



Special Edition Newsletter

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Summer 2020

Summer Bridge 2020

Eagle STEM Summer Bridge Program Highlights

by Amanda Cavin

Special points of interest:

- Students comments about Summer Bridge

The sixth Winthrop Eagle STEM Scholars Summer Bridge Program to transition high school students to college began July 17 and ended July 31. But boy-oh-boy did it look different! Twelve students participated in academic and team building activities for approximately four weeks. All graduated from high schools or home schools in South Carolina except for one who graduated from high school in New York. There are six Biology, two Chemistry, and two Computer Science, and two Math majors.



Amanda Cavin

We had three peer mentors this summer: David Brandyburg, a junior chem-

istry major; Kenny Butler, a junior chemistry major; and Brooklyn Clive, a sophomore Math major. The comprehensive program included chemistry and math classes (6 credit hours to be applied to the 14 hours of math and science credits required for the state scholarship enhancement), laboratory safety and techniques training, workshops, speakers, and peer instruction. Student progress meetings to discuss grades, concerns, and issues were held with program staff at regular intervals. Team building and social activities were held weekly. COVID was of major impact to our Summer Bridge program. We started our program with masks and social distancing and ended with the last two-and-a-half weeks being delivered virtually. This meant that students were unable to shadow in SURE labs. However, student comments indicated that their preparation in this program was still

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What did the Mentors Think About Summer Bridge?

Brooklyn Clive - This past summer, I had the honor of being a peer mentor for the Eagle STEM Summer Bridge which, allowed me to meet and grow close to 12 wonderful scholars. I enjoyed helping them settle in on campus over the summer and preparing them for their fall semester experience. I was able to learn about them individually and provide them with guidance for their time here at Winthrop. They are a wonderful group of students that have also helped me in ways that they will never know. It was definitely a learning experience for us all. This summer bridge



Clive

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Faculty's Comments on the Summer Bridge Program



Harris

Dr. Cliff Harris - "This past summer, we had yet another successful summer bridge program, even despite the numerous challenges faced this year. Twelve students from all different regions and walks of life came together as a cohort for 4 challenging weeks. Despite the difficulties presented by the COVID-19 protocols, the students were upbeat, positive and excited to learn. They showed remarkable resolve and maturity, and responded well to the challenges set before them. As the professor for the introductory chemistry course, I was very impressed with the academic and professional growth that I witnessed in such a short span of time, and the ability of the students to adapt to the rigor of a collegiate STEM course. One major benefit from the summer was that the students were able to catch an early glimpse of how their first year of college would look with virtual and hybrid classes, and the restrictions of social distancing. Even without the luxury of being able to participate in some of our annual extracurricular activities like visiting the Mint Museum, or taking a trip to the zoo, or doing an "escape room", the students were still able to build strong rapport. They spent a lot of time together via ZOOM, and played fun games like "Mafia". I was very impressed by the incredible level of admiration, respect and togetherness amongst this cohort. It also appears that the research talks and rotations had a profound impact. Many of our scholars are already interested in undergraduate research opportunities, and are looking to begin building their resumes for graduate and professional school, even at this early stage of their academic careers. I'm looking very forward to helping these scholars reach the next level." ■

Dr. Thomas Polaski - "The Eagle STEM Summer Bridge Program in 2020 was a wild ride. I taught MATH 101H (Algebra and Trigonometry for Calculus) for the second time in the program, reviewing large amounts of algebra and the ever-popular trigonometry. Due to the ongoing COVID -19 pandemic, we had to change the course design a couple of times on the fly. I learned a lot about Zoom and Blackboard! The class was designed to better prepare students for calculus and other STEM courses and to expose students to the internal discipline needed to succeed as a college student while providing plenty of help as they begin this adjustment. The daily practice in MATH 101H included online homework assignments and in-class quizzes. The students were a lot of fun to get to know—very inquisitive, friendly, and willing to work. All of the students in this excellent cohort successfully completed the class and showed potential to become successful Winthrop students. I look forward to monitoring their progress at Winthrop and beyond; in fact, I have five of my summer students in my Calculus 1 class this semester!" ■



Polaski

2020 Eagle STEM Summer Bridge Participants



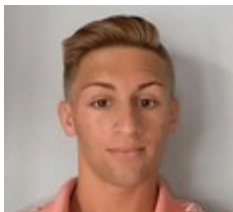
What did the Students Think About Summer Bridge?

Jordyn Benson - My experience with the summer bridge program and being a part of the 2020 Summer cohort was extremely memorable for me. At the beginning, we



Benson

were all asked what we wanted to gain from this experience. Many of us said that we hoped that it would help to make our transition from high school to college more successful. As I am now 2 weeks into the fall semester, I can definitely say that it did just that. From the different workshops and having to navigate classes daily, I think the accelerated workload of the summer made the more spaced out and schedule for the fall seem easier to handle. We made a lot of connections and friendships amongst each other, we now have a network to help us through the rest of college. Advising help from STEM faculty, mentors, and professors this summer also helped me in creating the best plan possible for me to be successful in my next few years here. I would highly recommend the experience to any one who is able to apply to the program. ■



Fults

Brayden Fults - The Eagle STEM Scholars Summer Bridge Program was a once in a life-time opportunity. It allowed me to get used to Winthrop's campus, get a feel for what college life is like, experience a college class before the fall semester, build connections with my fellow cohort, and take classes that would check off requirements for my course checklist. Summer bridge also helped me determine what study habits would work in a college setting and what study habits I needed to nip in the bud. Overall, summer bridge was a fun experience, except for Covid-19 cutting the program short. I would highly recommend that freshmen who can experience summer bridge, do so. ■

Sydney Helms - As I am beginning my Freshman year at Winthrop, I am so incredibly thankful for the Eagle STEM Summer Bridge Experience. This summer I took classes that helped me to remember the skills I learned in high school and earned a good number of credits, but it gave me a lot more than just that. I

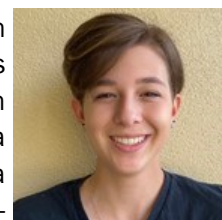
Ross Friend - Summer Bridge this summer was quite the experience! We started out learning about how our summer was going to be, all the rules and regulations we had to follow due to COVID restrictions, but more importantly meeting each other. One thing that was always stressed to us was that if we were to take away one thing from the summer, it would be the friendships and bonds that we would build. Those



Friend

bonds ended up becoming the most important thing there. Around one and a half to two weeks in, we were quarantined, and had to finish the summer virtually. This would come to be a challenge, as we had to stay in zoom calls for hours on and every day, with work that was complex enough to be hindered by this. It was those bonds we made that helped everyone to get through the summer. The work was challenging on its own, running at a very fast pace, with little room to take breaks on a day to day basis. However, we had each other to learn off of, but the professors were also more than willing to help. In a tight schedule, they would generally always respond relatively immediately, answering whatever question we may have had. The director, teaching assistant, and peer mentors were always there for us as well. They did things ranging from organizing our ever changing schedule, providing nice meals, helping us with our work, or even just playing games in our down time. Overall, the experience is super fun, I got to meet a ton of great people, make new friends, and learn a lot of new things! ■

have at least one person that I know in every single class that I am taking this semester that I can reach out to when I am confused or need help. I found a good group of friends and even a roommate. I know some of my teachers and already feel comfortable reaching out to them. Above all, I have a support system of both peers and adults that are ready and willing to help me with problems both academic or otherwise. It is not what I pictured myself doing my summer before college, it was stressful at times and I found myself overwhelmed more than once, but it has helped me in so many ways already and made me a lot less terrified to start college. ■



Helms

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Gwen Krauss - After four years of high school, there are people I couldn't name no matter how hard I try; after four weeks of the summer bridge program, and only two were in person, I can name everybody involved.



Krauss

The experience I got to have with my classmates, professors and my advisors was one I'll never forget and while it was unconventional due to reasons that we couldn't control. I enjoyed every second of it and I hope that next year's group has at least half as much fun as I got to have. I made friends and study buddies and I got to learn about what Winthrop's STEM majors offer with research which is something I can't wait to get involved in. We got to explore the campus in safe ways, and while it ended online, I still got to interact with the people who made my summer amazing. We learned about everything from microplastics in the ocean to using math to help with AIDS from amazing and friendly professors, and while not everything piqued my interest it was an amazing opportunity to be able to discover what my home for the next four years has to offer. ■

Courtney Miller - I really enjoyed my experience with the summer bridge program. I built a lot of wonderful relationships with the other students and with the professors involved in the program. The relationships you create are the best part of the program in my opinion. Another aspect I enjoyed was getting the experience of living on campus and going to classes. I feel extremely prepared to go into the Fall semester because of the knowledge I gained during the program. I am thankful for being able to participate in the summer bridge program because without it, I would be stressed about going into my first semester of college. I am going in with six credit hours and four cultural events under my belt. I am excited to continue my experience as an Eagle STEM Scholar and I am very glad I got to experience the summer bridge program. ■



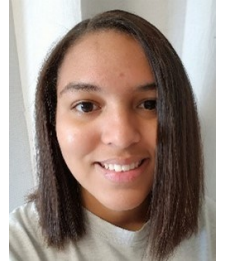
Miller



Smith

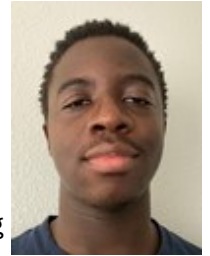
Teagan Smith - The summer bridge program is the most beneficial thing I did to prepare for college. I got to meet new people, learn my way around campus, and experience what it was like to be in a college class. My favorite part of the program was being around people who have similar goals in life. The

Ma'Liah Maddox - The summer bridge experience is one that I will never forget. The program prepared me by letting me learn my way around campus while adjusting to being away from home for the first time. This program made me realize the differences between high school and college classes while surrounded by people in the same situation as me. I was able to meet two professors, both of whom I have again this fall semester. I would do it again since I feel prepared for college in a way that I hadn't before. ■



Maddox

Josiah Mugabe - The summer bridge experience was interesting. The schedule was jam packed due to COVID-19, but it was nice because it was a very structured schedule. The social interaction was limited due to Winthrop and CDC guidelines regarding social distancing. On a more informal note, it was an amazing experience. The fact that we are all STEM students means that I have met at least one of them in my STEM classes, which makes the first day a lot less awkward than it has been with people that I just don't know. Amanda and Shea were amazing in my humble opinion, as the heads of this program. They made it clear what was expected of us which made the whole program run smoothly. Despite the classes being rough, due to the time constraints, the help that our peer mentors provided was always on point. In other words, I heartedly recommend the program and hope that I will be a peer mentor as well. ■



Mugabe

.support that I received from Amanda, Shea, and even the peer mentors, made me feel comfortable during my transition into college. The classes that we took were definitely challenging, but so is the STEM career path. The professors are understanding, and they care, so the classes are manageable. I was extremely hesitant about participating in the summer bridge program at first, but I am so glad that I did. I met my roommate, and some of my closest college friends. I enjoyed being on campus without many students, so that I could learn where my classes were. During free time, we were able to explore Rock Hill. Summer bridge was so enriching, it has made me want to become a peer mentor. ■

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Cobe Reid - Many people seek for some kind of connection prior to entering into their freshman year of college. Freshmen normally come onto campus without knowing anyone and not knowing where to go. Imagine having no prior knowledge of campus and having to move onto campus before even starting. The video can all be acquired by the Eagle Bridge Program was an experience that I will never forget. I met friends in this program that I never would have encountered through a normal school year. Not only did I make friends, but I was able to explore campus, obtain college credit hours, and establish a connection with advisors and professors. Having your summer deprived sounds like a bad idea, but this program shows you the complete opposite as you enjoy every moment you are with your cohort. This has been one of my most memorable summers. ■



Reid

Christy Stowe - The Eagle STEM Summer Bridge Program was an experience I will probably remember forever. During the summer bridge, I made friends through the activities that were mandatory, class time, and hanging out on our own. Our time was very different from the past cohorts, as we had to deal with the reality of trying to do as normal during a pandemic. During each of our classes we had to wear masks, and socially distance as all of the in person classes will be required to do during the fall 2020 semester. Although these were things we were required to do, I still had fun with my peers. I made friends that I will begin my college career with, and I wouldn't have done anything differently. ■



Stowe



Cassie Nalepa - Cassie was not on campus for Summer Bridge but did join the cohort in the Fall. ■



Gabby Walker - Though the Eagle STEM Summer Program was, unfortunately, cut short was still a highly engaging and rewarding program that I wish all freshman in college could be in. I was honored and very excited to be a part of this program and go through this summer experience. Though, that excitement faded very quickly when classes first started, and we received our first assignments and started facing assessments. Math 101H was a class I did not stress too much about. It was the other class we were taking, Chem 104H. Chemistry pushed me to a limit I never knew I had. Chemistry 104 made me reevaluate my study techniques and really push pass my mental barrier that I had when it came to asking for help. But now that I am reflecting on my tough time in that class, I have realized that the summer bridge program was designed to do exactly what I have described: push us pass our limits and help us exceed and succeed come the fall. This program is supposed to help rising—freshmen experience college in a slightly smaller but in a very real way. This program for me was a learning curve that I needed because I know if I came into college without attending this program I would be struggling in my classes. Therefore, I was very grateful to be a part of this program and highly encourage others to apply to be a part of this amazing program. ■

Mentors continued from front

may not have been in the standard format, but it allowed all of us to become close to each other, while also staying at least six feet apart. I am grateful for the opportunity to watch these students grow from the summer to now, and even throughout their college experience. ■

Kendarius Butler (Kenny) - "Being a peer mentor is always a good experience for someone to learn to be a leader and to know the importance of your role. Being able to build relationships with the students makes the semester and college in general a lot easier or the simple fact that you provide them with a support system over the summer. This makes it possible to incorporate them into your support system when the summer is over. There is also a sense of accomplishment with seeing the success of your students as they progress through the summer and their collegiate careers. Along with the aforementioned benefits, you are able to refresh your skills in areas and make yourself look better. Becoming a peer mentor is simply a job that can make everyone happy." ■



Butler

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meaningful and has helped them feel more prepared to begin college.

The team selecting program participants and planning for the summer bridge program included Velbert Ervin, Dr. Victoria Frost, Dr. Cliff Harris, Dr. David Meeler, Shea Nunn, Dr. Pat Owens, Dr. Julian Smith, Dr. Kathie Snyder, Dr. Takita Sumter, Dr. Michael Whitney, and Amanda Cavin. Admissions, Dining Services, Financial Aid, Finance, Residence Life and other Winthrop administrative services played key roles in making the program a success. **Thanks to all who contributed to the summer experience! Our program would not be successful if you didn't share your talents and expertise!**

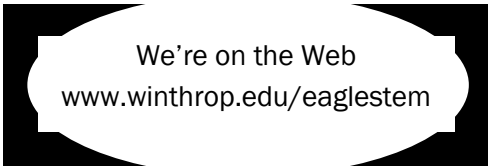
- Chem 104 Honors - Dr. Cliff Harris
- Math 101 Honors - Dr. Thomas Polaski
- Laboratory Techniques – Dr. Kathie Snyder, Ms. Holly Truluck

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The Eagle STEM Scholars Program was formed as a result of the INBRE II diversity initiative to effectively matriculate more students from diverse groups into biomedical science Ph.D. programs. Winthrop, because of its diverse population of students, is uniquely poised to increase the number of under-represented minority, low income and first generation undergraduates in South Carolina who matriculate into Ph.D. biomedical science, bioengineering, biochemistry, biology and chemistry programs. It is taking steps to move over the next two decades towards national leadership in this area.



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www.winthrop.edu/eaglestem