

SIUE students showcase summer experimental learning opportunities in STEM

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE - Fifteen Southern Illinois University Edwardsville students spent their summers retaining and sharing new knowledge, and inspiring youth and adults to get excited about science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The students participated in a diverse array of internships through SIUE's Robert J. Noyce Scholarship Science and Math Grants, coordinated by the SIUE STEM Center.

They shared details of their experiential learning opportunities with fellow students, faculty and staff during the Noyce Summer Internship Showcase held Thursday, Sept. 29. Among those interested in learning more was SIUE Chancellor Dr. Randy Pembroke.

"Everybody's talking about how we can successfully get more people interested in STEM fields," Pembroke said at the showcase. "As I learned more about these students' internships, I could see them making applications of the things they have learned, and getting others excited about that!"

"I've always loved learning and having all sorts of random knowledge," said Rebecca Krasny, a biological sciences major, specializing in medical science. "Being at the Field Museum in Chicago this summer gave me an incredible wealth of knowledge. I worked with kids and adults to ignite their curiosity."

"This internship gave me the opportunity to reach people from all over the country," said Christian Watts, a sophomore pre-pharmacy student. "Opportunity is key. You really don't learn anything until you get involved. I'm considering going into pediatric pharmacy, so working at the Saint Louis Science Center and gaining experience educating children was definitely motivating."

"Through programs like this, we are not only keeping SIUE students focused on STEM fields, but they're also sharing their enthusiasm with younger generations," added Pembroke. "These students enjoyed watching people learn and creating experiences that allowed people to better understand complex materials."

The grants are funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and provide summer internships for 200 hours of in-service training for qualified SIUE freshmen and sophomores, and local community college students who are interested in STEM careers.

Locations and programs for the 2016 cohort included the District 7 Summer Zone, SIUE's Odyssey Science Camp, Watershed Nature Center, William Leonard Public Library, the Field Museum of Natural History, Digital East St. Louis, Madison County Housing Authority, the Saint Louis Science Center and Adler Planetarium.

The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville [Center for STEM Research, Education and Outreach](#) comprises an independent group of researchers and educators, innovating ways to engage students and the public in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Within the SIUE Graduate School, the Center brings together research faculty, graduate students and practitioners to conduct education research. Center staff develop and teach hands-on STEM programming as well as online citizen science and astronomy initiatives. The Center contributes educational expertise to SIUE undergraduate classes and provides professional development for K-12 teachers. The Center boasts a significant library of equipment and resources, which are available for loan at no cost to campus and regional instructors. For more information, visit stemideas.org or contact STEM Center Director Sharon Locke at [\(618\) 650-3065](tel:6186503065) or stemcenter@siue.edu.