

NATIONAL HISTORY ACADEMY



National History Academy
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OVERVIEW

National History Academy is a life-changing educational experience that inspires high school students to understand the foundations of American democracy and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Our country needs a program like National History Academy as we face a growing crisis in civic and historical literacy. Recent reports document a shocking lack of knowledge of the core elements of American democracy. Nationwide, high school students score lowest on U.S. History out of seven tested subjects, and many schools no longer offer civics classes. Undergraduate history majors have dropped by 34% since 2011, and nearly two-thirds of adults in the country cannot even name the three branches of government.

In response to this crisis, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground created National History Academy in 2018. The Journey is a non-profit National Heritage Area that encompasses the region between Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and Charlottesville, Virginia, and provides the perfect outdoor classroom for students to study the foundations of our constitutional democracy.

The five-week residential summer Academy is based at the Foxcroft School in Middleburg, Virginia. Our students learn beyond the classroom, visiting more than 30 historic sites;



meeting with nationally known leaders and scholars; participating in civil discourse through our parliamentary debate program; and studying key historical events through the case-based History of American Democracy curriculum developed by Harvard Business School Professor David Moss.

The Academy's first two sessions have been a resounding success. The impact of this immersive, collaborative and participatory program has been transformative, improving students' critical thinking skills, raising their self-confidence and preparing them for college and beyond.

National History Academy is poised to play a leading role in history and civics education in the United States. To fulfill this promise, we have begun a 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

The Class

Enrollment is currently limited to 90 students. Over the first two summers, more than 400 students applied, and 170 students (115 girls and 55 boys) who were passionate about understanding American history, law and government have attended the Academy. Students from 37 states plus Puerto Rico, Saipan and Singapore have participated.

Diversity

Our students are not only academically talented, but also reflect extraordinary political, ethnic, geographic and socio-economic diversity. The Academy truly looks like America. As the students come from all over the country, they bring views that represent the political left, middle and right. They come from public schools, private schools and home school backgrounds. About one-third of the class are first- or second-generation Americans. Admissions is need-blind, and more than 75% of the Academy's students receive partial or full financial aid. Our goal is to build a robust scholarship fund to maintain this remarkable diversity.

Average Student

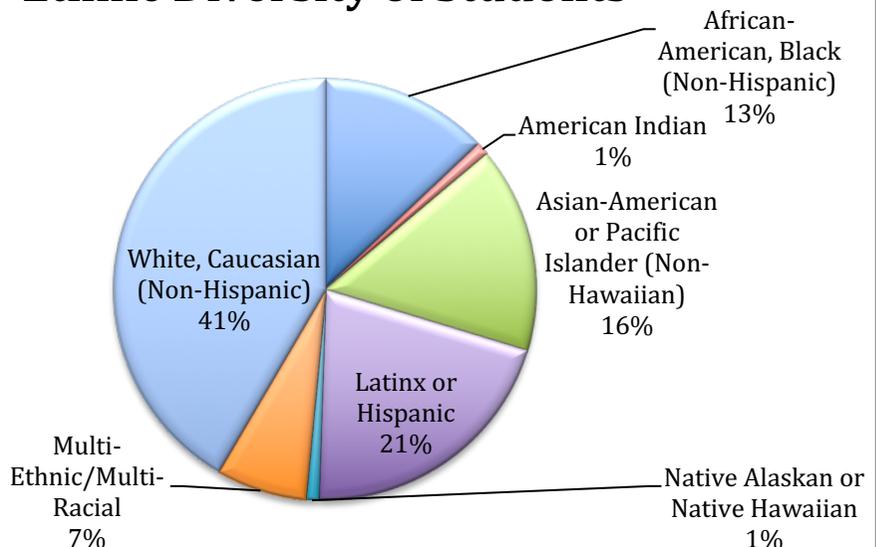
- Age: 15.8
- GPA: 3.93
- PSAT: 1200
- SAT: 1220
- ACT: 28



The student body here is very diverse, and that diversity allows us to learn at a different pace and through a different lens from what I'm used to back home.

~ Julius Pugh, New Haven, CT

Ethnic Diversity of Students



COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM

The Academy’s curriculum requires students to participate and interact with their peers. Our learning objectives are to increase civic knowledge and skills while also encouraging students to develop a civic disposition and think about the greater public good. The curriculum is built around four components: (1) visits to the defining sites of American history; (2) Harvard Business School cases; (3) parliamentary debates; and (4) guest speakers.

Site visits and unique experiences

The Academy combines classroom work with visits to the defining historic sites in American history, from Gettysburg, PA to Charlottesville, VA; Harpers Ferry, WV to Washington, DC; and Colonial Williamsburg to Historic Jamestowne. Site-based learning engages students in authentic material culture—architecture, battlefields, archaeological sites, museum artifacts—and introduces them to leading experts in the field. Each visit is carefully curated so students are challenged to integrate assigned readings and other classroom activities. The students also have once-in-a-lifetime opportunities such as seeing the hit musical *Hamilton* at the Kennedy Center and screening the movie *Gettysburg* with the film’s director, Ron Maxwell.

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. Professor Moss helps train the teachers and teaches one of the cases during the summer. The cases

allow students to explore more deeply into the lives and times of historical figures.

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, while developing both speaking and listening skills. This formal style of debate allows students to examine challenging contemporary issues rooted in the historical debates they study in the cases.

Guest Speakers

More than 30 nationally recognized guest speakers supplemented classroom activities. Our speakers represent many disciplines, including American history, government, law, finance and historic preservation. Among the 2019 speakers were:

- **David M. Rubenstein**, Financier and Philanthropist
- **Christy Coleman**, CEO of the American Civil War Museum
- **Ernest Green**, one of the “Little Rock 9”
- **Brent Glass**, Director Emeritus of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History
- **Ron Maxwell**, Filmmaker, *Gettysburg*
- **Trevor Potter**, former Chairman of the Federal Election Commission
- **Cecile Ganteaume and Paul Chaat Smith**, Curators, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian
- **Robert Duvall**, Academy Award winning actor

RESIDENTIAL LIFE AND EXPERIENCE

Campus Life

National History Academy is based at the Foxcroft School in Middleburg, Virginia, a premier private residential secondary school. Foxcroft's campus features modern residence halls, high-tech classrooms and a full range of recreational facilities and amenities with a focus on safety for high school students.

Friendships form quickly over meals in the dining hall, in the classroom, and during free time when the students can enjoy the swimming pool, tennis courts, volleyball, basketball, billiards, trivia contests, chess matches, card games, or visiting the horses in Foxcroft's stables. During the first week, the students tackle a challenge course, building communication, cooperation and trust by overcoming obstacles together as a team. Friendships are further cemented through fun outings, such as a pro baseball game, a river tubing trip, and hiking.

Staff and Faculty

Our talented and caring staff work with our students from morning to night on



gaining skills to live independently. We believe strongly that creating a safe, respectful and encouraging environment for our students to learn and grow – both in and out of the classroom – is the foundation of our program.

Our staff consists of an Academy Director, six teaching fellows from high schools throughout the country, ten college-aged teaching assistants and a nurse. Classroom staff are all highly trained with backgrounds in education, history, government, and law.

I was very impressed with the way NHA approached sensitive topics. Yes, I needed to stand up for myself and my ideas. At the same time, I was able to listen, learn, and revise my conclusions. History is anything but the past. It is the present and the future. The majority of people today think that history is dead, just a list of dates and long-deceased men. It most definitely is not. By learning history, one can adapt it, absorb it, and apply it.

-Eden Carnes, Friendsville, TN



IMPACT ON STUDENTS AND STAFF

National History Academy students come away better prepared for college and with a deeper understanding and appreciation of what it means to be an American. The Academy is based on active learning; all students participate in case discussions and debates. Students develop their opinions and advocate for their viewpoints. They question each other, consider differing opinions and, inevitably, learn from each other as their individual positions evolve on key issues.

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 develop creative and critical thinking skills, they learn how to interact with peers from very different backgrounds. They learn from and personally visit with national leaders from a variety of fields. The students learn how to share dormitory space, manage their time and money, and write thank you notes. Students gain self-confidence and feel better prepared for life beyond high school. Our students have gone on to Yale, Penn, Williams, Cornell, West



Point, and other top colleges throughout the country.

This growth in historical, civic and social literacy is documented both anecdotally and through surveys of our students.

After completing the Academy:

- 96% felt they had a better understanding of what it means to be an American.
- 94% said the Academy improved their opinion of people with different backgrounds and perspectives than their own.
- 92% of students thought the Academy was more memorable than their other experiences studying history and government.
- 89% felt more confident after attending the Academy.
- **94% feel more prepared for college.**
- **100% would recommend National History Academy to a friend.**

The Academy's positive impact also extends to faculty and teaching assistants who draw inspiration from both a challenging curriculum and a class of highly motivated students. The staff has just as life-changing an experience as the students, and their leadership, hard work and sustained energy contribute to the Academy's unique learning environment. The teachers receive extensive training in leading the Harvard Business School cases, moderating the debates, and incorporating place-based learning into curriculum. They can put their training into practice over the summer and then implement their new skills when they return to their home classrooms.

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

National History Academy has only existed for two years but is already recognized as a leader in history and civics education. As we grow, we have ambitious goals to fundamentally change the way history and civics are taught in this country. However, as a new program, **we need your help.**

Student Referrals

Every year, we want to recruit the strongest class possible with students from around the country. One of our goals is to enroll at least one student from every state each summer. Please encourage good students from your state to apply to the Academy.

Intellectual Partners

Help us identify academic and institutional partners who are concerned about the current crisis in historical and civic literacy and want to inspire young people to learn the foundations of our democracy and the responsibilities of citizenship. National History Academy is a perfect platform to test new ways to teach history and civics, which has helped us attract supporters like the College Board, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and National Park Service.



Funding Partners

We are building a robust scholarship fund that allows our program to look like America. The Academy would not be the same without our remarkable diversity. Tuition is \$9,995, which is cost prohibitive for a large number of even middle-class families. More than 75% of our students need partial or full financial aid. Please consider becoming a scholarship sponsor to ensure that every student who qualifies for the program will be able to attend, regardless of ability to pay.



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 everybody has a very different view; everyone has a very different background. 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. 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

For more information, please email us at info@historycamp.com.



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