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Travess Funk, surgical technology clinical instructor, guides camper Bumi Braimah and a group of students through a mock laparoscopic procedure using a bell pepper as stand-in for a person. Courtesy photo

- SCCC/ATS

In keeping with national trends that emphasize the importance of gateway experiences that offer high school students a glimpse of college life, Seward County Community College continues to expand its summer academies.

Allied Health:

Just after area high schools dismissed classes for the summer, the Allied Health Division hosted a two-day camp for students entering grades 9-12. Participants explored health careers in

conjunction with the college's programs for Medical Assistant, Respiratory Therapy, Surgical Technology, Medical Laboratory Technician, Sports Medicine and Nursing. Instructors addressed educational requirements, skills and typical job duties. Students participated in interactive, hands-on activities that highlighted skills, equipment, technologies and resources of the individual programs.



“We had them perform a laparoscopic surgery on a bell pepper,” said surgical technology program coordinator Carmen Sumner. Students also learned that electrosurgical equipment used to provide hemostasis during surgery does not electrocute the patient.

“I applied the grounding pad to myself,” said Sumner, “and demonstrated the closed circuit by making an incision in a grapefruit and allowing my body to be part of the circuit.”

Participants from Perryton's Top of Texas Accelerated Education program traveled to Liberal to take part in the camp, as did students from Liberal High School and Fellowship Baptist School of Liberal.

Sustainable Agriculture:

Time was, Southwest Kansas kids spent the summer helping on the farm. Thanks to the newly-introduced Sustainable Agriculture Summer Academy, high school students in the area had the opportunity to take a look at farming in the future. With guest lecturer Dr. DeAnn Presley of Kansas State University's Department of Agronomy, Sustainable Ag program

specialist Erin Russell covered topics directly tied to the long-term enhancement of agriculture.

Study included examination of water and soil quality, agriculture basics and how agriculture connects to basic human food and fiber needs, economic viability and quality of life not only for farmers, but for society as a whole.

Students sampled soil and water, visited a lagoon operated by Seaboard Farms and observed how lagoon water can be used for irrigation, toured the Seward County Landfill, an award-winning facility that composts materials sourced from National Beef Packing, and traveled to the Garden City research development site operated by K-State. Participants in the four-day camp stayed in SCCC/ATS dorms and ate in the cafeteria.

Food Science & Safety

Though the Food Science and Safety program at Seward County Community College/ATS is relatively new, the career and industry possibilities are broad. This year's FSS Summer Academy introduced students to the chemistry and biology used to study food properties, food spoilage, food processing and foodborne diseases.

What that meant in practical terms was yogurt-making, Amish friendship bread and even a cookout — after students learned the science of meat safety by injecting E.coli bacteria into raw hamburger, preparing slides, and observing what happened over time.

“The burgers were E. coli free,” noted program specialist Chris Guyer.

Visiting professor Dr. Pamela Hatesohl of Kansas State University helped craft the week's studies, focusing on fermentation, preservation and contamination/disease control in foods. In addition to lab work, the camp included a visit to the college's own cafeteria and kitchen and a lecture and mock inspection by Kansas Department of Agriculture surveyor Guy Windholz of Topeka.

While the FSS program promises graduates a career path in fields like quality control, lab work, education, food production and inspection, plant sanitation, technical sales or lab design of new products, one student had a distinctly down-to-earth take on her camping experience.

“I want to become a chef,” said Emily Ibarra of Great Bend. “My high school counselor told me about the camp, and I thought it would be helpful to have a deeper understanding of what’s happening with the food as you cook. I think it will give me an advantage.”

In the meantime, Ibarra said, “I’m going to enjoy the yogurt we made.”

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