

Exploring Their Future

Exploring aquatic preserves, excavating Hillsborough River banks and cruising around Sarasota Bay were all in a day's work for more than two dozen high school students enrolled in the USF Patel College of Global Sustainability Pre-College program this summer.

The two-week program offered rising juniors and seniors a chance to explore sustainability careers in fields including architecture, renewable energy and marine science.

"We want our program to inspire students by sharing with them new ideas and thinking, and to inform them of the great and exciting opportunities that lie before them in the growing green economy," says Kala Vairavamoorthy, dean of the Patel College of Global Sustainability.

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- ELIZABETH GARLAND

The global sustainability program was one of seven Pre-College programs offered by USF this summer. Begun as a Student Success initiative, Pre-College allows students to explore various majors and careers before beginning their college experience.

"Pre-College is a great opportunity for rising high school juniors and seniors to experience college life and important subject areas in their fields of interest," says Elizabeth Garland, chief business officer, innovative education at University College. "Students are exploring career ideas, getting hands-on experience in labs and in the community, and learning from leading STEM researchers."

In addition, many are getting a taste of their future college home. Following last year's program, 10 of 14 rising seniors applied to and were accepted to USF, five in Honors College.

Pre-College is an "excellent recruitment tool, attracting the best and brightest high school students to USF," says Garland.

More than 100 students from Florida, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Puerto Rico and Colombia participated in this year's Pre-College program. The program is sponsored by University College in conjunction with faculty and staff in colleges and departments across campus, and offers both residential and non-residential sessions. The sessions range from two days to four weeks.

Programs for 2013 were:

- STEM Academy: Diabetes & Medicine (two sessions)
- STEM Research for Scholars
- Global Sustainability
- Computer Science
- Biomedical Engineering
- Community Film-Making

Garland hopes to expand program offerings next year, including more residential programs and additional engineering programs, possibly focusing on robotics.

For now, she is thrilled at the response to the 2013 summer program, including emails from current program graduates, like Jules Hurley, who attended the STEM Diabetes & Medicine program in June, directed by Richard Pollenz, director for the Office of Undergraduate Research at USF.

"Before this camp I was on the fence about a career in medicine," he says, "and after learning so much about so many different fields in medicine, I'm positive it's what I want to do."

ANN CARNEY | USF News

Students in the Global Sustainability and Diabetes & Medicine Pre-College programs conducted field studies and laboratory research under the direction of USF faculty and staff.

