

Virginia School-University Partnership Student Leadership Conference 2016-2017

For twenty-six years, The Virginia School-University Partnership has sponsored an Annual Student Leadership Conference. This very popular conference, which was attended last year by over 350 students and faculty members from over 40 different high schools from around the state of Virginia, is provided at NO CHARGE to all VSUP member high schools as a benefit of membership in VSUP.

All VSUP high schools are encouraged to send a team of student leaders to this year's Student Leadership Conference, which is scheduled for Thursday, November 10, 2016, at The Emmet Street Holiday Inn, Charlottesville, Virginia, and is absolutely FREE to all participants from VSUP member high schools.

The theme of this year's conference is "Dare to Dream" and the goal of the conference is to inspire students to have the strength, courage, persistence, and belief required to turn their dreams into reality. The hope is that participating in the conference will help students develop the skills and knowledge needed to serve as effective leaders of their schools and communities.

The Student Leadership Conference will begin with a Keynote Presentation, "Dare to Dream," which will feature Rohan Murphy, a nationally recognized motivational speaker. The goal of the Keynote Address is to make students feel empowered to pursue their personal ambitions and to have a positive impact on the world around them. Rohan Murphy will tell his life story of growing up with a physical challenge as a way to help students realize that they too can overcome obstacles and accomplish amazing things. The adversity that Rohan has endured and triumphed over will inspire students to believe that anything is possible and motivate them to develop the life skills necessary to achieve their dreams. Rohan's determination, belief in himself, and work-ethic have enabled him to pursue dreams that seemed unattainable and defy the odds with his remarkable accomplishments. Rohan's passion, drive, courage, humor, and humility will touch participants and inspire them to believe in themselves and in their own power to achieve their dreams.

After the Keynote Presentation, all students will be assigned to small groups of approximately 25 students to participate in discussions of topics of interest and/or concern at their schools. These informal small group discussions will be led by seniors who have volunteered to take on this role and who participated in a training session for their role as facilitators before the conference. These small group discussions will give all participants the chance to learn more about each other as well as learn more about the over forty different high schools from across the state of Virginia which will be represented at the conference. The small group discussion sessions will help students grow as leaders by giving them the opportunity to share their experiences and collaborate with other students in coming up with creative solutions to whatever problems their schools might be facing.

During the conference there will also be a Share Fair Assembly during which twelve schools will make a formal presentation about a specific program, activity, or event at their school that they feel is particularly popular and effective. When they register, schools which wish to be considered as one of the twelve presenters at the Share Fair will be asked to provide a description of their topic and make a commitment to submit their proposed presentation two weeks before the conference. The hope is that the Share Fair will give students who prepare these presentations the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their personal skills as leaders as well as give all participants the chance to learn from their peers about programs and activities which they might want to implement in their schools.

We hope that this year's VSUP Student Leadership Conference will enhance all participants' confidence in their own abilities, inspire them to develop the life skills necessary to meet whatever challenges they face, motivate them to be actively involved in their schools, increase their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their educational environment, and encourage them to believe in the possibility that they can accomplish their dreams and make a positive difference as leaders of their schools and communities.

