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STUDENTS REACH NEW HEIGHTS AT HISPANIC EDUCATIONAL SUMMIT 2016

Location: NC State University's McKimmon Center, Date: Friday, March 11, 2016, Time: 8:00am – 2:30pm

Raleigh, NC, March 2016 – Over 600 middle and high school students representing 36 school systems from all over the state filled the rooms of the Mc Kimmon Center in North Carolina University today to participate in the largest conference for Hispanic students in North Carolina.

This year celebrates the 17th annual edition of the Hispanic Educational Summit, presented by the North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals (NCSHP) and hosted by North Carolina State University. To date, the Summit has reached over 12,000 students in an effort to promote educational opportunities among Hispanic youth in North Carolina.

During the opening ceremony, Duane Larick, Senior Vice Provost, welcomed the public on behalf of NCSU Chancellor Randy Woodson. Honorable Javier Díaz de León, Consul General of Mexico, also delivered inspiring words.

June St. Clair Atkinson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction addressed the participants stating the importance of supporting Hispanic youth. *"Our nation's greatest resource is the minds of our children and youth. We need to offer all students the tools and opportunities to shape a prosperous future, that is what the Hispanic Educational Summit achieves and why we are here today. We believe each student here can make a difference in our State."*

The ceremony continued with professional keynote speaker Fabián Ramírez, who energized and motivated the students to finish high school and pursue a career in higher education. *"Our ceiling is the next generation's floor, because they start where we leave off. When Hispanics graduate, we take ourselves, our family and our culture to the next level."*

Winners of the NCSHP 2015 Stay in School Campaign Video Contest were recognized for motivating their peers to graduate from high school and their videos were shown to the more than 1,000 attendees that applauded their creativity and accomplishments.

Participants attended a day filled with concurrent sessions designed for students to gain the tools necessary to prepare for their high school graduation and pursue higher education. They also received information on programs and services from community supporters and colleges, including NC State University, UNC, Durham Tech, NCCU, ECU, Meredith College and many others as a part of the exhibit hall.

During the closing ceremony, the NCSHP proudly recognized the 2016 North Carolina Hispanic College Fund recipients, awarding them with scholarships that will help them be able to pay for their college education. To close the day of events, Ms. Yesenia Polanco-Galdamez shared her inspiring story of success from being a member of a family that emigrated from El Salvador to the US in the early 80s, to now being the principal attorney and founder of Polanco Law, Inc.

"We are proud to continue to inspire, year after year, the youngest and fastest growing population in North Carolina to get educated and become valuable assets to our state. The Summit Initiative is an event that empowers Hispanic youth and seeks to provide the necessary tools and resources for Latino students to succeed," said Marco A. Zárate, President and Co-Founder of the NCSHP.

NCSHP thanks Diamond Sponsors: Food Lion and Cisco Systems; Platinum Sponsors: Duke Energy and Wells Fargo; and Gold Sponsors: Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Compare Foods, AT&T, PNC, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, Brasfield & Gorrie, Golden Corral, Mt.Olive Pickle Co., North Carolina Farm Bureau, PSNC Energy, RedHat, Stewart Engineering and VIF International Education for helping to make the Summit 2016 a reality.

Since 1999, the **NCSHP** has provided educational services such as scholarships, mentors and tutors, educational conferences and other programs to help keep Latino youth in school and guide them on to a pathway to college. The NCSHP is a statewide 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose only mission is to *promote education among Hispanic youth.* www.thencshp.org. ###