



# VIRGINIA SPACE GRANT CONSORTIUM

Old Dominion University Peninsula Center, 600 Butler Farm Road, Suite 2200, Hampton, VA 23666 (757) 766-5210

## NEWS RELEASE

---

For Immediate Release: August 4, 2017

**Contact:** Keith Koehler, [keith.a.koehler@nasa.gov](mailto:keith.a.koehler@nasa.gov), News Chief, NASA Wallops Flight Facility, (757) 824-1579  
Mary Sandy, [msandy@odu.edu](mailto:msandy@odu.edu), Director, Virginia Space Grant Consortium, (757) 766-5210

### **Virginia Students Explore Earth and Space on the Eastern Shore**

For the past five years, students throughout Virginia have received the opportunity to explore Earth and space through the Virginia Space Coast Scholars Summer Academy program at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility.

More than 500 students have participated in the summer program funded by the Commonwealth of Virginia and conducted in partnership between [NASA Wallops](#) and the [Virginia Space Grant Consortium](#).

The program includes a five-module online course during the spring semester for high school sophomores focusing on the science, engineering and technology integral to current missions at Wallops. Upon completion of the on-line program, top performing scholars are invited to attend a seven-day residential summer academy at Wallops.

Since its beginning with the 2012-13 school year, more than 1,300 students have participated in the online portion of the program and more than 500 of those students have participated in the Summer Academy at Wallops.

Mary Sandy, director of the Virginia Space Grant Consortium, said, "The Virginia Space Coast Scholars program has seen an increase in interest from students from across the Commonwealth to participate in this unique learning opportunity. Participation in the online segment of the program has more than doubled in five years and the Summer Academy has grown from one, one-week session with 40 students in 2013 to three sessions with 121 students in 2017."

Through the online course, students learn basic project management skills, data analysis and teamwork required for a successful payload and launch. They also learn how science drives the engineering and space mission design process.

During the Summer Academy, students interact with NASA scientists, engineers, pilots and project managers to hear first-hand about missions at Wallops. Through presentations, facility tours and informative briefings, students become familiar with NASA Wallops and the research being conducted from Virginia's Space Coast.



## VIRGINIA SPACE GRANT CONSORTIUM

Old Dominion University Peninsula Center, 600 Butler Farm Road, Suite 2200, Hampton, VA 23666 (757) 766-5210

Joyce Winterton, NASA Wallops senior advisor for education, said, “During the week at Wallops the students are immersed in the research and engineering activities at the facility and are challenged to develop their own missions. The combination of the online sessions and the Summer Academy allows the students to explore and gain an in-depth look at developing science missions. The Virginia Space Scholars Program is truly a unique learning experience.”

In 2014, the Virginia Space Coast Scholars program was recognized for its achievement in educating students in science, technology, engineering and math by receiving the NASA Robert H. Goddard Team Award. In 2015, the program was recognized for having a positive impact on student learning when it received the Programs That Work Award from the Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition.

Virginia students can apply for the [Virginia Space Coast Scholars](#) in the fall of their sophomore year. Applications for the 2018 program are due in November 2017. There is no cost to participate.

To encourage students to continue their interest in science, technology, engineering and math careers, students who have participated in Virginia Space Coast Scholars and others can apply to participate in the [Virginia Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars \(VASTS\)](#) or the [Virginia Earth Systems Science Scholars](#) programs during their junior or senior year held at the NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia. Both programs are free and offer dual enrollment credit. These programs also encourage students to apply for [NASA Internship opportunities](#).



(L to R) Virginia Space Coast Scholars Eryn Undan, Mahima Pannala, and Marc Nassar design, build, and test their hydraulic arm.

-end-