



High Tech U Provides Hands-on View of Real World Math and Science

In May 2009, SWWDC partnered with the SEMI Foundation, Underwriters Laboratories, Clark College, SEMI Pacific Northwest Steering Committee, and WorkSystems Inc. to offer the SEMI Foundation's High Tech U program to 30 students from Battle Ground, Hockinson, and Washougal high schools. The goal of the program was to inspire students to be part of tomorrow's high-tech workforce by energizing and exciting them about math and science, and high tech careers.

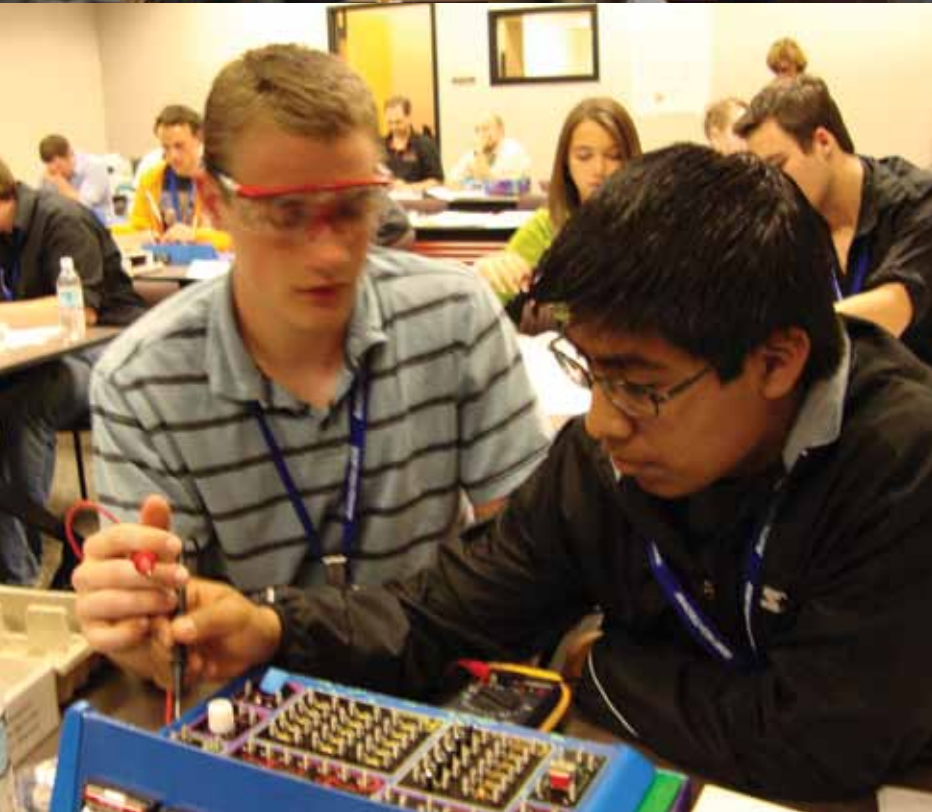
SEMI's High Tech U is an industry-driven math- and science-based career exploration program that offers students three days of learning at a local area employer – in this case, Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

Taught by UL's employees, the program demonstrated how math and science are used in the workplace and highlighted STEM career pathways. Students also participated in mock interviews. Post-secondary partner Clark College presented information on STEM related post-secondary education and training opportunities.

"This is exactly the kind of hands-on, real-world engagement we need to ignite that spark about STEM careers. So many people don't comprehend how math and science are used in the work world and, as a result, their interest in math and science rarely moves past the required courses in school. We see this as an opportunity to build the pipeline of STEM workers for our local area employers," said Lisa Nisenfeld, SWWDC executive director.

Students gave the program rave reviews. Hockinson High School student Jaime Miller shared, "The interviews were the best part of the





day. Oh my gosh, thank you for this opportunity! It was amazing to see what employers want.”

At the conclusion of the program, Kyle Barnes of Battle Ground High School and Josh Smith of Hockinson High School each received \$1,000 scholarships. Additionally, eight teachers from the participating high schools were invited to attend the educators’ version of High Tech U at Solar World and Intel in Hillsboro, Oregon.

The program was funded in part by a Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant from the US Department of Labor administered by WorkSystems, Inc. along with private sector donations. SWWDC hopes to bring High Tech U to Southwest Washington again in the future.

The program’s objective – to increase students’ understanding of the pathways necessary to move on to a technology-based career – has clearly been met. Ninety-four percent of the students in the program say they now understand the courses necessary to take in high school to lead them to a science or engineering career – an increase of 45 percent from pre-survey results. Students will be surveyed each year until they become sophomores in college to follow their academic and career paths.

For more information, visit www.semi.org and www.swwdc.org.



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