

Andrews Hosts SciFEST and Image & Influence

Both programs were held from Sep. 20-22

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Image & Influence attendees developed communication and design skills (Photo by Heidi Ramirez, University Communication student photographer)

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On Thursday, Sept. 20, 2018, students from various Adventist academies, homeschool groups and public/private schools arrived on the Andrews University campus to be a part of two programs, SciFEST and Image & Influence. SciFEST was the sixth annual STEM weekend. Image & Influence, a joint professional workshop hosted and produced by the Department of Visual Art, Communication & Design, included a publication design workshop and an influencer workshop.

The theme of this year's SciFEST was "Elements," and attendees were given the opportunity to explore how this theme manifested in each of the seven STEM departments (agriculture, biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, mathematics and physics) at Andrews University.

Anthony Bosman, assistant professor of mathematics, says, "SciFEST is an opportunity for students across the nation to come to Andrews and experience the different fields of science and the career opportunities that they open up."

On Friday, Sept. 21, visiting high school students spent seven hours in hands-on laboratory activities in each of the STEM departments. The activities earned points for the teams and assisted them in the Saturday evening “Quiz Bowl” competition. This culminating event not only helped the students show what they had learned but also gave them a chance to win academic scholarships.

Ryan Hayes, professor of chemistry, reflects on the goal behind SciFEST. “I think we are just trying to encourage students to continue to explore their interest in science and know that there are a lot of opportunities and there are a lot of people working in science. They [the students] don’t have to feel that they are a nerd or alone and isolated because they like science.”

For Ysabella Hamann, a junior at Wisconsin Academy, SciFEST truly was an opportunity for her to explore more options regarding a career path in the sciences. “I thought maybe if I come here it will get me a little more on the path to where I want to go,” she says.

In fact, this is a common experience for those who come to SciFEST. Jared Freeman, a senior at Georgia Cumberland Academy, expresses how he came to SciFEST to expose himself to a broader study of science. He says, “It’s been a really awesome experience, and it’s inspired me to pursue my career in the study of science and God’s creation.”

While many students were enjoying a weekend full of labs and STEM activities, there were also those building their communication and design skills with the Department of Visual Art, Communication & Design.

The students who participated in the publication design workshop were taught how to better implement principles of design to make meaningful photographic images for publications. In short, the goal was to equip each student with tools they could use to tell their unique stories through photography and graphic design.

Cally Kerr, a senior from Battle Creek Academy, attended the publication design workshop. She says, “The teachers gave us good information and were willing to help us whenever we got confused or had questions. I also enjoyed that they were honest with us in a professional manner and gave us critical feedback on our work.”

Those who attended the influencer workshop learned about various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. They discussed algorithms as well as strategies to gain awareness and learned about content creation in each platform. Before leaving, each student selected a platform they wished to be an influencer and advocate for, created an online space and shot a 30-second commercial for their pages to reach their target audience.

For Adasa Muñoz, a senior at Andrews Academy, this was her favorite part of the Influencer workshop. “I chose YouTube and created a channel called @VeganTeen. We learned how to take videos and pictures for our video. We learned how to edit and talk in front of a camera, looking straight at it like it’s a target without ever taking our eyes off it,” she explains.

Heather Day, associate professor of communication, interacted with the students at the Influencer workshop. “Students could not believe that we had real editors and real filmmakers helping them create commercials for their platforms,” she reflects. “My hope is that in the future we can run this workshop right here for students of all ages in our community. It was

an impactful event that gave hands-on experience, and all students were able to walk away with a tangible tool that increased their engagement with their community and strengthened their resumes.”

Ultimately, both SciFEST and Image & Influence strive to remind students there are careers they can be passionate about and to encourage them in their journey toward those careers focusing on Christ as their center.