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October 3, 2016

Dear School Official:

I invite you to nominate students for one or both of two engaging summer academies hosted each summer by **Truman State University**: The Summer Talent Academy for Professions in Health (STAPH) and the Zombie Scholars Academy: A Problem-Based Exploration of Science, Literature, and Leadership (ZSA). Both programs are targeted at bright and enthusiastic young learners and are hosted on campus during one-week summer sessions. They are coordinated by the same team that operates the 33-year-old Joseph Baldwin Academy, Truman's premier summer learning experience for gifted students.

The Summer Talent Academy for Professions in Health (STAPH)

Students completing the 10th and 11th grade at the conclusion of the 2016-2017 academic year, and who currently have a 3.25 cumulative GPA and a 3.5 GPA in basic science courses, are eligible for nomination. Once nominated, students will be expected to complete a detailed application that includes an essay.

STAPH is a collaborative effort between Truman, A.T. Still University of Health Sciences, and the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) in northeast Missouri. STAPH aims to educate students about careers in health care and to provide a jump-start to a future in medicine, nursing, psychology/psychiatry, and allied health professions. STAPH offers talented students a head start on their future by allowing them to spend a week on campus exploring high-tech health facilities, simulations, and a working cadaver lab. Unlike other medical summer programs, the curriculum is broad-based, giving students exposure to fields as wide-ranging as sports medicine, nursing, nutrition, communication disorders, psychology, and of course, pre-medical topics. **Our curriculum is aimed at helping students sort out career possibilities as well as reinforcing interest in chosen paths.** We help students develop enthusiasm for the possibilities of the field. Instruction is conducted by experts who are themselves practitioners. The week culminates in formal research presentations focused on an assigned topic.

Zombie Scholars Academy: A Problem-Based Exploration of Science, Literature, and Leadership (ZSA)

ZSA is a unique academic program that takes the unprecedented interest young people have in the fiction of a "zombie apocalypse" and turns that creative energy into a vehicle for learning about some of society's most pressing needs. Each of the program's first three years were so successful that they left participants begging for more.

The ZSA curriculum is designed by a team of national experts – some who lecture as part of our faculty – who have tested the concept of popular culture as a tool for energizing interest in complex real life subjects. Students at the Academy have dissected brains under the tutelage of a nationally-known Harvard psychologist and physician, chatted about creative zombie fiction with a CNN writer, worked with a Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Weapons response unit to learn about quarantine procedures, built field shelters with limited resources, and explored the philosophical, psychological, and sociological issues of disasters and crises with Truman faculty, among many other projects.

The Academy, inspired by pioneering work done by the Centers for Disease Control, takes the questions posed by dire scenarios and exposes students to learning opportunities in science, mathematics, creative writing, leadership, group problem solving, and social science while underscoring the importance of interdisciplinary and complex thinking. The program is available to all high school students (those completing 8th through 11th grade during the 2016-2017 academic year). Unlike STAPH, there is no minimum GPA for nomination to ZSA. However, counselors seeking objective criteria for the nomination of students to the program are encouraged to consider students in good academic standing (those with over a 3.25 cumulative GPA) or those enrolled in honors coursework. **We do find, however, that this program has broad appeal to gifted young people who may not be performing to their full potential because they are not as stimulated by traditional subject matter.** We encourage nominating counselors and faculty to think broadly when identifying candidates. Students may self-nominate for the program after these initial deadlines (with an accompanying recommendation from you), however, their greatest chance of finding a seat is to get your nomination, and apply, by the identified deadlines.

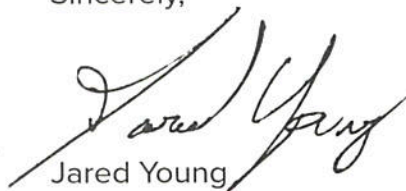
The enclosed brochure provides specific information about both of these programs. Selection of the STAPH and ZSA scholars involves two steps with independent deadlines. **(1) Nomination** – due November 14, 2016, and **(2) Application** – due January 30, 2017.

We no longer require the submission of standardized test scores (ACT, SAT, etc.) for these programs, however, scores may be submitted to strengthen a student's application. Applications are reviewed and accepted on a rolling basis and the maximum number of students that can be accommodated in each program is 50. Entry is competitive. Both of these programs are designed in a one-week format specifically-targeted to serve the needs of older students who often have summer employment and competing opportunities, but still crave interaction with their peers in a highly challenging and stimulating educational environment.

Enclosed you will find a copy of a brochure covering both programs, which you can share with prospective students. Feel free to request additional copies! All of the information on the brochure can be found at the program websites at <http://staph.truman.edu> or <http://zombie.truman.edu>. We've also included instructions on how to complete the online nomination process. Nominations can be completed online or by using the enclosed paper forms.

I appreciate your review of the enclosed materials and I hope that one or more of your students will join us for these programs in 2017. Please telephone my assistant, Jana Morton, or me if you have any questions at (660) 785-5406 or e-mail Jana at jmorton@truman.edu.

Sincerely,



Jared Young
Coordinator of Summer Academies

Enclosures