

Summer camps at ASU ignite students toward higher education

By Brielle Cohen, ASU News
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At Arizona State University, pursuit of higher learning and education never ceases — even during the summer.

This summer, hundreds of high school students from across Arizona and some parts of the U.S. came together for various summer camps taking place at all four campuses.

Hosted by Access ASU, the camps included Barrett Summer Scholars, the RISE Leadership Institute, INSPIRE and the César Chávez Leadership Institute — all of which provided workshops and activities that prepare students for a life in college and beyond.

“The goal is to help them explore career pathways and college pathways like they're totally combined,” said Amy Ball, director of outreach experiences for Access ASU. “We have the opportunity during camps like Barrett Summer Scholars to have them work with ASU instructors and faculty and real-world experts in the fields that they're interested in, so they get a taste of what options there are.”

Barrett Summer Scholars

At the college level, every student in Barrett, The Honors College must take The Human Event course, modeled after a seminar structure to encourage discussion around various social and philosophical topics. This course was adapted for the Barrett Summer Scholars, and attendees were able to choose from various disciplines within science, arts, humanities and beyond. Through these “T.R.A.C.K.” classes, the high school students explored their discipline via lectures taught by ASU instructors.

“The goal is to expose them to higher education through a discussion seminar and critical reading,” said Abby Wheatley, associate teaching professor for Barrett, The Honors College.

Jacqueline Sanchez, an incoming first-year college student and an aspiring immigration lawyer, said she joined Barrett Summer Scholars because of the college atmosphere it offered.

“They're definitely treating us as if we were adults, and I like to see that because they're actually seeing us as people and they're hearing us,” Sanchez said.

"I recommend the experience to anybody that's more academically focused or interested in going to college," said attendee Analiese Alexander. "I think this gives you a good taste of what the college experience is going to be like even if it's only for a short few days."

RISE Leadership Institute

The RISE Leadership Institute is designed to prepare attendees for college and career success through dynamic, hands-on workshops led by educators and professionals from various disciplines whose work reflects the history, achievements and lasting impact of Black and African American leaders.

Sessions explored a wide range of career paths — from health to the arts.

"The workshops were very in-depth and broadened my interest on what I want to do for a career. I want to be a plastic surgeon; I want to go to medical school," said participant Savion Bullock, a student at Hamilton High School who plans on pursuing a career in medicine.

"I think my favorite memory was the Afro beats workshop because I just love to dance," said participant Grand Georgori, who attends Bioscience High School in central Phoenix.

He also enjoyed the economy lesson that taught the students financial responsibility.

"I didn't know a lot about common economies, such as a Roth IRA or a 401k. I think I learned a lot about how it's important to start on these things early so that the money can build up over time," he said.

INSPIRE

The INSPIRE summer program brought together high school students for a weeklong experience centered on academic excellence, career exploration and cultural enrichment, with a focus on Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

"Having a summer camp that's free and accessible, with Indigenous professors, Indigenous leaders and even staff like myself is really helpful for our students," Camp Ambassador Ellerie Black said.

The camp offered tracks in health solutions, career exploration, sciences and more. Throughout the week, the students also worked on creative projects — like garments with patterns based on Indigenous roots and designs.

High school student Kira Thomas said she learned a lot during her time at INSPIRE and created invaluable connections with her peers and ASU staff.

"I would recommend this program to other students. You learn a lot about resources that can help you," she said.

She also appreciated the vast array of Native American book collections and information she found at ASU's Hayden Library.

“A lot of Native American kids grew up in very rural areas, so we don't have many resources,” Thomas said. “We don't get that much information. I feel like places like this are where the kids can actually experience it... It makes us want to be here.”

César Chávez Leadership Institute

The César Chávez Leadership Institute explores the legacy of César E. Chávez and the value of higher education, servant leadership and community engagement.

Through a variety of team-building, artistic and academic sessions, students experienced a supportive peer environment that encouraged collaboration, reflection and a deeper understanding of issues that impact their local communities.

The students also heard lectures about different fields of study such as social sciences, STEM and English, and engaged in creative sessions like salsa dancing.

Guadalupe Olivia Martinez, who attends Tucson High School, said she was astounded by the connections she made her first and second years attending the institute.

“This camp touched on the importance of having a strong sense of who you are and how it really builds your identity. ... You also learn about financial literacy and college applications,” she said.

Overall, ASU's summer camps serve as a way to show young students — and their families — what higher education and ASU have to offer.

Ball said there was one camper who especially fell in love with life at ASU during his time here.

“His parents said he won't let them even think about any other university now,” Ball said. “He is 100% ASU because this experience solidified it for him. They even told me they were thinking about getting their PhDs from ASU. It really impacts entire families.”

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Students in the Barrett Summer Scholars camp pose for a photo at the Downtown Phoenix campus this summer. Photo by Jr De Chavez

Text image(s)



Students in the RISE Leadership Institute pose during summer camp in front of ASU's Old Main building on the Tempe campus. Photo by Kaitlyn Beickel