

Summer program builds confidence for college

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Coupling college-level courses with a taste of on-campus life is a proven recipe for easing students into institutions of higher education. Since 2001, a Newcomb-Tulane College Summer Transition Program has consulted that recipe to arm local high school students with everything they need to know about the ins and outs of college.



Participants in the 2012 summer transition program attend weekly workshops led by faculty mentors. Here, Lisa Molix, assistant professor of psychology, talks to high school students about conducting academic research. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Rising high school seniors are selected for admission to the [Summer Transition Program](#) through a vigorous application process that includes an evaluation of transcripts, SAT/ACT scores, letters of recommendation, extracurricular activities and essays. Once admitted, students gain the feel of campus life by spending the summer living in campus residence halls at Tulane University while they are enrolled in English and precalculus courses.

Program director [Beretta Smith-Shomade](#) says the five-week program differs from similar programs for high school students because it offers much more than just

summer activities.

During the summer preceding their senior year in high school this year's class completed an English course and a non-credit precalculus course. Students who earned a C or better will return this fall to concurrently enroll in a Cultural Anthropology course at Tulane. Finally, with a C or better in the fall course, students are able to take an additional course in the summer following graduation from high school. This results in a nine credit unit jump on their college curriculum.

A secondary goal of the program is to improve the number of Louisiana students as well as the number of students of color enrolled at Tulane.

"If students are successful in each of the courses, they gain admission into Tulane," says Smith-Shomade. "Admission, however, has not meant financial aid. In most cases, we've been able to work effectively with financial aid to ensure the financial viability of our students to attend Tulane."

In the program's 11-year history, an estimated 95 percent of participants continue their education at a four-year college or university. There are currently nine former participants matriculating at Tulane with two new students beginning this fall.