

## Feedback from students who attended the CVDMA Conference:



I am Vanessa Annor from Pretoria High School for Girls. My VCDMA Conference experience has been filled with loads of fun and inspiration. I have - for the first time- made so many inspiring and amazing friends in a very short period of time. I have also been inspired by the many motivational speakers to not only set high goals for myself but to achieve them against all odds and obstacles. I will say however that the highlight of my experience will be the countless leadership skills I have acquired. I have learnt to effectively frame my thoughts and deliver them to a crowd of people in the shortest possible period of time, to be open-minded and welcome to a broad spectrum of views and to always have legitimate reasons for my views. This conference has indeed set me up for a great start to the University life by not only giving me the necessary skills and tips needed but by also informing me of the countless opportunities I will have as a VCDMA award recipient and a Tuks student. I am definitely thankful and ready to take advantage of them all and indeed Fly@UP.

School attended: Pretoria Girls High School

Matric Year: 2018

**Vanessa Annor**



My name is Laurie Aucamp and I am from Durban, KZN. I am studying Veterinary Science. I am incredibly honoured to receive a VCDM award. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience and am very grateful for the opportunity to meet new people with similar interests to me. I was pushed out of my comfort zone and realised that the best things happen when you leave your comfort zone. Through the many speakers and exercises I believe my skills as a student and leader have been strengthened. I feel fully equipped for university life and ready to face the challenges that varsity life will bring.

School attended: Hillcrest High School

Matric Year: 2018

**Laurie Aucamp**



The conference so far was very enjoyable. The 'Common Purpose Course' is of an exceptional quality and challenged me to move out of my comfort zone. The topics covered by the various speakers were relevant and addressed our greatest fears for the transition to university. Overall I feel that the week has added a lot of value and will be of great aid when the academic term starts in February. It has been a great bonding experience, and I am thankful for the opportunity to have met some of my fellow classmates beforehand. The beginning of university will definitely be less frightening thanks to this week.

School attended: Bergsig Akademie

Matric Year: 2018

**David Mark Dodkins**



The common purpose early leadership course has been eye opening for me. It has taken me to a place where I can't even find my comfort zone anymore and made it feel like home. It was not always easy. The hours were one of the largest obstacles to overcome but I think we managed. It taught me that everyone has valid opinions that may often differ greatly from your own and you must be open minded enough to accept it. Leadership was never something I felt I could do. That no one would ever listen to me and that I needed to hide in the background were it was safe but now I feel so much more confident and ready to overcome. Thank you.

School attended: Petra High School

Matric Year: 2016

**Laura Page Franceys**



Hello! My name is Johné Hattingh and I am studying Medicine at the university of Pretoria. What an amazing week it has been! I was granted the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and discover things about myself that I did not know before. Furthermore, I obtained skills, such as lateral thinking and leadership skills, that will help me to reach my goals as a student. I also obtained valuable information about UP that will ensure that my transition from high school to university runs smoothly. However, my favourite part of the conference was meeting new, like-minded people, with whom I can form lifelong friendships. Thanks to the VCDMA, I know that I will fly@UP.

School attended: Waterkloof Hoërskool

Matric Year: 2018

**Johné Hattingh**



This weekend I came in feeling like I didn't belong among the geniuses but at the end of it I realised I was here for a reason. It was not by chance. Throughout the conference what stood out for me were the numerous similarities between all the recipients. Coming into a room filled with people that are different in almost all aspects and finding out that we all had a similar thought process was memorable for me. I loved the fact that it was not like traditional leadership courses where you only receive speeches. Rather, we interacted with each other and immersed ourselves in whatever issue we were dealing with for that day. This conference was highly beneficial because of the many skills and ideas I have taken away from it and especially the fact that I got to meet people who are in 1st year with me. This gave me the reassurance that I was not alone in my situation. I was truly blessed to be given this opportunity and grateful to everyone that participated in making our week a success.

School attended: Westville Girls High School

Matric Year: 2018

**Bianca Ibeleme**



My name is Caleb Isaacs and I will be studying Medicine.

I am extremely grateful for this opportunity and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Being able to meet new people with whom I share similar interests and being pushed out of my comfort zone which allowed me to grow as an individual are just a few of the reasons I enjoyed and cherished the experience. As a result, I feel that I am fully equipped and ready for university life and the challenges that it may present.

I have gained a new found confidence that has strengthened me. I feel that I can face any challenge head-on because I have been equipped with the necessary tools. Besides growing and developing as an individual, the conference has also showed me that I am not alone. That there are other 1st years who are in the same boat and that I have support.

School attended: Cornwall Hill College

Matric Year: 2018

**Caleb Isaacs**



This experience has been such a blessing in so many different ways. I feel empowered by having engaged with other excellent students who have so much drive and passion for life and for grappling with some interesting and somewhat challenging topics and tasks. I am definitely very grateful for this experience as it has allowed me to create new friendships before orientation has even started, and these friendships I strongly believe will last. It has been both incredibly stimulating and exceptionally exhausting which is one of the many reasons I feel it has prepared me so well for this next chapter of my life. I am honoured to have received this award and to have attended this conference and I am excited to see what the future has in store for me as a VCDMA student.

School attended: St Johns Diocesan School for Girls

Matric Year: 2018

**Erin Ivins**



The VCDMA conference has been a very enriching experience. I had the opportunity to meet people from different walks of life and to learn a great deal from them, by listening to their life experiences and also their opinions on certain matters. I also made some great friends. I enjoyed participating in the group activities where we had to step out of our comfort zones and find creative solutions for problems. I also gained some valuable information about university life and especially the transition from school to university, which will be very helpful. This conference has made me even more excited about what still lies ahead this year.

School attended: Afrikaanse Hoër Meisieskool Pretoria

Matric Year: 2018

**Emma Janse van Vuuren**



Attending the VCDMA Conference has been such a privilege. I feel inspired and encouraged, not just for university, but for life. I was placed in situations that were out of my comfort zone, but this has enabled me to grow, learn and improve my skills of communication and critical thinking.

Meeting like-minded, passionate people was so special and true friendships and support systems were formed. Together, we learnt essential life skills such as listening to actually listen and how to improve leadership qualities. We took part in many interesting conversations which also broadened our perspectives.

It was a memorable experience and I'm so grateful I could be part of it.

School attended: Penryn College

Matric Year: 2018

**Ashley Kellar**



Wow! This week has been phenomenal and memorable in the sense that even though it has challenged me to leap out of my comfort zone, I have thoroughly enjoyed every moment of it. The speakers were inspirational, the activities thought-provoking and most of all the friendships made... priceless! It was an honor to hear the diverse views and opinions of South Africa's finest youth! I was pleased that as the days passed I was able to contribute more openly instead of answering questions inside my head. I think a major factor that perpetuated this progression was the encouragement I experienced from the members of the common purpose leadership movement as well as the kindness from Mrs. Slabbert and Mrs. Makola. Thank you!

School attended: Star College

Matric Year: 2018

**Yashoda Maharaj**



During these past few days I was amazed to discover that I am not alone in many of the struggles and fears I'm facing before university and truly enjoyed connecting with like-minded people who share the same dreams. It was such a privilege to tap into the knowledge and wisdom of the lecturers and be equipped with skills to prepare me for my journey forward. Thank you for guiding us to understand that there is a place for each one of us with our different personalities and strengths, to grow and flourish not only at Tuks, but also in our journeys later on.

School attended: Helpmekaar Privaatskool

Matric Year: 2018

**Clara Pretorius**





I'm Hamman Prinsloo and I'm first year medicine in 2019.

To be one of the VCDMA awardees is a huge privilege. The VCDMA conference is one of the most enriching and humbling experiences I have ever been a part of. To be surrounded by like-minded individuals was incredibly refreshing. The leadership development was on a whole new level compared to what we're used to.

We were confronted with different perspectives and learned how to work in groups and compromise. My creative thoughts were challenged and I could improve expressing myself in English, something I found difficult before the conference.

School attended: Hoërskool Rustenburg

Matric Year: 2018

**Hamman Prinsloo**



For me this conference has really been insightful as it made me realize how varied people's opinions are, and as much as our views are different, we all had the same end game: A better future for all. So with that in mind, we were able to reach a common ground, understanding that the problems are bigger than us, and decide on how we, as Future Leaders, could somehow bring about collective change. I also realized that we all have the power to actually bring about that change, we just need to dig deeper, through self-introspection, to ignite that "Powerful Spark" from within.

I'm forever thankful for being a part of this wonderful initiative.

"Together we stand, Divided we fall" - Captain America

School attended: Northern Academy

Matric Year: 2018

**Sathekge Lebea David**



Coming in to Pretoria from Durban was a long journey fraught with nervous anticipation as to what was to come. However, this anxiety quickly dissipated upon arrival, as I was suddenly immersed in a new environment full of welcoming, enthusiastic peers. Not only was I exposed to peers who shared a similar passion to me, I have been allowed the opportunity to network with those who some day will be leaders in their respective fields. The conference, and speakers and information it has provided have developed a solid foundation on which I can begin my journey at university. The leadership training course run by Common Purpose has also facilitated a space in which ideas and opinions have been shared, disputed and/or agreed upon. The programme has stimulated me to have an open mind, and truly contemplate what others have to say. The sheer diversity of perspectives have allowed for a new type of learning, a learning from the experiences of others. I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have been involved thus far, and am excited about what the future may hold, not just for me, but for us all.

School attended: Westville Boys High School

Matric Year: 2018

**Jarrod Staples**



The VCDMA conference has been a truly enlightening experience. The most profound aspects of this course were the exposure to the concepts of leadership and power, the implementation of various exercises concerning the above-mentioned topics and the interaction with the other awardees. The thought of meeting and engaging with the brightest minds in South Africa was initially quite intimidating. However, a potpourri of issues were addressed; resulting in the sharing of valuable opinions. The practical aspect of the conference, where our thinking was often challenged and our ideals considered; was the most valuable factor from which I derived most of my learning. Thank you to everyone involved in making this experience possible. I'm looking forward to the coming years of my life at UP.

School attended: Hilton College

Matric Year: 2018

**Nicolaas Taljaard**



I honestly had an unbelievable time here at the VCDMA. At first glance we got to make new friends and get a jumpstart on adapting to the new largely populated environment. We got to surround ourselves with like minded people and regularly challenge our own thoughts and boundaries. We were pushed out of comfort zones. I realized that I had much more of an opinion that I wanted to voice than I expected to. We got to touch base on challenges we are confronted with daily and also look at the reasons for these challenges and try to find solutions and our place and power in making a change in these challenges. We participated in various teambuilding, thought-provoking and competitive activities in which I realised that creative thinking helps us find unconventional solutions which we can implement to make a change.

We listened to very inspirational people who have faced challenges which they overcame. This made me realise that all obstacles are only temporary and that we can use our passion and dreams as a source of power to succeed. We were put at ease and guided with what to expect in varsity life and the ways to deal with the challenges and changes we will face. All in all it was an eye opening experience.

School attended: Pietersburg Hoërskool

Matric Year: 2018

**Jenadine Taylor (Jena)**



The only word I could think of to describe this amazing opportunity: Grateful.

This is really an amazing experience that I feel not only prepares the students to achieve tremendously at the University of Pretoria, but also cultivates relationships between like-minded people with great ambitions.

Being part of this programme has excited me for my future, but even more for the future of our entire generation!

School attended: Dr EG Jansen Hoërskool

Matric Year: 2018

**Wiehan van Pletzen**



This experience is life changing and is equipping me to be an active leader. The tips that were given will help me through this new journey that I'm about to begin. I have already created many networks and friendships with people who are like-minded. Through the leadership program I have come to realise that there is many things I need to work on to be the change of our community. I'm very grateful for this opportunity and privileged of being the very few people to be taken under the wing of the University of Pretoria. Thank you very much!

School attended: Maragon Olympus / Doxa Deo

Matric Year: 2018

**Clarice van Zyl**



The conference is an amazing opportunity to learn about leadership. It is a safe space where you feel at ease to ask questions and share your views. I am very grateful to have been part of it.

School attended: Home Schooling, Cambridge

Matric Year: 2017

**Gianni Volpi**



The VCDMA has had a profound impact on my journey thus far. They have already made the first step of the difficult transition between high school and university seem like a breeze. By lending support and motivation I have been able to make new friends and am starting to unlock my true potential through equipping me with leadership skills.

To any future VCDMA recipients I would just like to encourage you to take part in as much as offered and to not be afraid. I know it can be quite scary initially, but everyone feels exactly the same! Just enjoy the reward and make the most of the opportunity.

I would also just like to thank everyone part of the program and our amazing team. The accommodation is insane and they have planned us the best program!

School attended: Waterkloof Hoërskool

Matric Year: 2018

**Marcel Zehnder**