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1,300 high schoolers arrive on campus for Summer College

By Bill Steele

“Summer College” is not another name for Summer Session – although that’s when it happens.

Cornell University Summer College, a program of the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions, brings high school students to campus to take regular Cornell undergraduate courses with such leading faculty members as Isaac Kramnick, Ross Brann, Rosemary Avery and Henry Richardson. This year’s class of more than 1,300 students from 40 countries is the largest in the history of Summer College.

Previous program graduates include actress Lisa Kudrow of “Friends” fame; Marci Klein, the Emmy Award-winning producer of shows including “30 Rock” and “Saturday Night Live” and U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer.



Don Lebow/Provided

Summer College students attend an ice cream social to celebrate the start of the 2016 program.



Don Lebow/Provided

Volunteers help gather Summer College students by areas of study.

Summer College students can select from 30 programs that combine courses in such fields as architecture, fashion, robotics, business, engineering, government, biology and veterinary medicine. They stay in North Campus dorms with resident counselors and take part in activities including dances, field trips to regional parks and museums, intramural sports and outdoor concerts. They also attend admissions workshops and a college fair.

In various programs, which last from two to six weeks, students take courses in law, graphic design, hotel management, Shakespearean staging, and the history and politics of the Middle East. Aspiring veterinarians gain hands-on experience with equine and small-animal practice.

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Some students study sustainability and social entrepreneurship. And in a new program this year, students will fabricate robots using 3-D printing and visit the synchrotron.

Students enroll in regular Summer Session classes, some of which have been created especially for the Summer College. “We work with faculty to develop programs that would be enticing to high school students,” said Janna Bugliosi, associate director of Summer College. Once a course has been created for Summer College, Summer Session undergraduate students may enroll, she added.

Summer College students benefit from the experience of studying beside Cornell undergrads and staff members, and that can be life-changing, Bugliosi said. “They are all very bright,” she said. “Faculty will say they don’t know which ones are the high school students. And the students realize they are smart enough to attend an Ivy League school. They interact with faculty and other students and have the responsibility of being on their own.”

College credit earned by the students for their summer classes may be added to their transcripts if they attend Cornell; if they attend another school, it’s up to the school to decide whether to accept the credit.

Summer College is open to high school sophomores, juniors and seniors. Admission is competitive, with acceptance based on high school achievement and letters of recommendation. This year’s admissions are closed. Those interested in attending the 2017 session can sign up for an [e-mail list](#) to receive information and follow along this summer on the Summer College [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).