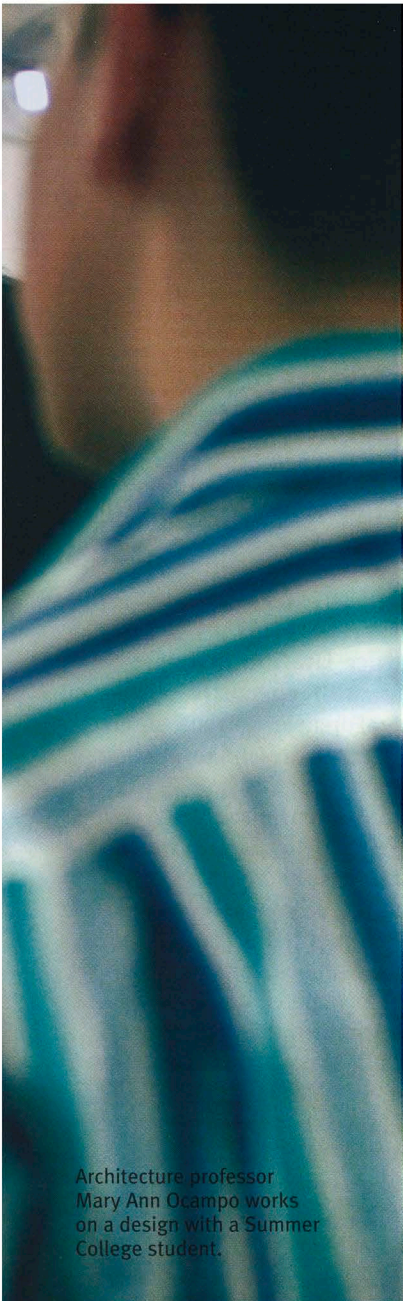




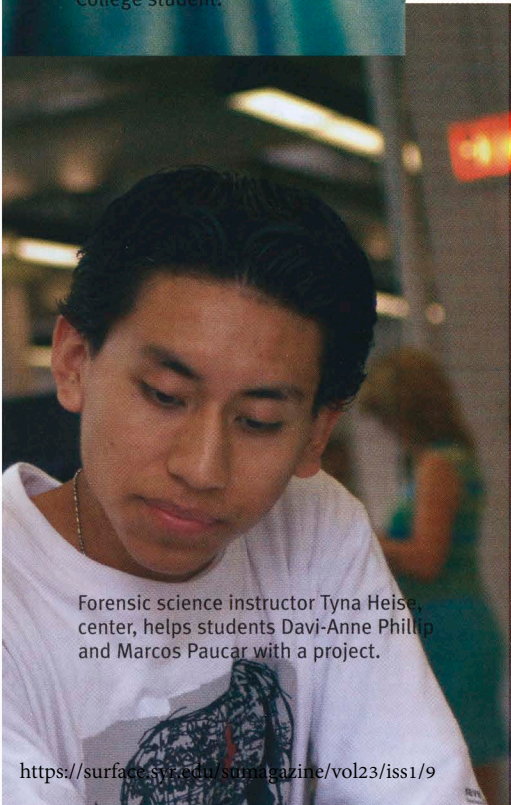
# Getting Ahead







Architecture professor Mary Ann Ocampo works on a design with a Summer College student.



Forensic science instructor Tyna Heise, center, helps students Davi-Anne Phillip and Marcos Paucar with a project.

## Through SU's Summer College, high school students explore academic interests and learn about campus life

**By Jolynn Parker**

Photography by Susan Khan



Fashion design student Tracy Martin

### **WHEN SYLVESTER REMBERT '09 ARRIVED AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LAST FALL**

from New York City, he faced a number of challenges that might have confused or frustrated any first-year student. He had to find his way around campus, fine-tune his class schedule, and also make his home in the Sheraton Syracuse University Hotel & Conference Center, because all the residence halls were filled to capacity with a record-size class of first-year students. But Rembert says he felt on top of the situation from the moment he set foot on the Quad. "I was already so familiar with the campus that moving in and finding my way around really weren't issues," he says. "I knew a lot about what to expect in my classes, and I even knew some professors."

Rembert attributes his easy transition to college life to the experience he gained at Syracuse University Summer College for High School Students in 2004. As a participant in the six-week Summer College program, Rembert spent the summer before his senior year of high school on campus, taking classes, earning credits, and living in a residence hall with nearly 200 other students. "I got the full experience," he says. "It prepared me for the realities of college and confirmed my academic interests. And it made me certain I wanted to come to SU."

One of the oldest pre-college summer programs in the country, Syracuse's Summer College for High School Students allows students to earn six college credits in one of 11 different programs: Acting and Musical Theatre, Architecture, Art and Humanities, Engineering and Computer Science, Fashion and Textile Design, Forensic Science, Law, Liberal Arts, Management, Public Communications, and Technical Theatre. "Our goal is to provide high school students with a hands-on experience of college life and of an academic field," says Anne Shelly G'84, executive director of the program. "We take students on the brink of making crucial decisions about college and give them the opportunity to test out their interests in advance."

This jump-start, according to Shelly, can make an enormous difference for students when they enroll at a university. "Obviously, the more credits earned early, the sooner the student will complete a degree program," she says. "The fact that the students have the opportunity to get comfortable in a college environment calms freshman jitters and makes for more confident students."



## Exploration and Experience

Summer College began at Syracuse University in 1958 as the Empire State School Press Institute, a summer session for New York State high school students interested in journalism. Within a decade, the University was drawing students from across the nation. Over time, it added specialized programs in a widening variety of fields. "You'll be pleasantly exhausted," the 1968 brochure assured applicants. That commitment to combining academic rigor with fun has not changed during Summer College's almost half-century of existence. "It was definitely a lot of work," says Hillary Hunt of Laredo, Texas, a student in the 2005 Architecture program. "We set up a satellite studio in the dorm for architecture students so we could keep working on our projects after the regular studio [in Slocum Hall] closed. But we also had fun. We spent a lot of time together."

The emphasis on hands-on and pre-professional programs has been a hallmark of Summer College from the beginning. Many other pre-college programs allow

**"It prepared me for the realities of college and confirmed my academic interests. And it made me certain I wanted to come to SU." Sylvester Rembert '09**

students to select from a large list of courses. But Syracuse's offerings are carefully crafted to introduce students to each particular field—an approach they tend to value. "I chose Syracuse because I really wanted a comprehensive introduction to fashion design, and this program was longer and more focused on the field than others I looked at," says Sara Armet, a high school junior from Medway, Massachusetts, who attended last summer. Dean Loe-A-Foe of New York City enrolled in the Engineering and Computer Science program last summer seeking an introduction to the field. "I took a math class that sharpened my skills, and I learned a lot about the options within engineering," he says.

The course programs are formulated either as studio/lab or pre-professional experiences. In the studio/lab programs, students enroll in pre-selected courses and spend most of their days, Monday through Thursday, doing experiential work. Fridays are set aside for studying, as well as field trips and other supervised activities. For instance, students in the Technical Theatre program, directed by Professor Donald Buschmann, gather at Syracuse Stage to learn the principles and techniques of behind-the-scenes theater production, from sound and stage management to costuming and lighting. Their experience culminates in building and operating the technical elements for the final production mounted by the Summer College Acting and Musical Theatre program. "We design the curriculum so that students spend the morning exploring skills and techniques in technical disciplines and stage management," Buschmann says. "In the afternoon, they rotate through the various shops, applying those skills to an actual production. They come away from the summer with a very realistic view of the value of training in technical theater."

Students in the pre-professional programs take one course specially designed for their field and choose a complementary course from among a list of offerings. Complementary courses are intended to provide substantive support to the content of the pre-professional discipline. Students in the Management program, for example, enroll in Introduction to Management and can choose such complementary courses as presentational speaking, composition, mathematics, economics, or political science. "The goal," Shelly says, "is an introduction to a particular field that gives a realistic sense of what happens within that field."

College of Law professor Kathleen Dole, who coordinates the Summer College Law program, sees merit in this approach. "I treat my students as future litigators," she says. "We hold class in a courtroom, which sets the tone for their experience. I expect them to speak and dress appropriately. They begin to get a feel for what it truly means to practice law." To that end, Dole joined forces last summer with chemistry professor and Summer College Forensic Science program coordinator James Spencer to enhance student understanding of how evidence is handled in the courtroom. The law and forensic science students collaborated on the examination and prosecution of a crime based on the well-known case of Green Beret Jeffrey MacDonald, who was convicted of killing his family in 1970, but maintains his innocence. While the forensic science students examined and tested evidence from a simulated crime scene, the law students took depositions and cross-examined material witnesses. Sheneita Graham of Hyde Park, Massachusetts, last summer's winner of the Award for Excellence in Litigation in Dole's class, felt she benefited from the program's real-world approach. "I learned so much from the case and in the courtroom," Graham says. "I already knew I wanted to be a lawyer, but now I know a lot more about the profession, and I know I can do it."

Summer College's Public Communications program places less emphasis on such hands-on experiences and simulations, instead offering students a rigorous introduction to theories of media studies. Getting this kind of

## Attending Summer College

- 2006 dates: July 3 - August 11
- Financial aid application deadline: April 15
- Regular application deadline: May 15
- Admission cycle: Rolling
- Total cost for tuition, housing, meals, and sponsored activities:  
Residential: \$5,600 - \$5,990\*  
Non-Residential: \$4,375 - \$4,765\*  
(\*depending on program choice)
- Web site: [www.summercollege.syr.edu](http://www.summercollege.syr.edu)
- Phone: 315-443-5297



background from faculty at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications can make the program's graduates attractive applicants for communications schools and professional internships. Occasionally, a Summer College student even manages to make this leap while still enrolled in the program. In 2005, Ryan Fishman, of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, worked with Professor Sharon Hollenback to arrange hosting a music show on the campus station WJPZ, and to intern at WAER, Syracuse's National Public Radio (NPR) affiliate. "I kept busy with more than just my classes at Summer College," he says. "NPR sent me out on my own to gather stories, write them up, and edit them. I went directly to air." Fishman's experience confirmed his interest in communications and in SU. While at Summer College, he also met with admissions officers and planned to apply early decision to the Newhouse School.

Of course, not all students find they are suited to the field they study at Summer College, and some discover their experiences don't necessarily conform to expectations. These, too, can be valuable lessons. "We don't regard it as a failure if a student leaves our Architecture program, for example, with the realization that he or she does not want to be an architect," Shelly says. "Students who test out a field and learn it's not a fit before they enter college are getting ahead of the game. That's also what this program is all about."

### Diverse Community

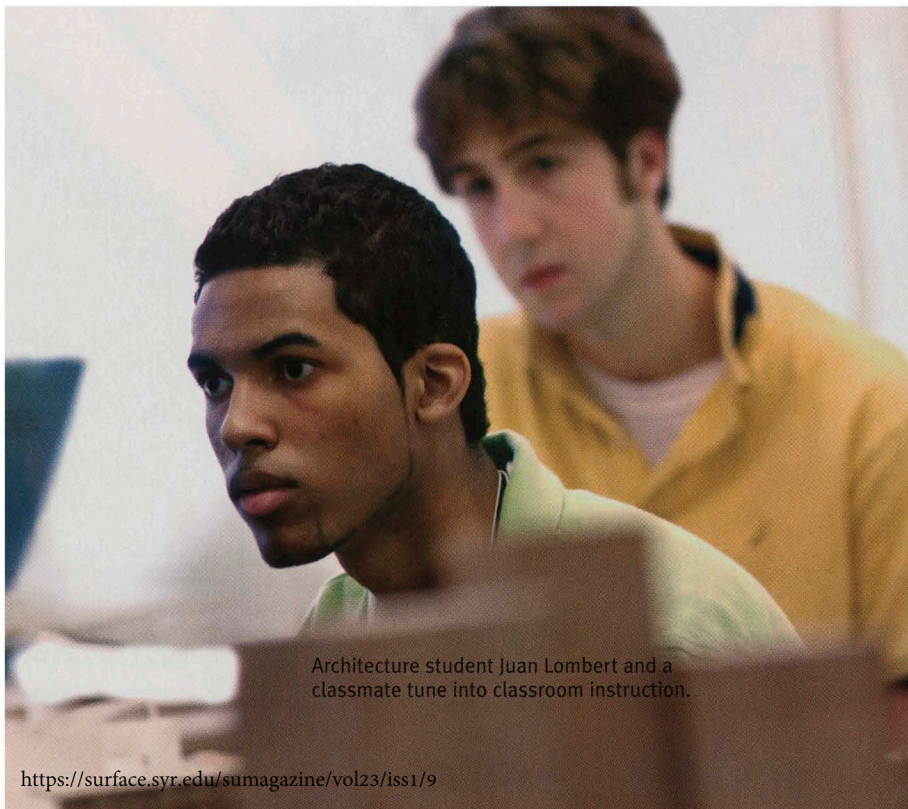
Shelly believes that students gain the best possible Summer College experience when they are part of a diverse community. To that end, the program places a premium on enrolling students with different interests and backgrounds. Most Summer Collegians come from across the United States, but some travel to Syracuse from as far away as Serbia, Turkey, and Hong Kong. Cem

Baysal of Istanbul, whose daughter Kiraz enrolled in the Acting and Musical Theatre program, appreciated the opportunity that Kiraz had to learn about the American university system and to improve her English. "Kiraz had a great experience," Baysal says. "She made a lot of new friends, developed as a performer, and has so many wonderful memories."

For their part, Summer College students consistently report the program's diversity as among its most important and appealing qualities. "Summer College is not just an academic experience; it's a cultural experience," says Brian Fadem, a Public Communications program student from Devon, Pennsylvania. "I got to know a lot of people I never would have met otherwise."

Summer College, a program within the Division of Student Support and Retention, collaborates with a number of foundations to ensure that it is accessible to low-income students. Shelly has forged partnerships with such education initiatives as GEAR UP, Operation Link-Up, Summer Search, and Minds Matter to guarantee that Summer College can provide opportunities to many talented students who might not otherwise be able to afford tuition. Carey Jenkins, founder and president of Operation Link-Up (a charitable organization that provides educational assistance and guidance to high school students in the Paterson, New Jersey, school district), attests to the value of Summer College for his students. "We've found that it's a tremendous source of motivation for them," Jenkins says. "We are confident that as more of our students have the opportunity to attend Summer College, our success will continue to grow. Right now, about 88 percent of Operation Link-Up kids graduate from college during a four- to five-year period. The preparation they get in Summer College is a big part of that success."

While students learn an enormous amount from their professors and textbooks, some of their most influential experiences can happen outside classroom and studio walls. The program is committed to supplementing academic life with such planned social opportunities as dances, movie nights, and visits to local museums and summer festivals. A staff of graduate and undergraduate Learning Community coordinators and resident advisors plans and supervises these activities as well as oversees life in the residence hall. Still, like most college students, Summer Collegians tend to report the unplanned activities—the everyday experiences of living on their own and hanging out with new friends—mean the most to them. Baylor Long, a student from Leola, Pennsylvania, may have summed up the lessons of Summer College best: "I learned how to do college-level work, how to talk to professors, how to do my own laundry, and where to order pizza at 2 a.m."



Architecture student Juan Lombert and a classmate tune into classroom instruction.