

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

GRIP LEADERSHIP
Term 3 2017

ENCOURAGING FEMALES TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAMS

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Below are pictures that our travelling team post every few hours across all of our social media platforms during recent conferences and school seminars.



REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

REGISTER NOW FOR THE GRIP STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE NEAR YOU!

Lock the date into your school's calendar now and register online to secure your school's booking.

AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY CONFERENCES

NEW SOUTH WALES			VICTORIA		
Sydney Option #1	7th Mar 2018	Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre	Melbourne Option #1	14th Mar 2018	Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre
Sydney Option #2	23rd May 2018	Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre	Melbourne Option #2	26th Apr 2018	Moonee Valley Racing Club
Goulburn	6th Mar 2018	Goulburn Workers Club	Sale	24th Apr 2018	Sale Memorial Hall
Moree	7th May 2018	Moree Memorial Hall	Geelong	27th Apr 2018	Geelong West Town Hall
Tamworth	8th May 2018	Tamworth War Memorial Town Hall	Shepparton	30th Apr 2018	East Bank Centre
Armidale	9th May 2018	Armidale Ex Services Club	Bendigo	1st May 2018	Bendigo Stadium
Lismore	10th May 2018	Lismore City Hall	Ballarat	2nd May 2018	Federation University
Tweed Heads/Coolangatta	11th May 2018	Twin Towns Clubs & Resorts	Wodonga/Albury	28th May 2018	Commercial Club Albury
Dubbo	21st May 2018	Dubbo RSL Memorial Club	Mildura	30th May 2018	Quality Hotel Mildura Grand
Bathurst	22nd May 2018	Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre	SOUTH AUSTRALIA		
Newcastle	24th May 2018	University of Newcastle, Callaghan	Adelaide	16th Mar 2018	Adelaide Entertainment Centre
Campus			Mount Gambier	3rd May 2018	Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre
Wollongong	25th May 2018	University of Wollongong	Port Augusta	31st May 2018	Lea Memorial Theatre
Albury/Wodonga	28th May 2018	Commercial Club Albury	TASMANIA		
Wagga Wagga	29th May 2018	Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga	Hoart	20th Feb 2018	Derwent Entertainment Centre
Central Coast	4th June 2018	Central Coast Leagues Club	Burnie	21st Feb 2018	Burnie Arts & Function Centre
Forster	5th June 2018	Club Forster	Launceston	22nd Mar 2018	The Tailrace Centre
Port Macquarie	6th June 2018	Panthers, Port Macquarie	WESTERN AUSTRALIA		
Coffs Harbour	7th June 2018	Coffs Harbour Racing Club	Perth	20th Mar 2018	Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre
QUEENSLAND			Albany	21st Mar 2018	Albany Town Hall
Brisbane	26th Feb 2018	Sleeman Sports Complex	Esperance	22nd Mar 2018	Esperance Civic Centre
Kingaroy	2nd Feb 2018	Kingaroy Town Hall	Bunbury	23rd Mar 2018	South West Italian Club
Cairns	5th Feb 2018	Pullman Reef Hotel Casino	AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY		
Townsville	8th Feb 2018	Mercure Townsville	Canberra	5th Mar 2018	Australian Institute of Sport
Gladstone	12th Feb 2018	Boyne Tannum Community Centre	NORTHERN TERRITORY		
Mackay	13th Feb 2018	Mackay Ent. & Conv. Centre	Darwin	10th Apr 2018	Doubletree by Hilton Esplanade Darwin
Bundaberg	13th Feb 2018	Brothers Sports Club, Bundaberg	AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY CONFERENCES		
Emerald	14th Feb 2018	Emerald Town Hall	NEW SOUTH WALES		
Maryborough	14th Feb 2018	Maryborough City Hall	Sydney Option #1	26th Oct 2017	Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre
Rockhampton	15th Feb 2018	Rockhampton Leagues Club	Sydney Option #2	25th Oct 2017	Western Sydney University
Sunshine Coast	15th Feb 2018	Lake Kawana Community Centre	Sydney Option #3	6th Mar 2018	Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre
Toowoomba	28th Feb 2018	Highfields Cultural Centre	Dubbo	23rd Oct 2017	Dubbo RSL Memorial Club
Coolangatta/Tweed Heads	11th May 2018	Twin Towns Clubs & Resorts	Wollongong	27th Oct 2017	WIN Entertainment Centre
			Albury / Wodonga	1st Nov 2017	Commercial Club Albury
			Newcastle	6th Nov 2017	University of Newcastle
			Tamworth	7th Nov 2017	Tamworth War Memorial Town Hall
			Coffs Harbour	8th Nov 2017	C.ex Coffs Club
			Lismore	15th Nov 2017	Southern Cross University
			QUEENSLAND		
			Brisbane	27th Feb 2018	Sleeman Sports Complex
			Gold Coast	9th Nov 2017	TBA
			Cairns	6th Feb 2018	Pullman Reef Hotel Casino
			Townsville	7th Feb 2018	Mercure Townsville
			Mackay	12th Feb 2018	Mackay Ent. & Conv. Centre
			Rockhampton	16th Feb 2018	Rockhampton Leagues Club
			Sunshine Coast	16th Feb 2018	Lake Kawana Community Centre
			Toowoomba	1st Mar 2018	Highfields Cultural Centre
			NORTHERN TERRITORY		
			Darwin	9th Apr 2018	Doubletree by Hilton Esplanade Darwin
			VICTORIA		
			Melbourne	13th Mar 2018	Melbourne Conv. & Ex. Centre
			Mildura	3rd Nov 2017	Quality Hotel, Mildura Grand
			Ballarat	2nd Nov 2017	Federation University
			Wodonga / Albury	1st Nov 2017	Commercial Club Albury
			SOUTH AUSTRALIA		
			Adelaide	15th Mar 2018	Adelaide Entertainment Centre
			Mount Gambier	4th May 2018	Main Corner Complex
			Whyalla *NEW*	1st June 2018	Westland Hotel Motel
			TASMANIA		
			Hobart	19th Feb 2018	Derwent Entertainment Centre
			Launceston	23rd Feb 2018	The Tailrace Centre
			WESTERN AUSTRALIA		
			Perth	19th Mar 2018	Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre
			Albany	21st Mar 2018	Albany Entertainment Centre
			Bunbury	22nd Mar 2018	South West Italian Club
			AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY		
			Canberra Option 1	31st Oct 2017	Australian Institute of Sport
			Canberra Option 2	5th Mar 2018	Australian Institute of Sport

NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCES

PRIMARY CONFERENCES			SECONDARY CONFERENCES		
Christchurch	22nd November 2017	The Celebration Events Centre	Christchurch	4th April 2018	The Celebration Events Centre
Dunedin	23rd November 2017	Dunedin Public Art Gallery	Wellington	5th April 2018	Pipitea Marae & Function Centre
Queenstown	24th November 2017	City Impact Conference Centre	Auckland	6th April 2018	Vodafone Events Centre
Wellington	27th November 2017	Pipitea Marae & Function Centre			
Palmerston North	28th November 2017	Awapuni Function Centre			
Rotorua	29th November 2017	Holiday Inn Rotorua			
Auckland	30th November 2017	To Be Advised			

REGISTER ONLINE at www.gripleadership.com

ENCOURAGING FEMALES TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Our GRIP Leadership team often receives questions from teachers who are having extra difficulty engaging a particular gender in student leadership activities and structures at their school. Some schools find it a challenge to engage males, and others females. Like any leadership challenge, there is no simple solution. We have, however, identified some suggestions and written separate articles specific to each gender. These suggestions are based on the conversations we have had with countless teachers surrounding this issue, and the observations we have made of hundreds of student leadership teams. This article specifically addresses engaging females, but in some contexts you may find these strategies work similarly in a male setting or across both genders.

1. Understand the Objections

Within each school context, there will be a variety of reasons why females may refrain from engaging in leadership. Some of the common reasons are:

- The student is from a family or ethnic culture where males naturally assume leadership identity.
- The student is singularly focused on study and academics.
- If male peers are typically louder than the female student there can be an assumption by the female that she is less suited for a leadership role.
- Students assume that school leadership relates mainly to sport, leading some females to believe that they should leave it to the 'bigger, stronger, faster' males.

Once you have identified the likely objections in your school, strategic options will begin to present themselves. Focusing strategies around these objections will be far more fruitful than continually asking females to simply 'step up'.

2. Have Strong Female Role Models

Sometimes, girls can be reluctant to engage with the idea of leadership due to a lack of significant role models. For the sake of this article, we'll divide the idea of 'leadership role models' into three categories:

Teachers: It's important that young female students have strong role models in their teachers, people to whom they can look at and genuinely say, 'I aspire to be more like you.' One of the best ways to foster this is for female teachers to intentionally engage in extra-curricular activities with groups of female students. Through these activities female teachers should humbly highlight that they themselves are a 'leader', reinforcing that teaching is leading. Most schools have great role models in their female teachers, although many girls need pointing out that these women are influential leaders. A practical strategy may involve renaming some titles for staff, for example; Mrs Jones is also the coordinator of the choir, but might now be referred to as the staff 'leader' of the choir.

Guest Speakers: An outside voice and example can do wonders for the leadership aspirations of young women. Many schools already utilise guest speakers as part of the activities of the school. Consider being intentional about weighting the invitations to include an abundance of female leaders.

Other Schools: If a primary school is struggling to engage females in leadership activity then the most convenient solution is to invite female leaders at the local secondary school to visit. This might involve a formal mentoring program or simply a presentation from the secondary students about leadership projects they have initiated. If, however, the engagement deficiency is in a secondary school, it might be wise to use the convenience of youtube to identify examples of leadership (led by female students) which could be shown to students throughout the year.

3. Make Contributions Meaningful

Sometimes students witness their student leaders doing numerous practical tasks. This might include setting out chairs, packing up at events etc. This sets a positive message that leadership is about serving others, however, if it's all that female students observe then it occasionally has an adverse effect on their engagement. Some girls will decide that leadership roles are best left to the boys, who they believe might be more capable of the lifting and setting up of audio visual equipment. The good news is, that taking a different (or additional) approach will engage with students who are more nurturing in nature, which would often include many females. Highlight that 'fundraisers' are not about running an event, but rather about finding ways to enrich the lives of other people. By sharing stories of the charities and people who are helped, these activities become far more meaningful to students, including many females. In addition to charity involvement, ensure that the student body is well aware of the pastoral (and not just practical) role that student leaders play in the school.



4. Tip the Scales

This strategy is less advisable in a male context but can be worthwhile in certain female contexts. Put simply, this involves the selection of far more females in a student leadership team compared to males in a single year, for strategic purposes. If a certain school typically has 12 student leaders, then it can have a positive long-term effect to allocate 8 or 9 of those positions to females in a given year. This might require staff to make personal approaches to the 8 or 9 girls to get them to nominate. Similarly, it will often involve declining the nominations of many capable males. Once the team is assembled and in action, the staff supervisors should do everything they can to showcase the team and their activities throughout that particular year. The desired effect is that younger females will see an obvious contribution from older female students, and develop a sense of ownership and responsibility to see female influence continue within the team in the future.

These are only a few examples of how to encourage females to participate in student leadership teams, but their principles will apply in every school. Understanding the current objections/reluctance, providing strong role models, facilitating meaningful contributions, and building a generational tradition will all help to ensure that the contribution of female leaders doesn't rely solely on individual inspiration, but rather is part of the culture and fabric of your school. Leading should no longer be unusual, it should be a natural, visible and effective part of your school community.

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1. Select a Widely Relatable Role Model

This article doesn't discuss the various different ways that many schools select senior leaders or school captains (other articles we have published can assist with this). An important consideration is, however, whether the male selected for a high profile role (such as a school captain) is a natural advertisement for future leaders. For example, a school may select a highly academic male as a school captain in order to inspire others to value their own academic ambitions which the school fears is generally lacking. In this example,

more students may consequently aspire in academics. A drawback will be that many males will assume that the school captain role is suitable for an academic achiever and in this example that means a very small pool of males will see themselves as potential leaders. This reality can be harnessed of course, to select a suitable male that is widely relatable with the intention of drawing large numbers of males to the role in the future.

2. The Obvious Vacancy

This strategy may seem like a contradiction to the first strategy of the article. A discerning teacher, however, will be able to judge when each strategy might be suitable. In essence, this strategy involves breaking tradition and deciding against selecting a male school captain for a given year. There will be a likely backlash, and a sensible response would be something along the lines of "we felt the female leaders were much stronger in this year's group so it made sense to select two female captains this time around". This strategy is not simply about making a statement. Instead, it can be harnessed in conversation throughout the year to encourage males to make an increased contribution in the future. In fact, without this helpful conversation, there is a risk that it may have an adverse effect and suggest to males that their contribution has now been structured out of the student leadership model.

3. Run a Personality Profile Assessment

Many students already possess a number of desirable leadership attributes, but have not yet had an opportunity to reflect on their personality and gifting in a structured way. Leading groups of boys (and naturally this strategy applies equally to girls) through a personality profiling exercise can be illuminating for staff and students alike, and can be a catalyst for a young student to begin to consider student leadership. As the process produces a measurable result at the end, there can be a natural discussion starter for teachers, highlighting certain qualities and characteristics as 'excellent qualities for a student leader to possess.' Being able to acknowledge that, as well as recognise the presence of these qualities through testing can be just the catalyst a young man needs to consider aspiring to student leadership.

4. Different Roles for Various Personality Types

Following on from the previous suggestion, there is room for a variety of personality types in a student leadership team. Gone are the days when only the 'Type A' male or 'Alpha' could be the leader – effective leadership is measured by the positive effect on others' lives, rather than by a contest of strength or popularity. With that in mind, ensure that your leadership team provides a diverse range of roles that cater to different personality types. Regardless of whether a male student is more of an up-front or behind-the-scenes personality...whether they are left-brain/right-brain dominant, there should be scope and opportunity to participate and contribute meaningfully within the student leadership team. Such a system facilitates recognition of value, and creates room for diversity.

5. Competition

It is generally accepted that boys can be highly competitive and the sporting field is the perfect example of this. Within an environment of competition many males willingly aspire to leadership. For example, it would be rare for a sporting coach to find that no male in the team wanted to be the team captain. The student leadership context can draw from this reality. Structuring a student leadership model around ongoing house competition (not just in sport) provides an avenue for healthy competition to be fostered. When competitiveness surfaces, so will the willingness of many males to contribute to associated leadership roles that are on offer.

These five ideas can provide a base for encouraging male students in particular to participate in student leadership. Our equivalent article relating to females will broaden the discussion in this important topic of encouraging both males and females to contribute to school leadership. Since there is no one quality or characteristic that defines a leader, there is scope and possibility to engage a wide range of students, and hopefully some of these strategies will prove to be effective in your school community.



Share Your Story...

At GRIP Leadership we love sharing stories. Our conference sessions are full of real life stories and examples of leadership in action. Our presenters share many of their own personal stories and we often share the stories of other students and school groups that we come across.

Has the student leadership group at your school achieved something great this year? We would love to hear about it, and use it as an example to inspire other schools.

From time to time we are sent videos and photos from schools who are keen to show us a successful event or activity that they recently completed. If you have something similar, we would love to see it! You don't have to submit it to us in any fancy format, we would simply be delighted to hear that you are achieving great things (and we won't share it with others unless we have your permission).

To share your stories, photos and videos
with us email
info@gripleadership.com

