

NATIONAL HISTORY ACADEMY

2018 Report



National History Academy
P.O. Box 2278 | Middleburg, VA 20118
www.HistoryCamp.com | 540.882.4929

OVERVIEW

National History Academy is an innovative new program designed to inspire high school students to understand the foundations of American democracy and the responsibilities of citizenship.

The five-week residential summer program held its first session in 2018 at the Foxcroft School in Middleburg, Virginia. The Journey Through Hallowed Ground (JTHG), a non-profit National Heritage Area, operates the Academy.



Recent studies reveal a shocking lack of knowledge of our constitutional history.

The Academy addresses the current crisis in American civic and historical literacy. A recent report by the National Assessment of Educational

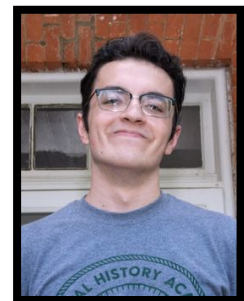
Progress found that of the seven subjects included in the report, high school students scored lowest in their knowledge of US history. Undergraduate history majors have dropped by 34% since 2011, and two-thirds of adults in our country now cannot even name the three branches of government.

The Academy's inaugural session was a resounding success. Over the course of five weeks, our 89 students from across the nation visited 32 historic sites in the JTHG and Washington, DC region, met with more than 20 national leaders, studied three Harvard Business School cases, and engaged in true civil discourse using parliamentary style debates. The combined impact of this experiential, collaborative and participatory program was transformative, resulting in improved critical and creative thinking skills while raising the self-esteem and self-confidence of our students.

National History Academy is poised to play a leading role in promoting history and civic education in the United States. To fulfill this promise, we have begun a \$6,000,000 comprehensive campaign to provide the Academy with a strong financial foundation, establish a scholarship fund, and create additional programs.

It's all about everyone bringing their perspectives to the table because that's what the fabric of the country is built on. Dr. King said it was his dream that this nation would rise up to live out the true meaning of its creed, and we all have a little bit different idea of what that means, but what binds us together is the idea that we can exchange ideas and live on.

-Ben Kellerhals, Surprise, AZ



ABOUT THE STUDENTS

Recruiting Process

The National History Academy partners with the College Board's Student Search Service to identify over 50,000 top-performing students who intend to major in history, law, government, archaeology, and related fields. We then recruit those students through a state-of-the-art "drip marketing" campaign, with the students receiving an email from us every ten days. In addition, filmmaker Ken Burns narrated our promotional video, which has been viewed over 31,000 times to date. In 2018, our recruiting campaign was incredibly effective as 233 students applied, representing 42 states, 2 US Territories and 3 Foreign Countries.

The inaugural class

The Academy selected 89 outstanding students (66 girls, 23 boys) who were passionate about history. The students came from 28 states plus Singapore and Saipan.

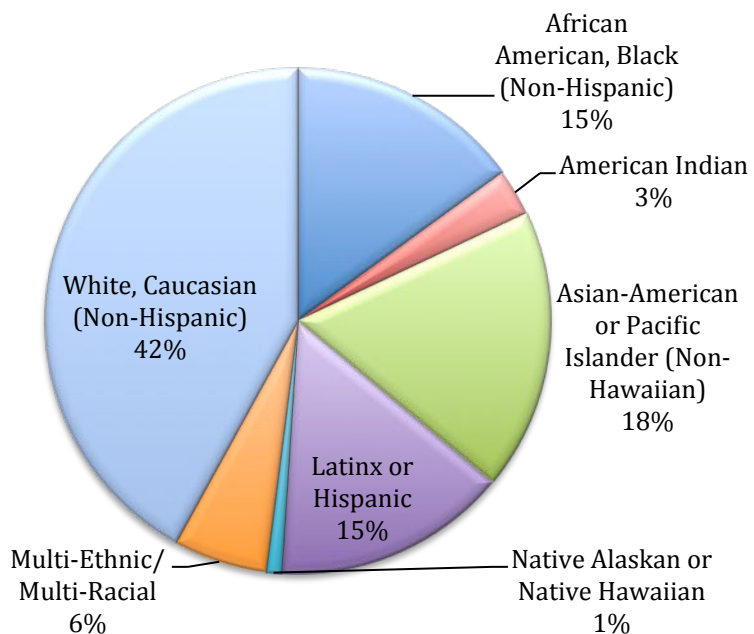
Diversity

These students were not only academically talented, but were diverse in ethnicity and socio-economic background. Of the 89 students, 75 were from public schools and nearly half received free or reduced-price lunch at their home school. It is imperative that we fund a robust scholarship program in order to maintain this remarkable diversity.

Average Student

- Age: 15.7
- GPA: 3.93
- PSAT: 1205
- SAT: 1218
- ACT: 27

Ethnic Diversity of 2018 Class



COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM

Our curriculum, taught by master teachers, challenges students to participate and interact with fellow students and historic places, and is built around four components: (1) Harvard Business School history cases; (2) parliamentary debates; (3) a speaker series; and (4) visits to the defining sites of American history.



Harvard Business School (HBS) cases.

The Academy uses the case-based History of American Democracy curriculum developed by HBS Professor David Moss. The cases provide an interdisciplinary and contextual examination of key historic events, permitting students to consider multiple viewpoints and to place themselves in the role of decision makers. In 2018, Professor Moss taught the first case on the US Constitution at James Madison's Montpelier.

Better Angels debates. In partnership with the Better Angels and the College Board, the Academy offers a parliamentary debate program designed to encourage civil discourse across the

partisan divide in an open and respectful environment. This formal style of parliamentary debate allows students to explore challenging contemporary issues in contrast to the historical debates studied in the cases.

Guest Speakers. More than 20 nationally recognized guest speakers supplemented classroom activities. Among the 2018 speakers were:

- **Jon Parrish Peede**, Chair, National Endowment for the Humanities
- **David M. Rubenstein**, Financier and Philanthropist
- **Ernest Green**, one of the "Little Rock 9"
- **Margaret Richardson**, former Commissioner of the IRS
- **Dr. Brent Glass**, Director Emeritus of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History
- **Dr. Doug Owsley**, Forensic Anthropologist
- **Trevor Potter**, former Chairman of the Federal Election Commission
- **Dr. Matthew Pinsker**, Lincoln Historian
- **Christine Woodhouse**, documentary filmmaker
- **Robert Duvall**, Academy Award winning actor

Site visits and unique experiences. The Academy alternates classroom work with visits to the defining historic sites in the region, from Gettysburg to Harpers Ferry, Washington, DC, Charlottesville and Colonial Williamsburg. Students experience iconic National Parks, museums, presidential homes, battlefields, and Civil Rights sites. The students also have once-in-a-lifetime opportunities: in 2018, they saw the hit musical *Hamilton* at the Kennedy Center and screened the movie *Gettysburg* with the film's director, Ron Maxwell.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

Students who attend National History Academy come away both more prepared for college and with a deeper understanding and appreciation of what it means to be an American. Each day, students examine defining moments of our history as well as challenging modern issues in historical context. The Academy is based on active learning; all students are required to participate in case discussions and debates. Students have to develop their opinions, then stand up and advocate for their viewpoints. They are questioned by others and must listen to differing opinions. Inevitably, all students' positions evolve.

In addition to a dramatic increase in historical and civic literacy, students gain social literacy. Most are living away from home for the first time, and as they are developing creative and critical thinking skills, they learn how to interact with peers from very different backgrounds from their own. They learn from and personally visit with national leaders from a variety of fields. The students learn how to share dormitory space, manage their own time and money, and write thank you notes. Students gain self-confidence and feel better prepared for life beyond high school. These gains in historical, civic and social literacy were documented both anecdotally and through survey results of our 2018 class:

- 94% felt they had a better understanding of what it means to be an American.
- 92% said the Academy improved their opinion of people with different backgrounds and perspectives than their own.
- 88% were inspired to become more engaged in civic issues.
- 92% felt more confident after attending the Academy.
- **94% feel more prepared for college.**
- **100% would recommend National History Academy** to a friend.

I think this experience taught me a lot about looking at all sides of an issue. I've been pretty one-sided with my view at home because most people around me are of the same perspective. They have the same background, they have the same views that I do, and here I did not have that experience. Everybody has a very different view; everyone has a very different background. And looking at our case studies especially, we saw all sides of a case. We [heard] other people's perspectives and why they made the choices they did before you judged whether it was right or wrong. So, I think this entire experience has taught me a lot about looking at the big picture and not being so focused on my own view that I didn't see the validity of someone else's point.

-Emma Martinez, Dalton, OH





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