

The USC/Chevron Frontiers of Energy Resources Summer Camp: Training Future Leaders in Energy Efficiency

Since its beginning in 2008, the USC/Chevron Frontiers of Energy Resources summer camp, sponsored by Chevron, provides outstanding high school juniors and high school science and math teachers with the opportunity to take part in a preparatory and interactive training program focusing on various energy resources. The selected participants develop problem solving and team building skills, and are exposed to the career possibilities available in the global energy resources industry. This year, a total of 178 students applied for the program, 20 students were selected to participate, giving the program a student acceptance rate of just 11 percent. Similarly, 27 teacher applications were received and only 5 were selected. Interactive and stimulating, the USC/Chevron Frontiers of Energy Resources summer camp provides its participants with an extraordinary opportunity to gain insight into the energy industry, making it a program that motivated students and teachers should definitely look out for.

The USC/Chevron Frontiers of Energy Resources summer camp not only exposes all participants to the concepts of energy efficiency, but also aids students in discovering their areas of interest in the science disciplines. Students get the chance to experience the college lifestyle by residing on the USC campus, attend lectures by USC Professors, and dine at USC dining halls. Emma Meinke, an upcoming USC Sophomore who attended the camp in 2008, expressed her liking of the summer program. "The camp not only helped me find true enjoyment in science and engineering, but also presented me with real world applications that are absolutely worth working toward...The environment allowed us to ask any question that came to our minds, and the speakers were eager to toss around ideas with the bright young teens who are not afraid to think outside the box...The camp was also extremely helpful in my decision to study chemical engineering." Educational and fun, the USC/Chevron summer program promotes exciting new technologies and inventive ideas, elevating its participants to become innovative thinkers who just might become tomorrow's great leaders.

"It's an eye-opening experience," states Riana LoBu, a high school senior who participated in the USC/Chevron summer camp in 2009. "It was really great and honestly life-changing for me...It gave me my first taste of what the engineering world is like and helped me develop an interest in alternative fuels that may turn into something I may end up pursuing as a career." LoBu recalls that the camp was not only informative, but also very enjoyable. She was even able to get to know USC professors who came to her assistance for her high school science project. In particular, Dr. Ershaghi of USC's Viterbi School of Engineering gave LoBu great insight for her science project. LoBu recalls that Dr. Ershaghi had introduced her to a book focusing on the methanol alternative that was written by a USC professor. "The book ended up being the key to my project, and gave me the idea on which I built my project. I [also] periodically sent Dr. Ershaghi updates on my project and he either helped me himself or redirected me to another professor when I needed some advice. Professor Narayan, one of the USC professors I e-mailed for help from the Loker Hydrocarbon Institute, was also extremely helpful, for he aided me immensely with my project through e-mail." LoBu's science project was a great success, winning second place in her high school science fair and first place at the Los Angeles County Science Fair. She also won the Woman Geoscientist Award, and was recognized by the Meteorological Society in its National Chapter.

LoBu was not the only camper who walked away from the camp with close interactions with USC professors. Catherine Chen, a summer camp participant in 2008, also contacted USC professors after leaving the USC/Chevron summer program. "It was through this camp that I came into contact with Dr. Isaac Maya, who lectured on Nuclear Chemistry," recalls Chen. "Really fascinated by it, I contacted him and asked if I could intern with him. Because he agreed, I found myself back at USC the following summer, interning at the Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events

(CREATE).” Chen’s research with CREATE also became the basis for her senior project in high school. Since, Chen has received the Presidential Scholarship for USC, a prestigious full tuition award. Indeed, the interactive set up of the USC/Chevron Frontiers of Energy Resources program allows its participants to apply and progress what they’ve learned far beyond the one week training camp.



Emma Meinke



Catherine Chen



Riana LoBu