

High impact

An event that has been described as "life changing" for some local students was recently held in Camas.

SEMI High Tech U, which this year included participation from Hewlett-Packard, WaferTech, Clark College and each entity's employees, offers an introduction to high tech concepts and career possibilities for high school students.

Coordinated and delivered by the Southwest Washington Workforce Development and the SEMI Foundation, this valuable and innovative program helps students gain some focus as they make their way through the standard required high school academic rigor. It opens their eyes to the possibilities beyond the classroom.

This can be incredibly important for a high school student, who is often in the midst of listening to lectures in the classroom, studying from a heavy load of textbooks, writing research papers and taking tests. In this environment alone, it can be challenging to think about what could be ahead. Yet, it is the future goals and career aspirations that colleges admissions officers are looking for when they consider students. They want the answer to that big question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

According to Lisa Nisenfeld, SWWDC executive director, "So many students don't have any idea of how math and science is used in the real world. Consequently, they often struggle in their course work and as a result, we see fewer students pursuing the careers that drive our economic vitality and offer excellent wages. As a region and a country, this does not bode well for our future. High Tech U has a demonstrated track record of engaging students and impacting their academic and career choices."

The organizations and businesses that have put on these incredible experiences for our youth for the past three years are truly having an impact. These kinds of continued partnerships are valuable to our local economy's future, as these students graduate from college and pursue stimulating careers that they will hopefully find available right here in their own backyard.

— Heather Acheson