health.
- Oversee the hiring, training, and support of consultants and seasonal staff to pilot student programming, including the College Transition Program.
- Work closely with the Executive Director, Manager of K12 Partnerships, and Operations Manager to engage local school partners and manage a student recruitment process via Salesforce.com.
- Work closely with other WPS staff to develop a strategy to engage and support student alumni.
- Work closely with the Executive Director and Operations Manager to design operational systems and processes to support student programs, including the use of facilities, procurement, transportation, meals, health and safety, etc.

Program Delivery

- Collaborate with other WPS staff to provide oversight for all aspects of student program delivery, including content development, program schedules, facilities, logistics, technology, communications, and program evaluation.
- Serve as a host and provide on-site support for WPS in-person programs.
- Establish, model and promote a climate of inclusion, respect, and collaboration among staff and program participants.
- Host potential nominating schools and other visitors as needed.
- Track key metrics, document learnings and support evaluation consultants to capture feedback and learnings from program participants.
- Lead and leverage WPS staff, peer mentors, and program alumni to execute the student engagement and support strategy.

Partner Collaboration

- Work closely with the Manager of K12 Partnerships to grow and maintain a network of partners at local high schools and non-profit organizations.



- Work closely with the Director of Program Partnerships to identify, assess and explore partnerships with non-profit organizations, higher-education institutions, researchers, and subject-matter experts to co-design, pilot and deliver student programming.
- Participate in external conferences, forums, and networks to share and gather learnings from mission-aligned providers of student programming.

Desired Mindsets, Experience, and Qualifications

- Have a combined 10+ years experience in program leadership, teaching and curriculum development at the college or secondary school level
- Hold a Bachelor's degree; advanced degree in Education or a related field strongly preferred
- Evidence expertise in researching, developing and facilitating student-centered academic programming that promotes critical thinking, collaborative learning, and self-reflection
- Have direct experience in and commitment to working with students from historically marginalized backgrounds, including first-generation college students
- Possess knowledge of best practices related to first-year transitions to college for historically marginalized groups of students
- Knowledge and experience supporting delivery of non-academic supports in the areas of mental health, social emotional learning, executive functioning, financial literacy, etc.
- Demonstrate the ability to operationalize aspirational design concepts into prioritized and organized sets of plans, tasks, and deliverables
- Have a sense of intellectual curiosity and commitment to continuous learning
- Enjoy and comfortably engage with high school students, their families and schools
- Lead collaboratively and inspire mutual respect and willingness to learn from others
- Enjoy working in a generative and collaborative manner with thought-partners
- Value differing perspectives and learning from others; welcome and share feedback with grace, demonstrate self-reflection and humility
- Exercise comfort, flexibility, and adaptivity in a start-up environment that requires team members to take on a range of responsibilities, contribute on multiple fronts, and adeptly navigate change

WPS is an equal-opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status.

APPLY

The salary for this role is competitive. To apply for this position, please submit your resume and cover letter [here](#). We welcome you to visit wpsinstitute.org to learn more about WPS.