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Summer program shows youth that college is possible

August 7, 2007

This summer SF State was the proving ground for a new joint initiative between the California State University system and Aim High, a nonprofit organization based in San Francisco that ensures students will be prepared to

succeed in college. The program provided targeted instruction and support for 60 seventh and eighth grade students from San Francisco's Mission, Sunset, Oceanview and Richmond districts.

The five-week program, which ran from June 25 through July 27, was co-directed by Jaime Jacinto, SF State lecturer in education, and Helen Serafino, an Aim High teacher and site director.

"The SF State College of Education is an innovative leader in creating college access programs for students from the San Francisco Unified School District," said Jacinto. "The success of the Aim High program on this campus is due to our previously established programs such as Step to College."

Aim High organized and provided the program in collaboration with SF State's College of Education. Traditionally held on elementary, middle and high school campuses in San Francisco, the college campus locale exposed students to a larger world.

Classes were held each weekday from 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., covering math, science, humanities and current affairs in the morning. After lunch provided by the Mayor's Lunch Program, the students participated in recreational and cultural enrichment activities including field trips, scholastic competitions, spoken word performance, digital filmmaking, art and dance.

Participating students received SF State I.D. cards that gave them access to the University's library and computer lab workshops.



Aim High students and instructors in SF State's Burk Hall.

Program instructors included SF State faculty, graduates of the SF State College of Education teacher credential program, and graduate and undergraduate students. High school and college students -- some graduates of Aim High -- served as teaching assistants.

"Next year we hope to extend our program to the CSU campuses in Hayward and San Jose," said Serafino, a graduate of the SF State College of Education. "We hope that even more CSU students will participate and possibly become college coaches and mentors for Aim High graduates during their high school years."

Aim High students are expected to attend each summer for three years. According to Aim High tracking surveys, 98 percent of the students who complete the program graduate from high school and 98 percent of these students matriculate to college.

Yolanda Newman of San Francisco said that four of her children are Aim High graduates. "It challenges the outgoing students and gives the more introverted the opportunity to focus and gain confidence," she said.

Observers of the program at SF State this summer included Roberta Achtenberg, Chair of the CSU Board of Trustees, Achtenberg, whose son was an Aim High teaching intern for four years, said that she was looking forward to the duplication of the SF State model at other CSU campuses. "These kids need to find a pathway to college," she said. "This program shows them it is possible."

-- [Denize Springer](#)

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