

SIUE School of Engineering Summer Camp's Robust Experiences Help Teens Find their Best Fit

by Megan Weiser
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EDWARDSVILLE - A future in engineering presents boundless opportunities to become an innovative, impactful leader. But, given the robust possibilities, it can be difficult for teens to decide which focus area they may enjoy most.

That's why Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Engineering's (SOE) Summer Camp exposes high school students to the broad array of options within each of its academic disciplines, to help them find their best fit, and get excited about their future career.

The SOE's 2019 Summer Camp features hands-on activities and field trips related to civil, electrical, industrial, mechanical, mechatronics or robotics engineering, construction management and computer science. The SOE is welcoming 51 students, grades 9-12, from across the country for two week-long camp sessions being held June 2-7 and June 16-21.

"It's always exciting to see our campers apply their enthusiasm, creativity and innovative spirit to the numerous experiential activities we provide at camp," said SOE Associate Dean Chris Gordon, PhD. "Campers come from across the country to experience the School of Engineering's unique facilities, programs, partnerships and expertise. Several campers return to campus as freshmen with a head start on pursuing the program area that excites them the most."

During the SOE Summer Camp, participants tour Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery and get a first-hand look at the water treatment processes that occur at SIUE's Environmental Resources Training Center. Engaging camp activities include drone programming, robot creation, structure building, manufacturing challenges, computer game development and more.

"The different types of engineering are a lot broader than I originally thought," said Mackenzie Kimble, of Edwardsville. "Like with civil engineering, we've learned about the wet side with waterways and the dry side with houses."

Kimble attended SIUE's Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day during grades 5-8. The SOE Summer Camp's high school focus, she says, and the chance to live on campus, have further amplified her excitement for engineering.

"Camp gives you a taste of everything, so you can get an idea of what you want to do for college," she added. "And, getting to experience the campus life while staying in the residence hall has been great."

Jeremy Furman, of Florissant, Mo., describes Summer Camp as a fun opportunity for problem-solvers and those who like to engage in hands-on learning, even if they don't want to pursue engineering as a career.

“Robots and drones are fun to play with, so this is an overall fun camp for anyone,” he explained. “I have a family history of engineers, so it's been a great experience for me to decide which specialization I like best. I've found mechanical and civil engineering to be the most interesting. Camp is a great learning experience.”

Current SIUE SOE students serve as camp counselors, offering mentorship, helping with activities and ensuring a comfortable atmosphere in which all campers can thrive.

“Before college, I was a camp counselor for many years, so I love the camp atmosphere,” said junior mechanical engineering major Daeja Daniels, of Peoria. “Not only is camp helping these students decide what they want to do next, but also it's helping solidify my interests. I had people who helped me figure out that I wanted to go into engineering, so I hope to help these students in return.”

The SIUE School of Engineering offers one of the most comprehensive and affordable engineering programs in the St. Louis region with eight undergraduate degrees, five master's degrees and a cooperative doctoral program. Students learn from expert faculty, perform cutting-edge research, and participate in intercollegiate design competitions. Companies in the metropolitan St. Louis area provide students challenging internships and co-op opportunities, which often turn into permanent employment. Students gain hands-on experience in the School's state-of-the-art facilities, including the new Fowler Student Design Center.