



XAVIER

UNIVERSITY *of* LOUISIANA



SUPER SCHOLAR EXCEL PROGRAM A GOOD FIT FOR COLLEGE BOUND STUDENTS

New Orleans LA – Hiram Cormier, a 17-year-old senior attending Da Vinci School in Los Angeles, has another year to think about his college major. Right now his interests are all over the place: he’s considering business, law, social work, and education, But while that decision hangs in the balance, he knows one thing is for sure: attending the SuperScholar Excel at Xavier University of Louisiana this past summer was one of the best decisions of his young life.

He recalls being in class when there was a very vocal discussion on whether jails and or prisons should be abolished due to the disproportionate number of people of color incarcerated. Cormier felt the topic was fitting, especially for him as a young male African American. Having such discussions now will help him be better prepared for college and life thereafter.

“There’s a whole wide range of issues going on in the world that need to be addressed,” said Cormier. “Since I want to be one of those people who will step up and try to help change some things that need to be changed, it’s important to have opportunities like this to express your opinion, to hear different viewpoints, and to think things out.”

Cormier was one of 30 rising high school seniors from across the country who participated in prestigious, three-week pre-college program that provided its participants with a vigorous and engaging curriculum that promoted academic growth and exposed students to the cultural and educational richness of New Orleans through field trips and activities while experiencing college life.

“We are here to push the boundaries of their (the students) comfort zones and lay a solid foundation so they are academically, mentally, and socially prepared to enter the next phase of their lives, which is college,” said Javon Bracy, program director of SuperScholar Excel and a Xavier grad, class of 2014.

The students who thrive in the program are those who have an interest in the liberal arts, social sciences, humanities, business, law or education. According to Bracy, the non-credit course touched on speech and debate, philosophy, African American history, College 101 and quantitative analysis. It’s all based around curriculum that encompasses reading, writing, math, and vocabulary development with supplemental exercises in oral communication, presentation skills, critical thinking and reasoning skills.

Participants are prepped for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), which they take both before and after the program. The objective is to build skills in order to enhance their performance on standardized tests.

It’s not all work. This summer the students took in tours of the French Quarter, the Riverwalk, Studio B, and other venues that afforded them the opportunity to soak in New Orleans’ rich culture and history, not to mention the best music and food this side of the Mason-Dixon line.

Of course, no Xavier program would be complete without a community service component. To that end the students spent one hot summer afternoon volunteering at Giving Hope Food Pantry of New Orleans East, where they assisted those who were picking up food, restocking, and distributing.

“At Xavier, service is ingrained into the culture of who we are,” said Bracy. “It’s not just the right thing to do, it’s a way of life, and I feel it is important to expose students to that idea through a service project while they are here.”

Summers can get rather warm in the Crescent City, and that service project left as lasting an impression on Cormier as did the academic program. It did not, however, temper his enthusiasm.

“To anyone considering this program, I recommend bringing lots of shorts and T-shirts,” he said jokingly. “But if you’re serious about going on to college, attending SuperScholar Excel is a must. It’s a legit college experience.”

###