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ECONOMICS

High schoolers get college knowledge at camp

The Summer Academy to Incite Learning promotes planning for college early

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Their SATs may not be for a few years, but 31 Springfield High School freshmen and sophomores got a taste of University life last week at Summer Academy to Incite Learning.

Designed to get students thinking about college early, the free volunteer-run pro-

gram is put together each summer by the University's economics, psychology and physics departments.

The program began last year with SAIL Co-directors Bruce Blonigen and Bill Harbaugh, both economics professors at the University, making a trip to Springfield Middle School. At SMS, which they chose because of its comparatively low socioeconomic status among area schools, they recruited high school-bound students from eighth-grade math classes.

"They don't necessarily have the means, or maybe

nobody in their family went to college, so it's scary," Harbaugh said. "Not many kids from Springfield High School go to college and we want to do something about it."

He described the five-day economics camp as one-third standard lectures from University professors; one-third college-related activities, such as a tour of the University campus and a talk on how to get into and pay for college; and one-third hands-on demonstrations.

Many of the latter are games, designed to teach the students principles of eco-

nomics in a fun way. In one exercise, everyone got a different playing card, the color of which dictated supplier or demander. Using Hershey's Kisses as money, the suppliers and demanders cut deals and whoever had the most candy at the end won.

SAIL, which is entirely run and staffed by volunteers, got such a good response from Harbaugh and Blonigen's colleagues that they decide to extend the program. The two collaborated with Helen Neville, University professor and director of the Brain

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Development Lab in Straub Hall, to add psychology camp to SAIL.

Nearly everyone from last year's group returned, while 20 new incoming freshmen attended economics camp.

"I like learning new things and that's one of the reasons I came," said Brian Beers, who will start his sophomore year at SHS in September.

His reason for returning? "They bribed me," he joked.

At the end of economics camp last summer, Beers was happy to learn that participants received \$50 gift certificates to the Valley River Center, courtesy of departmental funds.

"I thought it was interesting to learn how psychology works and stuff," he said, on his real reason for coming back.

In psychology camp, Beers and his 10 classmates have gotten an introduction to psychology, tours of the Jordan Schnitzer Art Museum and

the Brain Development Lab, and lessons in different types of psychology, such as developmental, social, clinical, and cognitive neuroscience.

"It's a great group, they're really sharp," said Eric Pakulak, a University doctoral student who volunteers at SAIL's psychology camp. "The thing I'm most happy about is the level of participation. People are paying attention and into it. They seem to be enjoying it."

For next summer, the plan is to extend SAIL to

include a week of physics and nanoscience for third-year participants.

"We hope to make it a University-wide program," Harbaugh said.

Another of Harbaugh's goals includes college funds. As part of the Society of College Scholars, there is a scholarship for one SAIL participant for when he or she eventually goes to college. The long-term goal is to get donors to sponsor the program in the future, allowing SAIL to provide more scholarships.

Harbaugh said he hopes to see some of the kids from SAIL on the University campus in the future.

"We think that college is increasingly important and there's this whole segment of Oregon that's not necessarily on the track to getting there," he said. "As college professors, we've got a real interest in making sure we have a diverse group of smart students."

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