

Science Days at ND 2012

JINA hosted two science days at the University of Notre Dame during the spring as part of a concerted effort to increase interest in STEM careers among students in underrepresented groups. Over 75% of the students participating receive assistance with school lunches and more than 80% are of Hispanic or African American descent.

Approximately 60 juniors and seniors from Washington High School were captivated by hands-on activities, demonstrations, a DVT show, and a tour of the NSL during their day on the ND campus. The students were surveyed at the end of the visit and 14% listed a non-medical STEM career aspiration. 73% responded that the visit affected their feelings about science and 27% responded that it affected their career aspirations. For both visits, the DVT astronomy show and liquid nitrogen demonstrations were the favorite activities.

The entire 5th grade from Navarre Intermediate Center (approximately 170 students) spent a day at ND rotating through activities, demonstrations, a DVT show, and a special lecture from Dr. Steve Williams, Chief of Education Initiatives at the National Air & Space Museum. Students were asked about their attitudes towards science and career aspirations prior to their visit to campus, and again at the end of the visit, 71 could be matched to the same respondent. Although changes in attitudes towards science were not significant, nearly 60% said the activities affected their career aspirations. Prior to the visit, 3 listed a STEM career as an aspiration, 18 listed a medical profession, and 18 listed professional athlete. After the visit, the numbers for athletics and medical did not change, but 10 added scientist to their previous choice, and an additional 7 switched their choice to scientist.



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