



# XAVIER

UNIVERSITY *of* LOUISIANA



## **CHEMSTAR: THE RIGHT MIX FOR PROMISING HIGH SCHOOLERS**

When the curtain closed on this summer's ChemStar program at Xavier University of Louisiana, some 69 high school students – mainly juniors from Orleans and surrounding parishes – left the college campus knowing what a periodic table is and how it is used to identify elements.

In contrast, most of their high school peers have yet to crack open a chemistry book.

For three weeks, enterprising young scholars like 16-year-old Ty Tubbs, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader at De La Salle High School in New Orleans, and Amari Hurst, a 15-year-old from Riverdale High School in Jefferson LA, traded their summer vacation leisure time for the rigors of Xavier's prestigious pre-college chemistry course, which meant participating in lectures, group study, lab work, and homework. And both are glad they did.

“It was fun,” said Tubbs, whose long-term goal is a career in mechanical engineering, meteorology, or veterinary medicine. “We’ve learned so much about chemistry – things I never knew. I feel like it has really prepared me for this coming school year. “

Hurst concurred, although unlike Tubbs, Hurst is eyeing a career field that doesn’t really require much knowledge of chemistry. She’s more into public relations or fashion design, but she knows in order to fulfill that dream, she has to pass high school chemistry first.

“I joined ChemStar so that I could just have a basic knowledge of chemistry going into my tenth grade year, and it really has helped a lot,” she said. “I’m not going in blindsided. I now know what to expect.”

Leah Deloch, a 2013 Xavier alumna who just completed her second year co-directing the ChemStar program, said there are a number of reasons why this summer program has been successful through the years. And she should know, as a fulltime chemistry and physics teacher at East St. John High School in Laplace LA, she has witnessed first-hand the advantage her students get from the non-credit course.

“Primarily self and peer motivation comes to mind,” said Deloch. “I also credit the environment. It breeds positive engagement and cooperative learning to where they (the students) help each other.”

“We’re not just preparing them for chemistry, but we’re preparing them for the rigorous studying and having to digest information that they’ll need for college,” she added. “We teach them a new skill everyday – it’s a very fast- paced course. We are specifically giving them the tools that they need to be prepared for high school chemistry.”

Tubbs, Hurst, and their fellow 67 ChemStar scholars are ready.

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