

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

High school students excel at first-ever CIBRE summer camp

By **Katie Land**, news editor

High school sophomore Erica Spitzley plans to use the new business skills she picked up at the first-ever Center for Integrated Business Research and Education (CIBRE) summer camp.

She intends to use them to counsel her father, who is about to create his own company. "My dad just got the go ahead to get his business started," Spitzley said. "He said I can be his advisor now that I am learning about entrepreneurship."

The camp's goal is to teach the basics of business and foster an entrepreneurial spirit with high school students. Its method is to put business principles into practice rather than teach an abstract concept, according to Wayne Blizman, visiting instructor of management and marketing and coordinator of the program.

The program has been a success for 17 high school students from the International Academy in Bloomfield Hills.

"These kids want to be challenged. They want to be stimulated. They want to interact and problem-solve," Blizman said.

Every participant wants to be there. Some are interested in becoming entrepreneurs, others are interested in business and the rest just want to learn. Blizman said he can see these students finding the spark needed to become successful entrepreneurs – to become the type of individuals he describes as inquisitive and risk-taking. Students from the International Academy work together to create a viable business plan.

"I wanted to see if business sparked an interest with me," said senior Gwen Hittle, whose parents run their own business. "This is a good opportunity for any student to learn more about business."

Various activities for the week included creating and developing a viable business plan, playing a fictitious \$10,000 in the stock market, analyzing case studies, hearing presentations from guest speakers, taking field trips to local businesses and tackling a "puzzler of the day" finance story problem.

Broken into four groups, students worked daily to create a full-fledged business plan that included everything from startup costs to marketing to determining income taxes for their company.

The four new business models are for an environmentally-friendly smart phone battery, a floating restaurant, a public bus system for pre-teens and a mobile ice cream parlor.

"The idea for the preteen bus originally came as a joke, but we developed it and it became viable," said junior Harvey Li. "However, with any success at all, we would have to protect against liability."

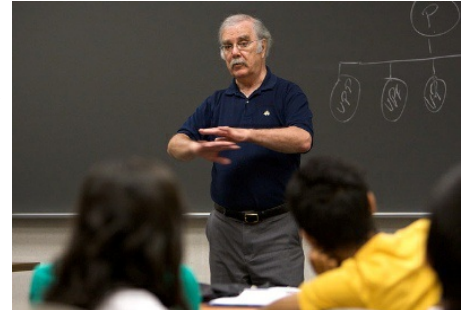
The group worked simultaneously on concept, design, marketing and legal issues. Bianca Stoica, about to enter 11th grade, ran the numbers. Her vision of the financial plan included specific routes down to the mile, estimated gas costs, estimated driver hours and pay and income taxes. "At \$2 a ticket, I think we can build a profit by the second year," she said.

OU junior Kristin Dayag is one of four student volunteers to act as a mentor at the camp. "The students are really smart and very self-sufficient already," she said. "I just work to keep them on track and to raise questions they haven't thought of before."

Blizman is proud of the students and impressed by their problem-solving skills. "Their minds are going a mile a minute," he said. "This is a very unique group of students."

The week concluded with presentations of the completed business plans, a tour of OU and a celebratory cookout.

For more information about Oakland's CIBRE, visit www.sba.oakland.edu/cibre/.



OU's Wayne Blizman teaches the basics of business to 17 eager high school students.



SUMMARY

The first-ever Center for Integrated Business Research and Education summer camp teaches the basics of business and fosters an entrepreneurial spirit with high school students.

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