Summer Science Academy Deemed a Success

A different kind of summer school was held this year at the College of Pharmacy -- the new Summer Science Academy for economically disadvantaged high school students who have a strong aptitude in math and science. Selected from the class of rising seniors in Clarke and Oconee counties, 15 students attended a week of classes and field trips focusing on pharmacy and health sciences. Classes were taught by UGA faculty and included laboratory instruction in compounding, discussions on protein synthesis and stem cell research, and how pharmacy impacts everyday life.

“We’re excited about the enthusiastic support for this new program by our students,” said Vivia Hill-Silcott, the College’s diversity coordinator. “Male students are clearly in the minority in pharmacy school, so this program is an opportunity for them to get more information about pharmacy careers.”

“Our hope is that these students will develop enough interest to pursue an academic education in pharmacy or in another health science, hopefully here at Georgia,” she added, noting that classes in veterinary medicine, business and journalism might also be offered in the future “to broaden the experience,” along with a stay in the residence halls.

“I realize now how precise pharmacists must be,” said Sana Pasha, a senior at North Oconee High School who enjoyed learning about different diseases and how they can be treated by many different medicines.

Shaquilla Wise, a senior at Cedar Shoals High School in Athens, is interested in being a chemistry major with the goal of working in the cosmetics industry. She especially enjoyed the experiments making lip balm and fluorescent tablets.

The academy began with an introductory ceremony in which the students received white coats, just as entering pharmacy students do. They also were able to experience campus life by eating in the dining halls, visiting Sanford Stadium and touring the campus. The last day of the Summer Science Academy included student presentations on their experiences and an awards ceremony and luncheon.

All meals and expenses for the commuter program were provided through the Walgreens Diversity Initiative, the Dean Stuart Feldman Foundation Grant, and the UGA chapters of Kappa Psi and Student National Pharmaceutical Association.

A followup session in the fall allowed Hill-Silcott to track the students to see if any had decided to pursue health science careers. Kirsten Smith, now a freshman at Augusta State University, said the program “has and will continue to provide a valuable service to Athens and the neighboring communities.”

Visit the Photo Gallery to see more photos of the Summer Science Academy students.