SMILE Program Overview

The SMILE Program offers afterschool academics enrichment in science and mathematics and college readiness for students in grades 4-12. The mission of the SMILE Program is to help students acquire skills, knowledge, aspirations, and attitudes to prepare them for higher education and to increase the numbers of historically underrepresented students from rural underserved communities who graduate high school qualified to enroll in college and pursue careers in math, science, engineering, health professions, and teaching.

Summer Bridge Program

SMILE also offers a college transition program called the Summer Bridge Program. The Summer Bridge Program is designed to help incoming OSU students "bridge the gap" between high school and college. It exposes students to campus and community resources and assists them in building skills that will support them throughout their college careers all while also introducing them to the emerging field of Bioenergy. This program is funded through a USDA Bioenergy grant.

Experience working with underrepresented students

During my first year at Oregon State University, I participated in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP).

The program provided:
- College Readiness
- Campus networking
- Academic Support
- Mentorship

During the previous three summers, I have worked along side the CAMP program to facilitate the Oregon Migrant Leadership Institute (OMLI).

The institute provided:
- Experience facilitating discussions
- Outreach to communities via our students
- Increase awareness of Higher Education among high school students
- Experience evaluating OMLI

Responsibilities

- Recruit summer bridge program participants
- Outreach to Campus Resources and Professionals
- Assist in creating professional development material for our mentors

Challenges

- Convincing students of the benefits of participate in a bridge program
- Maintaining communication with students after their acceptance
- Communicating solely over phone calls/emails with students
- Developing and gathering materials for mentor training

The Program is Here!

My internship is extended through the summer bridge program, which will allow me to work as a mentor. As mentors, our goal is to provide the students with adequate guidance and build a peer support network. I look forward to working with the group of mentors in creating a supportive, wide network.

Future Implications

I have participated in bridge programs as a participant and support staff. My previous roles were post-planning and I was unaware of the stresses and time commitments needed to plan a bridge program. This experience was enormous and crucial to the program's existence. This experience added to my repertoire of skills, which will benefit the students I will work with in future positions.

The SMILE Summer bridge program has strengthened my passion for working with transitional students. My intention is to work as a high school teacher in the coming years. I plan to stress the need for college readiness and to encourage more students to see college as more than just a possibility, but reality.