

HIGHER EDUCATION

By ERIKA PRAFDER

THIS summer, rather than working on your tan, why not work on your college and career plan? Taking a precollegiate course as a middle or high school student can be an enriching and valuable endeavor, says Debbi Honorof, senior director of marketing and communications for Hofstra University's continuing education department.

"It's a good opportunity for teens to meet teens from other areas and



Kevin Kelly has been taking classes in sports journalism at Hofstra, leading him to pursue the subject at college.

bond, experience life on a college campus and stand out on your application when you apply to college. These are experiences you can write about in your college essay," says Honorof. About 70 class offerings are currently available through Hofstra's precollegiate programming, including digital photography, precollegiate law institute, culinary arts, criminal justice, sportscasting — even comedy improv, which has a unique benefit for students.

"With social media, kids today are losing the art of communication," says Scott Baker, who teaches the comedy improv pre-collegiate course. "When you know how to communicate, you have a leg up over those who are only interacting on Facebook and through texts."

When Baker first launched his class, "I thought it would be performers who were my students, but they weren't. They are high schoolers, college students, attorneys, salespeople, customer service representatives and tech geeks who don't know how to talk to people — we help bring them out of their shell," says Baker.



Scott Baker's comedy improv class at Hofstra teaches the social media generation "the art of conversation," he says.

sales or customer service ability," says Baker.

Baker's course is offered for a full week in the winter and as a six-week program in the summer.

The Hofstra classes are limited to 20 kids, are two weeks in length and are taught by professionals in the field of study. Lunch is included in the 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. classes.

While not applicable for college credit, the classes can also provide valuable insight into a chosen profession. For 18-year-old Kevin Kelly, a high school senior from Port Washington, N.Y., being an avid sports fan meant he had a clear idea of his career path.

"Since I was little, I've wanted to do something with sports journalism. I knew I wouldn't play [sports] professionally myself, but I wanted to be around it," he says.

Kelly spotted an ad for Hofstra University's sports journalism pre-collegiate program in the 6th grade. Back then, "The five-day class covered everything you can do in the field, from the studio newscasts to play-by-play analysis and player research," says Kelly. "I absolutely loved the class."

Since then, the program has expanded to three different classes, including the sports radio talk-show course, taught over four weeks, says Kelly, who has been a returning student of the program.

On average, "there have been 25 to 30 students in the classes from 8th grade to high school," says Kelly, whose college plans have been influenced by the program.

So far, he's been accepted to five of the seven out-of-state academic institutions he's applied to.

"For my essay to University of Wisconsin, I wrote about my academic experience at Hofstra. Taking classes is great. It makes you look good and people want to hear about it. Journalism programs are competitive. My precollege experience made me stand out; it says that this is something I want to do," he says.

For more information log on to hofstra.edu/Academics/CE/ce_pre_collegiate_classes_long_island_courses.html

SHOW ME THE FUNNY

From comedy improv to criminal justice, summer courses at local colleges can improve communication skills, college applications and career focus

Listening skills are highlighted in Baker's class.

"It's great to get your point across, but by listening and asking questions, you'll get another person's point," he says.

Learning to inject humor into the conversation and be more affable

are key components of his course.

On a college interview, "If you're going to just give 'Yes' and 'No' answers, admissions folks aren't learning anything about you. You have to be able to have conversations and convince these people that you're an asset to their school,"

says Baker.

When applying for internships or jobs, "What are you going to do that shows something different from your résumé? How can your 2.8 GPA beat the next guy's 3.5? Your communication skills enable someone to feel confident in your

CLASS ACTION

Collect credits at these NY schools

Starting May 2014, and coinciding with the arrival of Dr. Lauren Mountry, vice president of enrollment management and student success at Adelphi University, the school's precollegiate courses will undergo a major change — for all 2014 summer programs, students will be able to receive

transferable college credit.

"It's more attractive, but intense. Students come in with a cohort and live together in the dorms. Each class is two weeks in duration," says Mountry.

High school juniors and seniors must submit a transcript, essay and reference letter.

"Precollege classes show that students have an interest in something and a willingness to expose themselves, which helps contribute to knowledge and growth when applying to college," says Mountry.

Six programs will be offered, including business, introduction to nursing, gaming and theater. All are taught by full-time faculty.

The cost is \$2,950. This includes tuition, housing, all meals, all field trips, course materials and books.

More info: precollege.adelphi.edu.

At New York University's Stern School of Business Undergraduate Program, a precollege program is slated for 2014.

"Summer @ Stern is set to attract students who are thinking of pursuing business in college," says Rohit Deo, vice dean of undergraduate academic affairs and strategic planning for the college.

Two six-week-long sessions will be offered — one focusing on business and investments and another on behavioral economics and the

science of decision-making.

For acceptance, "You must be a rising high school junior or senior, have a GPA of 3.2 or higher, and submit both your academic transcript and a short essay."

Enrollment will be capped at 30 students per class.

The cost for both courses totals \$10,000. Students will receive academic credit, although it's not transferable to Stern.

More info: stern.nyu.edu.

— Erika Prafder