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project FIBONACCI® FOUNDATION, INC.

2025 CONFERENCE GUIDEBOOK

7th Annual Project Fibonacci® STEAM Leadership Conference

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ProjectFibonacci.org

PO Box 424 Rome, NY 13442-0424

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MEET THE CHAIRPERSONS

Dr. Andy Drozd
Founder of Project Fibonacci, Chairperson of the Board

President ANDRO Computational Solutions, LLC

Bob Bojanek
Executive Co-Chair / Curriculum Commitee
Shoreline Group, Inc.

Tamalin Martin
Executive Co-Chair / Curriculum Commitee
Camden CSD (Ret.)

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WELCOME

Welcome to the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference Policy Guidebook, where our mission is to inspire and empower the next generation of leaders in STEM and the Arts. Your participation in the conference will equip you with essential skills for your next chapter, whether that be in academia or your career. Together, we will delve into critical thinking, leadership, entrepreneurship, communication, and much more. You'll have the chance to collaborate with students from across New York State and beyond, engaging in hands-on learning while receiving guidance from experts in the field. The guidebook will serve as your resource for attending, including information on how to support your tuition for this transformative conference. It contains vital details about the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference, such as payment plans, scholarship opportunities, and other support options. Our aim is to ensure that every student, regardless of their financial situation, has the chance to attend and gain from this valuable experience.

Steps for Scholars to Attend the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference:

- ☐ **Self-Nomination:** Complete the Scholar Self-Nomination Form: All interested scholars must fill out this form to express their interest in attending the conference.
- ☐ **Reference Nomination Form:** *New Scholars Only* If you are a new scholar, ensure that a Reference Nomination Form is completed and submitted on your behalf.
- ☐ **Schedule a Virtual Interview:** New Scholars Only: After both forms are received, the registration chairperson will reach out to schedule a virtual interview. The interview will include the potential STEAM Scholar and their parent/guardian and will be conducted with our Admissions Board.
- ☐ **Admissions Decision:** Await Acceptance Notice: The Admissions Board will review your interview and notify you of your acceptance into the program.
- ☐ **Registration:** Early Bird registration starts on Monday, March 10th. Register as soon as possible to secure your spot. Pay Deposit: A non-refundable deposit of $250 is required upon registration. This can be paid via credit card or check.
- ☐ **Financial Planning:** After registration and deposit payment, our financial support team will contact your parent/guardian to discuss payment plan options and answer any questions regarding tuition assistance. Review Payment Dates: If participating in a payment plan, ensure you and your family review the payment schedule.
- ☐ **Fundraising and Scholarships:** Scholars are encouraged to fundraise to show initiative in supporting their tuition. Submit Scholarship Funding Applications: Apply for any available scholarships to assist with tuition costs.
- ☐ **Conference Preparation:** Our team will provide updates on the conference schedule, special announcements, and workshop preselection.

Reach Out with Questions:
If you have any questions or need assistance, do not hesitate to contact us!

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ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

THE SCIENCE OF THE UNKNOWN: LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD

JULY 27 – AUGUST 2, 2025

GRIFFISS BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY PARK
ROME, NY

The Project Fibonacci Foundation, Inc. is excited to announce its theme for the 7th Annual STEAM Leadership Conference, The Science of the Unknown: Living in a Material World. The conference presents an intriguing exploration into the realms that straddle the borders of science and speculation. The week-long event will be an intellectual deep dive into a series of controversial topics that have perennially fascinated humanity. These topics ranged from the existence of extraterrestrial life and alien encounters to the depths of paranormal phenomena and the varied landscape of pseudo-sciences.

FROM IMAGINATION TO INNOVATION

Topics We'll Explore:

- Investigate the areas that blur the lines between science and speculation
- Engage in an intellectual exploration of a range of 'controversial' subjects that have consistently intrigued humanity
- Examine materials utilized in space-age technologies, such as the semiconductor chip industry, metamaterials, smart fabrics, and graphene
- Compare science fiction with factual literature to uncover the art of the impossible and reflect on past predictions for the present

Eligibility for STEAM Scholars:

REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 10, 2025

- Students aged 15 to 19
- Enthusiastic about STEM, STEAM, and/or professional growth
- Must be recommended by a teacher, mentor, or guidance counselor*

*RETURNING STEAM SCHOLARS DO NOT NEED A REFERENCE

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VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

Once we have your self-nomination and reference forms, Courtney Newvine, our Registration Chairperson, will arrange a short virtual interview with you and members of our Admissions Board. This guide is designed to provide you with insights on what to expect and how to prepare for this significant discussion.

The interviews are meant for both new scholars and some returning ones, particularly those whose progress over the past year we may need to review.

Purpose of the Interview: The virtual interview serves as a chance for us to gain deeper insights about you beyond the information provided in your nomination forms. Furthermore, this interview will assist in preparing you for future academic and professional interviews, offering you valuable experience in showcasing yourself and clearly communicating your objectives.

To prepare for the interview, consider these tips:

- Review your application details.
- Reflect on key experiences shaping your journey.
- Articulate your goals and alignment with the STEAM Scholar program.
- Practice responses to common interview questions for clarity and confidence.
- Ensure your technical setup is ready for a smooth virtual conversation by testing your internet, microphone, and camera.

What to Expect During the Interview

In the interview, you can anticipate a series of questions aimed at providing us with a deeper understanding of your character, ambitions, and dreams. Our team looks forward to learning about your unique experiences, as well as your future aspirations.

Interview Structure

- Duration: The interview will be brief, focused on efficiently collecting key insights about you.
- Participants: Alongside you, our team members will be there to facilitate the discussion. Your parents or guardians are encouraged to join the interview, as their presence can provide valuable support and context.

MEET THE ADMISSIONS BOARD

Jessica Griffin
Admissions Board / Workshop Coordinator
Director of Human Resources, ANDRO

Ramona Smith
Admissions Board / Judicial Board
Rome Council Woman

Deb Van Slyke
Admissions Board / Curriculum
Retired Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Barb Welch-Drozd
Admissions Board / Judicial Board
Owner of AndroMetaX, Retired LMSW, LCSW

Our Admissions Board is committed to supporting you throughout the process and are available to answer any questions you or your family might have. After your interview, the Admissions Board will review your nominations and the judging rubric to arrive at an admissions decision.

Additional Support:

Courtney Newvine
Registration Chairperson / Interview Scheduler
cnewvine@projectfibonacci.org

Amy (Singletary) Jaworski
Conference Manager / General Inquires
ajaworski@projectfibonacci.org

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CONFERENCE TUITION

We are committed to providing an enriching and exceptional experience for all participants. To continue offering the best possible conference, we must make a necessary adjustment to our tuition fees.

Starting in 2025, the tuition for our conference will be updated from $1,500 to $1,895. This decision was not made lightly and reflects the rising costs associated with maintaining the high quality of our program.

Please note that this is our first tuition increase since our inception in 2016, and even with this adjustment, our tuition remains a deeply discounted rate compared to similar programs.

We are dedicated to inclusivity and ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder any student's participation. Therefore, we continue to actively seek scholarship funding to assist families in need.

Our goal is to provide every student, regardless of financial background, with the opportunity to benefit from this unique and transformative experience. Thank you for your understanding and continued support. We look forward to welcoming you to another inspiring and educational conference.

TUITION COVERAGE DETAILS:

Your all-inclusive tuition of $1,895 for the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference covers a comprehensive week-long experience designed to enrich and inspire. Tuition includes:

- Lodging/Accommodations
- All Meals & Snacks
- Conference Swag
- Exclusive Speaker Access
- Opportunity to Work with Local STEAM Experts
- Interactive Workshops on Creative Skills
- Social Activities
- Outdoor Adventures & Icebreakers
- Entertainment
- Medical & Security Services
- Networking Events - Fuel Your Future Fair
- Keynote Sessions
- Group Fitness Activities
- Guided Tours
- Certificate of Attendance
- Closing Ceremony and Awards Presentation
- Mentorship Opportunities
- Peer-to-Peer Learning Sessions
- Daily Team Challenges with Prizes

STRENGTHEN YOUR SKILLS

By the end of the conference, you will be amazed at how much you can grow and evolve your skills including:

Leadership & Motivation

Teamwork & Collaboration

Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving

Technical Proficiency & Career Exploration

Confidence & Project Management

Strong Communication & Public Speaking

Creativity & Interdisciplinary Work

Adaptability & Visionary Thinking

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NEW FOR 2025

REGISTRATION DEPOSIT

For the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference, we've implemented a new policy mandating a non-refundable deposit of $250 to reserve your place and qualify for scholarship funding. This measure is essential for both attendees and the Project Fibonacci Foundation, Inc., as it affirms your intention to participate and helps us manage resources effectively while reducing potential costs linked to last-minute cancellations.

WHY THE DEPOSIT IS ESSENTIAL

- **Ensures Commitment:** The deposit is a demonstration of your commitment to participate in the conference, which is essential given the limited number of spots available..
- **Avoids Future Fees:** By securing your spot early, you help us avoid additional costs that can arise from last-minute adjustments. This also allows us to focus on enhancing the experience for all attendees.
- **Limited Availability:** The conference has a limited number of spots, making it imperative to register as soon as possible to guarantee your attendance.

We strongly encourage all prospective attendees to complete their registration promptly to take advantage of this opportunity and to ensure they have a place at this transformative event. The deposit amount will be subtracted from your total tuition balance, which means you will only need to pay the remaining balance of $1,645 after your deposit is made.

2025 PAYMENT PLAN

Tuition can be divided into four equal payments:

- **First Payment:** $411 due by April 20, 2025
- **Second Payment:** $411 due by May 20, 2025
- **Third Payment:** $411 due by June 20, 2025
- **Final Payment:** $411 due by July 20, 2025

Please Note: If your tuition is already covered in full by your school, a private organization, or a company, you do not need to participate in the payment plan

The Project Fibonacci Foundation, Inc., accepts both checks and credit cards for payments related to the conference. Please be aware that an additional 3% will be charged for credit card transactions to cover processing fees.

REFUND POLICY

Payments made towards the conference are fully refundable up until June 27, 2025. Should a scholar find themselves unable to attend the conference, they are eligible to receive a refund for all payments made, *with the exception of the non-refundable deposit.*

SCHOLARSHIP REFUND

In the event that a scholar cannot attend the conference, any scholarship funding awarded to them will be reallocated to another scholar who requires financial assistance to participate. This ensures that scholarship resources are optimally utilized to support scholars in need.

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TUITION ASSISTANCE & SCHOLARSHIPS

We are committed to ensuring that financial constraints do not prevent students from attending the conference. Students requiring financial assistance are encouraged to apply for scholarships.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

- **Eligibility:** Open to all students demonstrating financial need.
- **Coverage:** Scholarships may cover up to 50% of tuition, funded by private donors and the Foundation.
    - View our special circumstances section on page 8

SUBMISSION OPTIONS FOR TUITION SUPPORT

To be eligible for tuition support at the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference, you are invited to choose one of the following submission options. Each submission type allows you to demonstrate your unique strengths and commitment to STEAM fields while showcasing your potential impact on the conference community.

Personal Statement Essay
Write an essay detailing why you should be chosen to receive funds to attend the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference. Highlight your passions, your achievements, community involvement, and how attending the conference will contribute to your personal and career goals.

Vision for the Future Essay
In a rapidly changing world, the workforce is significantly transforming due to technological advancements and global market shifts. It is vital to identify and develop the skills necessary for a robust and adaptable workforce. Write an essay exploring essential skills for a stronger future workforce, addressing at least two of the following elements:

- Emerging Technology and AI: Discuss how technologies like AI, automation, and data analytics are reshaping jobs. Identify in-demand technical skills and their significance.
- Relevance of Your Preferred Subjects: Highlight your favorite subjects and their relation to future workforce needs. Explain how knowledge in these areas prepares individuals for new challenges.
- Importance of Soft Skills: Analyze soft skills such as communication, leadership, and critical thinking. Discuss their integration into education and professional development for workforce readiness.
- Societal and Educational Shifts: Reflect on how society and education can adapt to prepare individuals for future careers, emphasizing interdisciplinary learning and lifelong education.

Previous Conference Experience Video
If you have attended a previous conference, create a short video sharing your experiences. Discuss what you learned, how it impacted you, and why you want to attend again.

Essay Guidelines: 250-500 words. Include full name and school district in header. PDF preferred.
Video Guidelines: 2-3 minute video, share via email cnewvine@projectfibonacci.org

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TUITION ASSISTANCE & SCHOLARSHIPS

While we strive to provide financial assistance to as many students as possible, it is important to note that scholarship funding is not guaranteed for every applicant. Our team is committed to working diligently to secure resources and support, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to attend the conference. However, due to limited funding and high demand, not all applicants may receive a scholarship.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OPTIONS

School Support: We recommend that students reach out to their schools to request financial support. Many educational institutions recognize the value of such conferences and are willing to invest in their students' development.

Fundraising: Students are encouraged to engage in fundraising activities to cover the remainder of their tuition. Fundraising not only helps financially but also develops leadership and organizational skills. Refer to our list of potential fundraising options for ideas.

Company Sponsorship: Reaching out to a local company for sponsorship can secure support for attending the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference. Many businesses aim to invest in the future workforce and may view your participation as a community contribution. Identify companies aligned with your interests or supportive of educational initiatives, and craft a compelling proposal that highlights the conference's benefits for your STEAM skills and career impact. This demonstrates a significant level of initiative, reflecting your character and determination, which could pave the way for future internships or job opportunities!

Fundraising Toolkit

Company Sponsorship Example Letter

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

We understand that each student's situation is unique, and we are committed to working with you to find a solution that allows you to participate in the conference.

Assessment Process: Our team will carefully review each request to determine eligibility for additional financial support. This process ensures that assistance is provided to those who need it most, allowing them access to the opportunities offered by the conference.

Confidentiality: Rest assured that all information shared with us as part of this process will be kept confidential. We respect your privacy and are dedicated to handling your application with sensitivity and discretion.

We encourage students facing financial hardship to reach out without hesitation. Our goal is to provide as many students as possible with the chance to benefit from the enriching experiences and networking opportunities at the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference. You are valued, and we are here to support you in every possible way.

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CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

We are committed to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment for all scholars. To ensure a harmonious and productive atmosphere, we have implemented an extensive Code of Conduct that all scholars must adhere to throughout their time at the STEAM Leadership Conference.

Before Opening Day: The Code of Conduct will be provided to all students and their families. This document is essential for understanding the behavioral expectations and responsibilities of each scholar. Families are encouraged to review the Code of Conduct thoroughly with their scholars to ensure clarity and comprehension before the start of the conference.

Opening Day Seminars: You and your family will participate in a Code of Conduct review seminar on opening day. These seminars are designed to ensure that all students and their families are fully aware of our expectations and the rationale behind them. During these sessions, we will also cover the potential disciplinary actions that may be taken if the Code of Conduct is violated.

Importance of Adherence: Adhering to the Code of Conduct is crucial for maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment. It outlines the behaviors that promote mutual respect and cooperation among scholars, faculty, and staff.

Commitment to Community: By understanding and following the Code of Conduct, scholars contribute to a positive and inclusive community where everyone can thrive. We believe that when students are aware of their roles and responsibilities, they can better focus on their academic and personal growth.

ATTENDANCE COMMITMENT POLICY

This is a leadership conference that involves team-building activities and collaboration where you will learn more about critical thinking and ways to problem-solve. This conference is meant to help you grow to be a leader of tomorrow. You are expected to attend workshops and actively participate in team project times. By registering for the conference, you are agreeing to attend the entire duration of the event, which spans one week. This commitment includes staying overnight at the hotel accommodations provided by the conference organizers. Your presence is expected throughout the event to facilitate networking, learning, and participation in scheduled activities.

Responsibility for Fees:

Should you need to depart the conference at any time before its conclusion, you will be fully responsible for any fees incurred as a result of your early departure.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Hotel accommodation fees that may arise due to early checkout.
- Any additional service fees associated with conference activities or amenities.

We recommend planning your schedule carefully to ensure full participation and to avoid unnecessary costs.

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DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

In the event that you are removed from the conference due to a violation of the code of conduct or other disciplinary reasons, please be aware that you will not be entitled to any form of reimbursement. This policy is designed to maintain a respectful and professional environment for all attendees.

Liability for Damages or Fees:

In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, please be aware that if a family member or a STEAM Scholar is removed from the program, they may be held liable for any damages or fees incurred as a result of their actions.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Damages to hotel property or conference facilities.
- Fees associated with any disruptions caused to conference activities.

This policy ensures that all participants are accountable for their actions, maintaining a safe and respectful environment for everyone involved. We ask that all attendees conduct themselves responsibly and respectfully to avoid any such liabilities.

Your commitment to this policy is essential for the success and integrity of the conference. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in adhering to these guidelines. Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact our conference support team. Thank you for your commitment and participation.

We look forward to welcoming you to the 2025 STEAM Leadership Conference and helping you embark on a journey of discovery, growth, and leadership. Together, we can build a brighter future!

LINKS & IMPORTANT DATES

Student Self-Nomination

Reference Nomination

Fundraising Toolkit

Sponsorship Example Letter

March 10: Registration Opens

April 14: Advance Program Launch

June 16: Workshop Pre-Selection Start

July 20: Final Payments Due

July 27 - August 2: Conference

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