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## THE URBAN DEBATE ADVOCACY PRO-BONO FELLOWSHIP

The National Association for Urban Debate Leagues (NAUDL) invites associates at your firm to undertake a full-time pro bono Urban Debate Advocacy Fellowship in the coming year. Associates who are deferring their start dates can make a valuable contribution in the interim to the NAUDL and urban debate. Urban debate is a highly-effective program for diversifying the pipeline to the legal profession and dramatically improving academic achievement.

The Urban Debate Advocacy Fellow will provide legal advice and assistance to local Urban Debate Leagues (UDLs), run legal education seminars with UDL students, prepare submissions to federal and local governments on matters of public interest, and conduct other legal work, including drafting documents.

**Background:** The NAUDL, the national leadership organization of the urban debate movement, seeks to facilitate participation in organized debate activities for as many urban students as possible. It does so by building new UDLs, promoting UDL sustainability and institutionalization, expanding the capacity of existing UDLs, and connecting UDLs to form a cohesive Urban Debate Network. Over 37,000 students from 400 schools in 24 cities across the country have participated in UDLs.

Urban students of color and women with great creativity and potential for future careers in the law unfortunately face many challenges in learning the communication and academic skills they need to enter law school and start legal careers. To counter these challenges, many firms have turned to academic debate in urban schools as an effective mechanism to open a larger, more diverse pipeline of students who are interested in, and well-prepared for, law school and legal practice.

The Urban Debate Advocacy Fellow would provide pro-bono legal assistance to help bring debate to more students and more urban schools. By reaching more students nationally, urban debate can train a generation of urban students of color and women to excel in school and become interested in law, policy making, and argumentation. Now is a crucial time for the expansion of urban debate, as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the forthcoming budget provide an opportunity for urban debate to garner unprecedented support as an innovative solution for closing the achievement gap and training America's future workforce.

The Urban Debate Advocacy Fellow will work with the NAUDL's senior leadership to craft strategies and proposals related to the stimulus. The length of the fellowship can vary with

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*"We will soon see, thanks in large part to urban debate, an increasing number of talented, hard-working, and highly successful minority students matriculating at law schools and entering the legal profession."*

*- Laurence Tribe, Professor at Harvard Law School and former debater*

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availability, ranging from several months to a whole year. The Fellow will undertake the following projects:

**Legal Research and Writing:** The specific legal expertise of the Fellow can be applied to researching and drafting documents related to rules, regulations, goals, and a general understanding of all components of the public interest concerns related to education funding through the ARRA and the federal and state budgets. This work will focus on the NAUDL engaging decision makers and making proposals effectively.

**Non-profit Governance Issues:** The Fellow will provide legal assistance to local UDLs who are in the process of formally organizing as non-profit organizations. The Fellow will coordinate with local Advisory Boards to identify the needs and goals for their organizations as they move forward and to develop a governance structure that will allow organizations to continue to grow and expand their services. This will include guidance on incorporation, obtaining tax-exempt status, and resolving various corporate governance and procedural issues. It will also include drafting funding and affiliation agreements and documenting policies and procedures that govern the relationships between the NAUDL, local UDLs, and local school systems.

**Awareness:** The Fellow can help craft strategies to increase awareness of urban debate among thought leaders on diversity issues in the legal profession, government decision makers, and school leaders. In many cases, local school leaders, businesses, and politicians have supported debate, but this support has not been made public or leveraged to raise new investment. In other cases, leaders have priorities aligned with debate but do not know that urban debate exists as a proven solution.

**Policy Development:** The Advocacy Fellow can apply specialized expertise toward developing policy documents and proposals related to urban debate and funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Title I, Perkins, the Innovation Fund, State Stabilization Funds, the Workforce Investment Act, and other funding sources. Policy development entails identifying the requirements and priorities of funding sources and aligning urban debate submissions with these guidelines. Depending on the development of the stimulus and the budget, the Fellow can support efforts to craft policy statements for proposed initiatives on the local, state, or federal level. This will include through the Department of Education, Department of Labor, and state and local education authorities. In all cases, aiding with research, proposals, strategies, and communications will be a crucial role.

If you are interested in becoming an Urban Debate Advocacy Fellow, please contact Eric Tucker at the NAUDL at [EricTucker@urbandebate.org](mailto:EricTucker@urbandebate.org) or 312-427-0152.