Project GRAD program at Lee College Education Center – South Liberty County

High-schoolers from Dayton, Hardin and Liberty participated in College & Career Institute

BAYTOWN, TX — More than two dozen high school students from the Dayton, Hardin and Liberty school districts spent a week at the Lee College Education Center – South Liberty County this summer to attend the J.P. Morgan Chase College and Career Institute, a program sponsored by Project GRAD Houston to help young people start on the path toward a high-wage, high-skill and high-demand career.

Project GRAD Houston aims to improve lives in low-income communities by helping students develop and achieve their educational aspirations. As part of the effort, the program offers college institutes each summer for 1,000 scholars across the Houston area. The J.P. Morgan Chase College and Career Institute at Lee College was also sponsored in partnership with Workforce Solutions.

Lee College hosted the majority of the institute at its new education center in South Liberty County, where faculty gave students an inside look at programs in electrical technology, process technology, logistics, computer-aided drafting and engineering technology. They learned about the hard and soft skills that employers want to see in job candidates, and picked up tips about networking and proper presentation.

The students also took field trips to regional manufacturing facilities and spent their final evening at the main campus in Baytown, participating in a mock career fair with representatives from Chevron Phillips Chemical Co., Covestro, ExxonMobil and Noltex. Robert Bird, a rising senior at Liberty High School, was announced the lucky winner of a $500 scholarship at the institute’s closing ceremony.

“At Project GRAD, we say that ‘graduation really achieves dreams,’” Anne Sung, vice president and chief strategy officer for Project GRAD Houston, told the students who completed the institute. “You could have spent your summer vacation doing many things, but you chose to come to Lee College to explore college, explore careers and discover more about yourself.”

Students at the institute developed 30-second commercials about themselves for potential employers and produced videos detailing their future educational and career goals. Adam Percy, a rising sophomore at Liberty High School who aspires to be a lawyer, volunteered to share his commercial live on stage at the closing ceremony and said he learned valuable lessons by participating in the program. When he had his opportunity to speak with process operators from Chevron Phillips at the mock career fair, he felt confident about how to approach and what to say.

“Go to school while you can, and always do the best you can,” Percy said.