

November 26, 2015

Dear Faculty and Students,

Please read the attached Call for Papers for the Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Political Science 10th Annual Politics and Government Student Research Conference. This day-long event will be held on Friday, April 15th, 2016 in the VCU Student Commons. Our call for papers will ask you to submit your proposals/abstracts by Thursday, March 24, 2016.

For students, please join us for a day of presentations, discussions, shared experiences, and a celebration of our areas of interest.

For faculty, please announce to your students and encourage them to spend a day discussing their research, meeting interested students and faculty from all over the state, region, and the world. Come with your students and see what it's all about. Chair a panel or just enjoy a great day with outstanding students. We even serve lunch!!

There are many great reasons why students should consider presenting at this conference. Among them:

First, students who present at the conference (or any research conference) should include this on their academic resumes. When graduate or professional schools consider applicants they often look for this kind of credit on a CV. Having presented your research as an undergraduate powerfully indicates that you are already doing graduate level work and gives you a competitive advantage over other applicants.

Second, students get the opportunity to present their own ideas, arguments, and evidence to their peers and faculty. This gives a work in progress a preliminary test-run. You can receive comments, advice, and recommendations for further development in the process without having to receive a grade. Often these presentations help students to submit better papers, and occasionally these presentations help turn existing papers into theses or even articles for publication.

Third, you are engaging your discipline or research agenda of choice at a high level. This is an intellectually fulfilling opportunity with no chance of risk. Our conference panel chairs are there to help foster discussion and enhance your presentation. Unlike some professional conferences, this event is not designed to competitively challenge your research findings as much as it is to help you further develop your research interests.

Finally, your participation in this conference will likely place you in panels with students from any number of different universities and fields of study. In recent years we have had participants from a number of international partner universities, dozens of universities from our region, and hundreds of VCU students, making our conference one that is local, state, regional, and international. Last year's conference features students from 20 regional universities and 4 countries. This is a great opportunity for students to engage their ideas with those from all over the field.

If those reasons aren't convincing, we will offer cash prizes for the best completed papers!! We will provide you a great luncheon even where you can talk with faculty and students from other panels, programs, schools, and even countries...and the food is even very good!! How many different good things can one conference provide?

The conference is targeted to undergraduate students although we will consider graduate level papers as they fit the panels. We DO NOT REQUIRE completed papers...except for the Best Papers competitions. We will consider works in progress, new ideas you want to develop, old papers you want to present, and most other research possibilities as long as they fit into the following criteria:

Papers or ideas should fit into the very broad categories of: Government, Public Policy, and International Affairs. Papers can range from the formal and theoretical to pragmatic policy and issue analysis.

Particular consideration will be given to papers that deal with issues of:

- American politics and policy
- Public administration
- Sociology and social structures
- International relations and world affairs
- Human rights
- Civil rights
- Criminal justice and public safety
- National security
- Human security
- Geography and demography
- Health policy
- Environmental policy
- Economic policy

However, consideration of many collateral fields can fit our conference including: philosophy, education, women's and gender studies, religion, psychology, business, and the life sciences.

We hope to hear from those of you are inspired to participate. Please send your proposals to: vcustudentconference2016@gmail.com . You can send questions to that address or to cjsaladino@vcu.edu with the words RESEARCH CONFERENCE in the subject line.

See you on April 15th!

Chris Saladino
Conference Organizer

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