
THE MACOMB DAILY

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OU camp focuses on career preparation

By Heidi Bitsoli
For The Macomb Daily



Macomb County high school students, from left, Cameron Livernois, Steven Scaglione and Victoria Dennis listen during a career training session at the Oakland University Anton Frankel Center. Macomb Daily staff photo by David Dalton

Some teens go to summer camp to kayak and hike. For a group of high schoolers from Macomb, Oakland and St. Clair counties, they also were going to camp, but the focus was on career preparation.

For four days, more than 35 teens ages 14-17 gathered at Oakland University's Anton/Frankel Center in downtown Mount Clemens to take part in OU's Career Exploration Camp.

Interactive, hands-on activities were planned in several in-demand disciplines: engineering and computer science; criminal justice and social work; nursing and health sciences; and, finally, business.

The camp experience cost each student \$95 but they received a wealth of eye-opening career ideas in addition to breakfast, lunch and a T-shirt.

For the business venture, the teen teams put their heads together to plan a business model. Everyone took the Myers-Briggs Personality Test, and the results helped place them in varying roles, from CEO to management information systems. Each team had a line of footwear to create, name, budget and market. After some time to develop this model, they would pitch it to OU faculty, who in turn would offer feedback on what worked and what needed work.

Two groups were thinking eco-friendly footwear. Another team, Motor City Footwear, was thinking work boots. Their motto would be "Putting America Back to Work," according to team CEO Victoria Dennis, a student with the International Academy of Macomb. The final day of camp was abuzz with energy, but the whole week was full of activity and information.

For nursing, the teens learned to do blood pressure checks and worked with mannequins to diagnose and provide emergency care. Health services had kids whipping up trail mix and determining the nutrients and calories.

Social work focused on aging, and teens wore arthritic gloves for tasks like opening jars. They also tried on special glasses to impair their vision so they had an aged person's perspective.

Engineering careers, for example, focused beyond mechanical elements and into biomedical and alternative energy, as well as into computer science. Students had fun, too, building their own light bulbs, a la Thomas Edison, and making batteries out of lemons and tuna cans.

For criminal justice day Macomb County Chief Judge Mark Switalski talked about federal and county law. Cameron Livernois, operations manager for team Motor City Footwear and a student at Chippewa Valley, was excited about that guest since he is interested in a criminal law career, and Switalski's talk answered many questions.

The goal of the Career Exploration Camp is to help teens focus on career options while still in high school. "The more undecided a student is, the more likely he or she will need to spend extra money on years in college earning a degree," said Julie Trube, director of Enrollment and Community Outreach at Oakland University-Macomb. "Career exploration will help them to create a more realistic educational and career plan."

Kids are receptive, too. "We actually had a waiting list for camp," Trube said. To learn more, visit oakland.edu/macomb or call 248-370-3910.