

Internship Program Nurtures the Scientists of the Future

The Clinic's new internship program gives 41 top high school science students the chance to explore scientific careers.

While many high school students were working at the mall or flipping burgers this summer, Orange High School student Stephanie Richman was in the Clinic's Cancer Biology Lab from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays mapping genes in mice – more than 400 mice, in fact.

“I learned firsthand what it's like to work in a research lab and interact with doctors,” says Richman, one of 41 area high school students selected for the Clinic's new Science Internship Program. “This is a great influence in my academic life because I've learned a multitude of new experiments in the field of genetics.”

The Science Internship Program is one of the first projects for the Office of Civic Education Initiatives, launched in June under the direction of Rosalind Strickland (see story on page 3). The internship program has enabled juniors and seniors from area public and private high schools to work in a Cleveland Clinic Health System research program.

“We interviewed more than 60 students from area high schools with stellar grades and references and selected these 41 students,” says Strickland. “The goal is to foster their interest in science and research and to expand their experience beyond the classroom. They have been a wonderful group of students to work with.”

In departments across the system, these high school students have brought with them their enthusiasm for science and they have earned a small income for their work. Terrell Garner, an aspiring dentist who goes to East Technical High School in Cleveland, interned with Thomas Cowper, D.D.S., and Dental Lab Technician Julius Draper in Dentistry, where he had the chance to “brainstorm with doctors,” read panoramic radiographs and work on a dental prosthesis.

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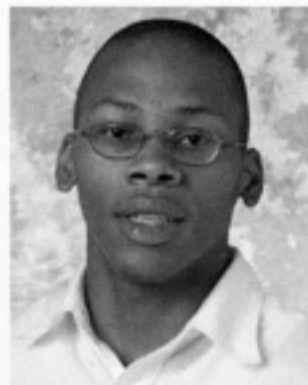
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"This internship has helped me improve my research and oral presentation skills. It's better than any summer job you could have," says Garner. "We also had the chance to get together with all of the interns from the different schools."

Every Wednesday, the student interns had a day of learning away from their project at another Clinic, Health System or outside site. One of the most popular outings was to the Body Worlds 2 exhibit at the Great Lakes Science Center, where Clinic physicians gave them a hands-on tour of the human anatomy on display.

"These weekly outings gave the students a chance to see what is happening in different parts of the Clinic and Health System," says Strickland. "And they could make new friends and network with other science-minded students."

"I liked the program because it gave me the opportunity to do research while still in high school and work alongside some truly remarkable doctors," says Westlake student Konrad Sawicki, who has aspirations of studying medicine and becoming a cardiologist. His research project with Internal Medicine at the Westlake Family Health Center with



Terrell Garner



Stephanie Richman



Konrad Sawicki

Mary Walborn, M.D., focused on how to improve clinical mammography rates. "This gave me more experience in the biological sciences," he says enthusiastically.

"Konrad Sawicki was like a breath of fresh air," says Dr. Walborn. "It was refreshing to watch him delve into Health Maintenance Data and find ways of improving the process of data collection."

Stephanie Richman's mentor, Clemencia Colmenares, Ph.D., Cancer Biology, says, "I think the program is a great success. Stephanie has been a big help in doing genetic testing in the mice to find markers that may be associated with cleft lip and palate in humans. She was

really fun to have around and very interested in the lab and the molecular explanations."

On Aug. 12, eight of the students gave a final presentation about their research projects this summer. Research Day at the InterContinental Hotel and Conference Center concluded the 2005 Science Internship Program.

"We selected eight students to talk about their work this summer," says Strickland. "This event was a thank you to all of the interns for their hard work and dedication. We look forward to the future for these students and are already planning the Science Internship Program for next summer." ■