

The Student Leader

September 2015

VSCA State Office
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New School Year, New Leadership

Depending on your location in Virginia, you are probably finally finding your groove in this new school year. I hope that those of you that are newly elected officers or those that are joining student council for the first time are ready to make this a year that counts.

I hope that you have learned from the student leaders that have come before you, but I also hope that you are ready to embark on your own adventures in SCA.

Along with other representatives from the VSCA, I was able to attend the NASC Conference this summer. It was an amazing experience. I hope that you had the opportunity to gain some new experience to help you in your new role.

November brings many exciting training opportunities for student leaders and advisers. I hope that you will check out the website and attend a session.

Good luck this school year and I hope to see you all soon.

Andrea Vail
VSCA Director

A Letter from the President

President School, Woodgrove High School
Student Representative, Ryan Thomas

As almost every school in the Commonwealth starts the 2015-2016 school year, I would like to take a moment and talk about what the Virginia Student Councils Association has planned for this year. As a dedicated body of student leaders, it is our natural goal to find more leaders that hold our ideals and energy.

This past summer, myself and Reagan Wambler (Secretary) travelled with our schools to Albuquerque, New Mexico for the annual National Association of Student Councils (NASC) Conference, held at Rio Rancho High School. On top of the amazing hospitality and warm welcomes, we were in awe at how large each state delegation was. It was mentioned quite a few times that the proportion of students here was about equal to the size of the state's actual leadership body. It got us thinking that if Minnesota and New York had such large representations, why couldn't we? As we sat down this past July, the officers agreed that a serious recruitment strategy was needed. Our goal is to find and recruit at least 40 new schools to join the Virginia Student Councils Association on top of the previous year's membership. We are currently well on our track, but that doesn't mean we cannot try harder. I encourage each member school to reach out into their district and even neighboring school districts to engage young leaders. In addition to this spike in membership, we would like to see a spike in our own State Convention attendance this coming spring.

Not to toot our own horn, but the schools that are a part of the Virginia Student Councils Association are award winning – seriously. This past year, we saw 21 schools receive the Achievement Award from the VSCA and nine Virginia schools were recipients of the National Council of Excellence Gold Award, given by the NASC. These are outstanding achievements! If we can increase our membership, we can surely increase our award-winning leadership. This year the Achievement Award application (as well as the forms for Convention) will be up on our website circa October 1st. Be sure to find what your school does, document it, and send it in with your registration forms. Speaking of our website, if you are looking for great ideas on projects to do or would simply like to learn more about the VSCA, you can visit us at www.scaleader.org. We have links to the NASC project database, as well as upcoming workshop dates for your region.

One of our newest additions to the VSCA calendar this year is the Elementary and Middle School AND Advisers workshops. Both will be taking place on Friday November 6 in Williamsburg. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people and share new ideas. I cannot wait to see our elementary and middle school leaders there (as well as our amazing advisers!).

As always, if you ever have any questions, comments, or concerns about VSCA, you can direct them towards myself or the state director, Mrs. Andrea Vail. Our contact information is listed within this newsletter as well as on our website. We appreciate your involvement and look forward to another successful year with VSCA.

Sincerely,



Ryan Thomas, VSCA State President

Woodgrove High School – Region 4

VSCA at NASC in New Mexico- Was it all just a dream?

Secretary School, C.D. Hylton High School

Student Representative, Reagan Wampler

Nationals in Albuquerque, New Mexico was a life changing event. Not only do you get to meet leaders just like you from other states, but also other countries too. The President's and Secretary's schools packed bags and headed out early Thursday morning to start an adventure. We made pit stops in Dallas and Chicago, but made it there on time. Finally, we were off to bed dreaming about how amazing tomorrow will be.

The first day of the convention was accelerating. We were dancing and singing on the bus with New York's student council. Once we got to Rio Rancho High School, it was time to get down to business and really learn more about leadership. Our class room was beautifully decorated with all things representing Virginia to make us feel more at home. Then we headed to the court yard to give out pins that represented our state. Finally, it was time to go to the first general session. The first speaker talked about how some leaders put on a front and hide who they really are inside because they feel like no one would like them if they did not. It was a very moving speech that stated the first step of a being a leader is loving who you are inside and out. After that we went to mini sessions about different forms of leadership. One of my favorite leadership sessions was the dancing session. We all learned how to whip and nay nay. Ryan was the best at it. That day, we bonded with a bunch of people from all over. I even recognized some friends from last years convention in Orlando. When it was time to go to the hotel, we were all exhausted.

The next day we watched Ryan, holding our Virginia flag, walk on the main stage representing us as they announced our great state. The speaker following Ryan talked about loving himself, as well, but in a different way. He talked about how he didn't realize he hid himself so much, that his own wife didn't even know who he really was. Once he let his walls down, he became finally became happy. This was a very inspirational message. The last session of this day was the Food Can Drive session. This session showed people working together to make a difference, even with a small pass of a can. Everyone made a long line and passed cans from one person to another until the trucks were full. This representation showed that when one person works with another, they can accomplish big things and truly make a difference. The night ended with the "Illumination" ceremony. Glow sticks were passed around to represent leadership and that we glowed together as one.

As the last day approached, emotions were flowing. We traded all of our t-shirts with the other states and said our goodbyes. We came together on the last general session listening to "This is My Fight Song" hugging each other, swaying to the music. This was the last time we would be together at Rio Rancho. I will never forget the memories that were made at NASC. This was truly a life changing event. And like a dream, the memories will always be near to my heart.

Regional Workshops- Training Close to Home

Region 1- Prince George High School
November 14, 2015 10:00am – 2:00pm

Region 2- Landstown High School
November 21, 2015 9:00am – 4:00pm

Region 3- Courtland High School
November 21, 2015 9:00am – 1:00pm

Region 4- Park View High School
December 5, 2015 10:00am – 2:00pm

Regions 5 & 8- Buckingham County High School
November 14, 2015 10:00am – 3:00pm

\$15/per person for VSCA Member Schools
\$25/per person for Non-Member Schools

Registration Forms Available at
www.scaleader.org

Elementary and Middle School Workshop

This workshop is geared toward our student leaders in grades K-8. It has been brought to our attention that there is a strong desire to provide leadership training to our younger students that may not have the ability to attend our three day VSCA State Convention in the spring. We hope that this 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. format will meet this need. It will be led by former SCA advisor and current elementary school principal, Ms. Alaina Trott. Throughout this dynamic workshop, students will work collaboratively to enhance their leadership skills by answering the following questions that will improve their school and community.

How can we make connections between what we learn in class to our community life?

How do we create and maintain school spirit and morale?

What new activities and traditions do you plan to build memories?

How do we affirm and value our differences?

How do we identify student body concerns and utilize a problem solving model to advocate for ourselves?

How do we promote relationships between students, staff, parents, and business/community members?

How do we give back to our school, community, state, and global world?

Workshop Leader: Ms. Alaina Trott

Date: November 6, 2015

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Advisor's Workshop

The second workshop will be exclusively for advisors. Lou Miller, director of the New Jersey Student Councils Association and SCA advisor for over 20 years will lead this inspiring and informative workshop. Topics that he will address are as follows:

Its Not Just a Dog & Pony Show - what's your mission (do you have one), what are your goals, what is your branding and how do various segments of your school community view it, and where do your activities fit into these things? Take a step back and see your program from the big picture.

Make Your Time Count! - there always seems to be too much to do and too little time to get it all done. Now more than ever, time and stress management is a necessary skill for advisors and student leaders.

Ooops... I Shouldn't Have Done That! - admitting your mistakes (we all make them) is the first step. More important is the next step, which is to learn from your mistakes (and those of others - be ready to share!). Doing so can help you avoid them in the future and can be lots of fun, too!

Tech Smack Down! - it's always a good time for tips and idea sharing for discovering and using technology.

Lessons From The Road - there are so many leadership and life lessons that can be learned from driving cross-county (and back).

Workshop Leader: Mr. Lou Miller

Date: November 6, 2015

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Registration Forms Available at www.scaleader.org