

Kids reaffirm their passion for all things science

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New Orleans area high school students tour the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse, La., as part of a U.S. Navy-sponsored STEM camp hosted at Tulane University. STEM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. (Photo from the Naval Air Station)

It might not have appealed to the average teenager, but for the 27 New Orleans area high school students who converged on the Tulane University campus last week for a naval sciences program called LASSO, it was exactly how they wanted to spend a week of their summer vacation.

LASSO is an acronym for Logistics, Acquisition and Supply System Operations, and the free camp, funded by the U.S. Navy through Temple University in Philadelphia,

reaffirmed their passion for all things science.

"I loved the teamwork aspect of it and working with students who are interested in the same things that I'm interested in," said Tram Nguyen, 17, an aspiring chemical engineer and senior at Thomas Jefferson Academy for Advanced Studies in Gretna, La.

Students learned how to solve various challenges using logistics, mathematics and cyber and engineering games. The program included a visit to the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse, La., where they learned about flight operations and career opportunities with the Navy. At the conclusion, each participant received a Kindle Fire.

LASSO got its start in 2012 in response to the Navy's desire to improve math achievement among students in middle school and high school. The program began at Temple University, and over the past two years, has partnered with several other universities, including the Tulane School of Science and Engineering, which has a strong K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) [Outreach program](#).

[Michelle Sanchez](#), director of K-12 STEM at Tulane, said LASSO is a perfect fit for Tulane.

"It gave local students the opportunity to learn about the importance of science and engineering in careers in the armed forces."

"Our country has a shortage of STEM professionals," added Lt. Aaron Dimas, a New Orleans-based naval officer. "And the Navy is trying to do its part to promote and encourage STEM."

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