



## SEARCH FOR CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

*Latin American Leadership Academy seeks a world-class professional with exceptional operational, managerial, strategic and analytical skills to complete our founding leadership team. The ideal candidate is -like us- on a personal mission to have a dramatic positive impact in Latin America, and is ready to join us as we take LALA from a young, innovative leadership development institution to a continental force for good.*

### About the Academy

Latin American Leadership Academy (LALA) seeks to promote sustainable economic development and strengthen democratic governance in Latin America by developing a new generation of leaders. We aim to develop the Latin American Nelson Mandela, the Latin American Bill Gates, the Latin American Ruth Bader Ginsburg - and to do so by the hundreds.

LALA creates international and socioeconomically diverse cohorts of the most promising graduating high school students who have demonstrated an unshakeable commitment to social change. These students then attend LALA's eighteen-month program blending entrepreneurial leadership, a liberal arts education, and social and emotional learning. The program also connects them to mentors, resources, and opportunities. We envision a diverse continental ecosystem that collaborates across countries, sectors and socioeconomic differences to bring shared prosperity to Latin America.

At this early stage of our journey, we are looking for exceptional professionals who share our belief that the key to transforming our continent lies in empowering its future change-makers to solve their communities' biggest challenges, and who share our commitment to make this happen no matter the odds, no matter the obstacles.

### Position Overview

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) will provide the leadership, management and vision necessary to build sustainable, efficient and scalable operations to achieve LALA's mission. You will ensure that LALA develops proper operational controls, administrative and reporting procedures, and people systems to effectively grow the organization and ensure financial strength and operating efficiency. You will accomplish these objectives through a constructive and energetic style, constantly guided by LALA's mission, objectives and values. In particular, the role includes the following responsibilities:

#### ***Strategic Planning:***

- Design, plan, implement and oversee LALA's overall business operations strategy crucial for our growth and success.
- Work with the Founders to create LALA's financial sustainability strategy. You will bring the financial and operational evidence and arguments to choose the best strategy.
- Discover and support growth opportunities for the business; represent LALA at highest-priority engagements and cultivate powerful partnerships to build our brand globally and propel our mission.
- Provide strategic direction for our business model as a member of the Executive Team.

#### ***Overseeing Overall Operations:***

- Manage LALA's various functions including Finance & Accounting, HR, IT, Legal, Operations, Sales and Administration and ensure operational excellence and cost efficiencies.
- Develop and manage operational budgets across all aspects of the Academy's work; manage our strategic assets.



- Build the frameworks and procedures for legal compliance, financial projections, budgeting, resource allocation, financial audits and organization-wide risk mitigation.
- Establish programs, policies and procedures that promote company culture and vision, and attract, develop and retain the best global talent.
- Actively promote and support employee development; build a global talent pipeline for our growth.
- Oversee acquisition, development or rental of LALA's campuses and related infrastructure; supervise procurement and management of large service contracts.
- Oversee the measurement and effectiveness of all processes internal and external; provide timely, accurate and complete reports on the operating condition, business performance and challenges of the organization.

### Profile of Ideal Candidate

- **Purpose-aligned:** Passion for education, social impact, economic development and social justice.
- **Proven Ops Chops:** At least 6 years' experience in Operations/ Consulting/ Management in fast-paced business environments with a track record of operational excellence. Deep insight into financial sustainability trends in lean educational start-ups is a plus.
- **Masterminding Systems that Scale:** Experience in strategic planning and building systems from the ground up with a willingness to do what it takes to get the job done.
- **Biz Whizz:** Excellent business acumen and in-depth knowledge of different business functions such as Finance, Accounting, HR, IT, Sales, etc.
- **Quant:** Strategic and analytical thinker comfortable working with financial and economic concepts; ability to analyze and interpret data and metrics and communicate them easily.
- **Clairvoyant:** Good understanding of analytical and predictive models and tools, particularly CRM software (Salesforce) and school-related measures.
- **Nerd:** Enjoys taking on complex challenges and solving problems; up-to-date with tech trends.
- **Swiss-Army Knife:** Analytical, structured problem-solver who is also a creative, out-of-the-box ideator.
- **Master Communicator:** Communicates ideas and rationale clearly both verbally and in writing. Articulates our vision to key stakeholders, using language relevant to their context.
- **Finisher:** Derives pleasure from building systems, accomplishing goals and seeing projects to completion.
- **Hustler:** A self-driven, hardworking and inspiring leader who sets an example with an outstanding work ethic.
- **Poet:** Great people and relationship building skills; genuinely invests in the development of people.
- **Global Local:** Culturally-sensitive and can manage people locally as well as across borders and different cultures, particularly LatAm and U.S.
- MBA or Master's Degree in a relevant field from a top global institution preferred.
- Fluent in Spanish with an excellent command of Business English. Portuguese is a plus.

**Location:** Medellín, Colombia

**Application Process:** Candidates should submit a CV and cover letter (in English) by email to [LALACareers@gmail.com](mailto:LALACareers@gmail.com). The submission should include contact information for at least four professional references (*one direct supervisor, one peer, one direct report, and one peer you've had a difficult working relationship with*). Interviews and background checks will be conducted after screening your application.



## MEET THE FOUNDERS



**Diego Ontaneda Benavides** is the Co-Founder and CEO of Latin American Leadership Academy. Diego brings a hybrid background in entrepreneurship, business and education to his work. He started working at 15 as a private tutor, and launched a tutoring company when he graduated high school. He has worked in strategy consulting at McKinsey & Company in San Francisco, and as Chief of Staff at African Leadership Academy (ALA) in Johannesburg. At ALA, Diego developed a keen interest in the potential of education and leaders to fundamentally change society, and decided to return to Latin America to build Latin American Leadership Academy.

Diego holds an MBA from Stanford's Graduate School of Business, where he received the Certificate in Public Management and Social Innovation, was awarded both the Miller Social Change Leadership Award and the Impact Design Immersion Fellowship, and was on the leadership teams of the GSB Social Innovation Club, the GSB Academic Committee, and the GSB Student Alumni Committee. Diego graduated *magna cum laude* and *Phi Beta Kappa* with a BA in Political Economy from Williams College. He is originally from Lima, Peru.



**David Baptista** is the Co-Founder and Director of Teaching and Learning of Latin American Leadership Academy. David's passion is helping students develop the essential dispositions, skills, habits and values that support lifelong learning and wellness. His quest to transform education has taken him on a 15-year journey. David has taught STEAM, philosophy, history and theater at the International School of Curitiba; he has trained teachers and consulted for schools across Brazil and he has led retreats for the Posse Foundation. David has also developed innovative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curricula, and helped build innovative assessment tools at Lectica.

David triple-majored in Philosophy, Physics and History at Tufts University, with honors in each major. Cognitive science sparked his passion for education and he is broadly interested in understanding the impact of self-regulatory practices in multicultural contexts.

When he met Diego Ontaneda Benavides and heard about the LALA dream, he fell in love with the potential this institution held to transform educational practice at scale for an entire continent. After two pilot programs in 2017, they founded LALA together in 2018.

**The Founders'** work was recently validated when they were named Echoing Green Fellows and recognized as two of the "leading emerging social entrepreneurs in the world" in June 2018.