



ISA 2026 Academy Offerings

AHS: Leading The Way For a Better Tomorrow - College of Applied Health Sciences

This AHS Academy involves innovative approaches to healthcare education, research, wellness, and leisure to prepare future professionals in the health and recreation fields. Through interactive workshops and seminars with faculty, staff, and students, participants will understand the impact of today's choices and gain tools to improve our communities. Participants will learn about the careers in the College of Applied Health Sciences while being challenged to develop leadership skills. *Note:* Plan to bring comfortable, active clothing that you can move in. This Academy will include an opportunity to swim at the Urbana Crystal Lake Aquatic Center. Participants should plan to bring swimwear, sunscreen, a towel, a water bottle, and \$20 to cover the entrance fee.

AI & Machine Learning - U of I School of Information Sciences - Informatics

Dive into the world of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in this hands-on, interdisciplinary academy! Over four days, high school scholars will explore the fundamentals of ML model training, large language models (LLMs), and AI tools while engaging with researchers and industry professionals across various fields. Through interactive workshops and real-world projects, students will develop skills in Python programming, data analysis, and ethical AI applications, preparing them for future careers in tech and research. By the end of the academy, participants will gain a foundational understanding of AI/ML principles, practical experience in model development, and insight into the diverse career paths within this rapidly evolving field. *Note:* While previous programming/Computer Science experience is not required, some familiarity with coding (Scratch, Python, etc.) will only make this experience that much more enjoyable and rewarding. Youth will need to bring a computer running Windows 10 or the latest version of macOS, with at least 4 GB of RAM. Before the start of the academy, youth will be required to download applications for use during the academy. The list of required applications and additional information will be shared with accepted applicants.

Explore Sustainability - College of ACES, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

Environmental sustainability affects your future; the air you breathe, the food you eat, and the planet you'll inherit. Come learn from ACES Faculty & Staff and explore the many exciting opportunities and challenges of environmental sustainability. This interdisciplinary academy will include experiences in ecological engineering, environmental science, sustainable agriculture, environmental economics, food science, and sustainable food systems. By the end of this academy, you will understand more about the wide variety of college and career opportunities where people are applying critical thinking skills to contribute to a more resilient world. *Note:* Plan to bring long pants and closed-toed shoes for the field observation component of this Academy. Rising Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors are encouraged to apply.



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

University of Illinois | U.S. Department of Agriculture

Local Extension Councils Cooperating University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Exploring Journalism, Advertising & Cinema - College of Media

Explore the dynamic world of media in this hands-on academy offered by the University of Illinois College of Media. Students will be introduced to journalism, advertising, and cinema while learning how media is created, shared, and experienced in everyday life. From virtual and augmented reality to advertising strategy and news production, participants will explore how stories and messages move across platforms such as television, digital media, radio, podcasts, and social media. Through interactive lessons and creative projects, students will gain practical experience in media production and content creation. By the end of the academy, participants will have the skills and tools needed to create their own original content designed for distribution across a variety of modern media channels—perfect for students curious about storytelling, creativity, and the future of media.

Exploring Your Engineering Options- Grainger Engineering

Engineers apply math and science concepts to find creative solutions to a wide variety of challenges. There are more than a dozen types of engineering majors at the University of Illinois. In this academy, you will explore 2-3 engineering options each day through lessons, demonstrations, lab tours, and hands-on activities developed by the departments in The Grainger College of Engineering. Interact with students and faculty who can answer your questions about their specialized engineering interests. Discover which types of engineering are the best fit for you. *Note:* Bring at least one set of lab-safe clothing, which includes sneakers, long pants, a lightweight, long-sleeved shirt, and something to tie back long hair.

Feeding the Future: Breeding and Genetics- College of ACES/ Dept. of Plant Sciences

Participants will explore advances in technology that are revolutionizing crop improvement. Learn how biotechnology, machine vision, and AI are utilized to produce food for the world's growing population. Participate in real research to improve popcorn varieties and see how technologies in the laboratory and the field can help solve global food security challenges. Join us and be a part of our research team! *Note:* Casual, except closed-toed shoes and pants, will be required for some greenhouse and lab sessions.

Game Development Academy- Game Studies and Design

Have you ever wanted to design and program your own video game? Come join us and learn some of the basics! Experiment with some of the narrative, gameplay, coding basics, and level design that go into game design and development. This academy will introduce you to both the theoretical and practical aspects of game development in a hands-on, project-based environment, working side-by-side with U of I Faculty and Graduate Students. *Note:* Participants should have a working knowledge of computer basics with keyboard and mouse skills.

Gies Business Academy- Gies Business

For more than 100 years, the Gies College of Business has been preparing students to turn big ideas into meaningful actions. In this academy, students will learn about various majors and careers within the business field and get hands-on experience through interactive activities with campus and community experts. Whether you're interested in starting your own business, building a brand, developing leadership skills, managing wealth, or working with data and technology--this academy will help you gain the leadership skills and exposure you need to start considering a future in the business world. *Note:* Academy is open to Rising Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors only.



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

University of Illinois | U.S. Department of Agriculture

Local Extension Councils Cooperating University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Growing with Tech: Intro to Digital Ag- College of ACES / Dept. of Agricultural and Biological Engineering

This course is an introduction to the basics of coding as it is applied in the context of digital agriculture, with a focus on crops and animal production. Students will learn how to interact with drones, robots, and microcontrollers through hands-on activities with examples applied to digital agriculture. By the end of the course, students will be able to apply their knowledge to real-world problems in the field of digital agriculture. There will be opportunities to interact with drones, robots, and microcontrollers to collect and analyze data. By the end of this course, students will be challenged to develop solutions to problems facing our food systems using the skills they have learned. *Note:* Please bring long pants and closed-toed shoes for field observations.

Health Innovation Academy- Carle Illinois College of Medicine

At Carle Illinois College of Medicine, medical students and faculty are re-engineering healthcare by applying engineering principles and advanced technologies to real-world medical challenges. The Health Innovation Academy offers an immersive experience that shows participants how clinicians and innovators approach and solve complex problems. Students explore a wide range of medical and health careers while developing foundational clinical, innovation, and entrepreneurship skills. They also practice technical procedures in the state-of-the-art Jump Simulation Center, a safe and high-tech environment designed for early learners. *Note:* Please bring closed-toed shoes for lab attire.

Honeybee Biology and Beekeeping- College of ACES/Dept. of Entomology

Understanding the behavior of pollinators and their relationship to our environment is an important part of ensuring a sustainable food system. In this academy, students will learn the biology and behaviors of honeybees and their colonies while getting hands-on experience handling the live beehives. Students will learn some best management practices to preserve/increase pollinator-foraging habitats. At the end of this academy, you will put together your own hive body and take home the basic tools for working in a hive. Working in small groups at the U of I Pollinarium, students will discover how to help pollinators so they can continue to help us. *Note:* Please bring closed-toed shoes and long pants with socks that cover your ankles. Bring shorts in case of hot days to wear inside bee suits.

Unlocking Your Leadership Potential- Illinois Leadership Center

Leadership never happens alone. It's about working with others to create positive change in service to something bigger than yourself. In this academy, students will explore their unique leadership style using the Illinois Model of Leadership. Through an engaging mix of hands-on workshops, exposure to campus resources, and panel discussions featuring student affairs leaders, you will develop valuable skills in strengths-based approaches to work, time management, conflict resolution, empathy, and teamwork. Don't miss out on this empowering opportunity to step into your leadership potential while you connect with experts, mentors, and like-minded student leaders.

Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences Academy- College of Vet. Med, College of ACES/Dept. of Animal Sciences

Are you passionate about animals, medicine, emergency care, and science? Do you love helping people, solving mysteries, and tackling real challenges? If so, a career in animal health or science could be the perfect fit for you! Join us for an engaging, hands-on academy where you'll explore the sciences that shape the world of animals. Work with a variety of species—from farm animals and companion pets to wildlife—while diving into key topics such as nutrition, reproduction, and public health. Experience the world of animal science and veterinary medicine through



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

University of Illinois | U.S. Department of Agriculture

Local Extension Councils Cooperating University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

interactive activities in our Clinical Skills Laboratory and animal production units. Learn about the many career opportunities in animal health and science and gain valuable insights into this exciting field! Related Careers: Veterinarian, Veterinary Technician, Animal Caretaker, Animal Trainer, Public Health Advocate, Wildlife Manager, Marine Biologist, Animal Breeder, Kennel Manager, Researcher/Educator, Consultant, Animal Nutritionist, Animal Behaviorist, Animal Geneticist, Animal Scientist. Take the first step toward a future in veterinary medicine and animal sciences—join us for this immersive learning experience! *Note:* Please bring long pants and closed-toed shoes for field observation and lab work.



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

University of Illinois | U.S. Department of Agriculture

Local Extension Councils Cooperating University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.