



Questions & Answers

Summer Institute for the Gifted Webinar

February 9, 2010

General SIG Questions

Q: Are all the programs identical between the colleges - how do we decide which campus to select other than proximity?

A: The program at each campus starts out identically as described in the catalog. Individual differences occur as course selections change by campus according to student enrollments by course. Each campus is different and as each program has different people and different staffs, each program will have its own personality and culture, so the choice of campus is really an individual choice. Some people do consider proximity and many will also want to experience different kinds of campuses.

Q: How does your program differ from the John Hopkins and Duke TIP programs?

A: The main difference is that Talent Search programs focus on a particular discipline area for the three weeks in a single course. At SIG students can choose to take any of the courses available according to their strengths, interests, or any other reason.

Q: What is the policy on cell phones, personal laptops?

A: Students may bring laptops and cell phones. Cell phones may only be used in the dorm. Students are not allowed to bring them to class or use them throughout the day.

Q: Are we able to visit our student during the 3 weeks on campus?

A: Yes. There is a parent visitation day the Sunday before the program closes. In addition, if you would like to visit at any other time you may do so by informing the campus staff ahead of time, but the schedule is so busy that we recommend parents only visit on visitation day so that the students can enjoy the full benefits of the program.

Q: How does SIG participation impact college admissions?

A: Having participation in a summer academic program shows college admissions staff that the student is motivated academically, works at a high level, has gained independence by living on a college campus, and exemplifies positive characteristics that universities are seeking in their applicants.

Q: Will the students have the opportunity to get some exercise during the day?

A: Yes. Both the residential / commuter and day programs have a recreational period during the day. They may engage themselves in social, athletic and other recreational activities during the 'rec hour'. Additionally, they walk to classes between periods and have periods at night that are active or recreational as well.

Q: How many students have attended SIG? Could you provide me with a reference family from my area?

A: SIG began running academic summer programs in 1984. Since then we estimate that over 10,000 students have attended our programs. We would be happy to supply you with references. Please contact our office for further information.



Q: What are the pros and cons of commuting instead of living/staying on campus?

A: Being a commuter student is a fantastic option for the local student who is looking for an academic challenge but is not ready for the residential experience or may have other evening / weekend commitments. The drawbacks are that the commuter option does not allow for participation in the evening social activities, the option to work with their classmates during the evening tutorial or attend the recreational get away and social activities that occur on the weekends.

Applications / Admissions

Q: What is the time table for application for the residential program and how can one go about the process?

A: The application deadline for domestic students is May 1 and the deadline for international students is April 1. Applications can be made through our online application or by using a paper application that can also be obtained from our website www.giftedstudy.org. The sooner students apply the more likely they are able to get the courses they want.

Q: Do many/most students start early and keep going? It sounds as if it's a group of kids that stay together and may be awkward to start as a high school student?

A: Our student population is a fantastic mixture of returnees and new students of all ages. Approximately 40% of our students return from year to year.

Q: Will there be information mailed to me specifying on what I need to bring to the camp?

A: Yes. A student handbook and all the information you need before arriving at SIG is mailed in May! In addition, we send periodic emails in the weeks leading up to the start of your program as reminders.

Q: What percentage of SIG students return at least one more time?

A: Approximately 40% of SIG students attend more than one year. This year we will have several students completing their seventh consecutive summer attending SIG!

Q: Once admitted into the program, what is the admission process if I want to try out the program at a different school the following year?

A: As a returning student you need only to fill out an application each year. You will only need to supply new eligibility documents if you have not enrolled for more than two summers.

Q: We have an honor, A-student who has not been tested for a gifted program. How can he apply for SIG?

A: SIG accepts test scores from nationally-normed standardized tests, letters of recommendation, PSAT, SAT and ACT scores. Please visit our website for a full list of acceptable eligibility documentation at <http://www.giftedstudy.org/eligibility.asp>.

Q: How long does it take to notify applicants whether they have been accepted?

A: Most applicants receive a decision within two weeks of our receipt of eligibility documentation.

Q: What is the general age and male / female breakdown of participants?

A: We have found over the years that both male and female students enjoy attending the program fairly evenly. In 2009 the overall ratio was 51% female to 49% male.



Q: How many students attend per campus?

A: SIG day programs generally host between 40 and 80 students. Our residential /commuter programs have a population between 100 and 275 students.

Q: Do students have to bring certain textbooks and notebooks or are they provided?

A: Some courses will require the use of books and other course materials. The materials can be purchased on registration day. Normal supplies such as notebooks, pens, pencils, etc. can be brought by the students from home. For the day program the average course materials purchase is \$40 and is approximately \$75-\$100 for residential /commuter students.

Academics

Q: Do the classes count for college credit?

A: No, they are short term enrichment courses.

Q: Are the teachers college professors or high school teachers? Do you have special criteria for hiring them?

A: Most often, the teachers are local teachers. We look for teachers who have experience in gifted education and have expertise in the content field. We do not often use college professors; though they are undeniably experts in their fields, they do not tend to possess our other criteria of experience in gifted education and experience working with pre-college students.

Q: Is the curriculum developed by full time SIG faculty?

A: Our Academic Director oversees and develops the curriculum outlines for the courses. Instructors further tailor the courses according to the students interests and needs as well their own passions about the content.

Q: How are lessons prepared? Who supervises?

A: Instructors are provided with a general course outline, which is developed by the Academic Director. This outline includes objectives for the course, as well as suggested activities. The instructors then develop their own unit plan, which is approved by the Academic Dean at each campus. These plans, however, may change based on the level of knowledge the students bring with them to the course, as well as their individual interests. During the first two days, each student creates a personal objective for the course, and the instructor then creates individualized objectives for each student. Lessons are adjusted during the course of the three weeks in order to meet the SIG objectives, student objectives and instructor objectives.

Q: Do you bring in guest speakers?

A: We do occasionally bring in guest speakers for our academic courses; however one benefit of hiring local instructors is the educational network that they bring to the table. Instructors may, at their discretion and the approval of the Academic Dean, arrange for a guest speaker for their course.

Q: Do you have foreign language courses?

A: No, we are currently not offering foreign language courses.



Q: Can advanced students in younger grades participate in classes for older grades?

A: We recommend that students remain with their age group, as the opportunity to develop deep social relationships is so important to our students and is facilitated by the fact that the students they work with in classes in their age range will also be the ones in their counselor group and in their dorm “house”. It is also important to remember that all the students had to demonstrate eligibility for this program, so the other students in the same age classes will be similar in ability to your student. Sometimes, because these students are so asynchronous in their development, it is logical to take a course in a different level, particularly if there is not a similar course in the same age group. In this case, the Academic Director in the SIG office will discuss the possibility with the parents and make a determination about the out of level course. In cases where this change is permitted, SIG recommends that only one course be taken in another age group. It is possible to take a course of interest with a younger group as well. The student should just be made aware that he or she will be older than all the other students and must be comfortable with that distinction.

Q: How many students are in a class?

A: There is an average of 10 students per class. Some courses (e.g. Broadway Beckons) are designed to have a larger number of students to enhance their experience.

Q: If I am not happy with my course selections, will I be able to change them?

A: Yes. Students may change course selections during the first two academic days of classes.

Q: What is the goal of each academic course?

A: Our general goal for each course is to offer students both breadth and depth in an area of interest. While each course has 3-5 objectives created by the Academic Director, students create personal objectives for each course, and teachers then create an individualized objective for each student, with their interests and pre-existing knowledge in mind.

Q: Do course topics offer different every year?

A: SIG offers many new courses each summer. These are combined with popular courses from the year before.

Q: What grade would a student fall in if they finish 1st grade in June 2010? Would he do 1st grade or 2nd grade courses in the summer 2010?

A: He would be considered a 1st grader and take courses listed for 1st graders as course enrollments occur during the school year prior to camp.

Q: Are the teachers available for communicating with the parents during the 3 weeks to discuss how things are progressing with the child?

A: We encourage parents to meet with the teachers on Parent Visitation Day, which is the final Sunday of the residential program. Additionally, parents may call the SIG office and leave a message for the teacher or speak to the Academic Dean.

Q: For specialty classes (like photography), does the program supply the equipment needed or do they need to bring their own?

A: The students will need to bring their own equipment for the photography course. A digital camera, power cord, and media card (at least 1G) should be brought to the program, along with the cord to connect the camera to a computer or a media card reader (USB). The student handbook distributed in May will contain a complete list of items needed for specific courses.



Q: My son is a grade ahead (he skipped a grade). Would he be in the group with his grade or his age?

A: Whatever grade your son is completing this year is his placement for the SIG program.

Q: My son prefers to take an academic class rather than a tutorial/study for one of the periods...do you recommend against this? will it be too much of a load?

A: Students are free to select the schedule that best meets their interests, needs, and study habits. One study tutorial is provided every evening, an additional tutorial is not required. Every student learns at his/her own pace, and has unique study habits. For students who prefer to take their time with assignments, meticulously working until it is "just right" may benefit from an extra tutorial during the day.

Q: Is there interaction between the residential students and the day students?

A: Commuter students follow the same academic schedule as the residential students. Arriving after breakfast, commuter students take all five periods, lunch, and the recreation period with residential students. Commuter students must be picked up after the recreational period; they cannot participate in the evening events, with the exception of the performance night (they must be accompanied by a parent and their class must be one of the performing classes in order to attend this evening event).

Day Program Specific

Q: How long have you offered the K-1 program? How many children attend these sessions? What is the teacher student ratio?

A: SIG began offering our summer day programs in 2002. Our day programs tend to have an attendance of 40-90 students. Approximately one quarter of the students have been in the K-1 program.

Financial Questions

Q: Are there many opportunities for financial aid? Is a payment plan available?

A: SIG believes that every student should be afforded the opportunity to attend our program and offers a limited amount of financial assistance. We start accepting financial assistance applications in December for the following summer and accept applications until all of the allocated funds have been distributed. For the 2010 SIG season all funds have been exhausted. For a full list of fundraising and other scholarship /grant ideas please visit our website: <http://www.giftedstudy.org/fundraising.asp>.

Q: Is the tuition tax deductible?

A: In some cases you can deduct the non residential fees on your taxes. Please check with your accountant to determine whether this is possible in your individual case.

Residential Life

Q: Are the classrooms/residential rooms' air conditioned?

A: In most cases but it depends on the campus. Please contact SIG for this type of information for any campus you are considering.

Q: What is the room mate selection like? Do all students have roommates?

A: Most of the campus dorms have double rooms. Room mates are chosen randomly by age,



gender and nationality to promote diversity. You may request a single room for an additional \$250 fee. If we are unable to accommodate your request the amount will be refunded. Students may also request a specific roommate. For this request to be accommodated both students must request each other.

Q: Do counselors stay in the dorms?

A: Yes. Counselors, Resident Assistants and Housemasters all live in the dorms with the students.

Q: What would happen if my daughter didn't feel comfortable with her roommate?

A: She should let her counselor know. Conflict resolution is sometimes helpful and sometimes students will request a change in roommates. In all cases, the students will discuss the situation with her counselor, housemaster and/or the Residential Dean.

Q: Are parents able to sign out a student for the whole day on a weekend?

A: Yes you may sign the student out for the day on the weekend. However, we do offer Saturday Get A Way days that we encourage students to partake in to enhance their socialization experience and bonding with the other students.

Q: Are there religious services in the area that students are allowed to attend?

A: SIG makes every effort to accommodate a student's desire to attend religious services on the weekend.

Q: How do you cope with homesickness?

A: Some students will experience homesickness and some will not. Remember, homesickness is a natural occurrence in a child's development. SIG counselors and staff are well-trained to handle such situations. We have found over the past 25 years that parents who follow our recommendations to work with us in such cases, and who avoid contact with their student for the first three days, increase their child's enjoyment of the residential experience as well as their ability to develop personal independence and problem solving. Homesickness can be more difficult for the parent than the child!

Q: At the second dance are all grades together or do you have a dance for younger students and one for older students?

A: The first dance (first Friday) is a senior only dance (grades 7-11). The second dance is for all students.

Q: Do students mingle with the rest of the student body?

A: Generally no. In some cases there are some students who are college staff (RAs for example) or taking summer studies as well as some residential professors who live on campus throughout the year and have permanent residences in some of the dorms we use. Many of the campuses also host other summer camp programs. However, there is no direct interaction between them and us. Additionally, our students are always supervised by SIG staff.

Q: Will a tour of the campus be given to the students?

A: At the end of registration, students are taken on a tour of the campus and counselors specifically point out buildings of interest based on students' schedules.



Q: Are boys and girls taking classes together? Are they staying in the same dorms?

A: Yes all of the courses are co-ed. On most campuses the genders are housed in separate buildings. In some cases the genders may be in the same building housed on different floors. If students of different genders are housed in the same building they are not allowed on an opposite sex floor.

Q: Are parents called when there is a behavior infraction?

A: Yes. Parents are contacted when the student's behavior disrupts the classroom and/or the residential environment.

Q: How much spending money should I send with my child?

A: Typically students will only need money for personal purchases, snacks and laundry. A nominal amount of \$100 - \$150 is usually sufficient. In addition, all residential campuses have conveniently located ATM machines. Students are responsible for taking care of their own money.

Q: Do you recommend siblings to attend the same campus?

A: This would be a personal choice. It is likely easier to send siblings to one campus rather than two. In all cases, we would recommend that they not room together so that they may meet new people. Whether or not they are in the same age group, they will be able to see each other at meals and during camp wide activities.

Q: Are efforts made to have cultural diversity at each program site?

A: Yes. SIG is pleased to host students from over 30 US states and 40 countries. Students from different cultures are blended into counselor groups and as roommates.

Q: Are representatives of the host universities/colleges requested to give a presentation about the host university/college?

A: We generally do invite admissions representatives to meet with students who are interested in learning more about that college or university.

Q: Would it be possible to speak to some former students who made it to college?

A: Possibly. Please contact our office to discuss.

Q: Are performance classes such as dance or theatre workshops broken up depending on age and/or ability?

A: They are open to a wide age range. Instructors are encouraged to group within the classes to accomplish various skill or social objectives.

Health and Safety

Q: How do you deal with medication during the day? Do different age students go through a different process? I have a child who takes medication on two points during the day, how would this work?

A: In the residential programs there is a nurse on staff 24 hours a day. All medications must be surrendered to the nurse at registration who will distribute as prescribed by your doctor. Medications are normally dispensed at meal times. In cases when medication needs to be taken at different times of the day or night; a counselor will escort the student to the nurses office.



Q: Who is responsible for the safety of the child? SIG or the college/university?

A: The SIG staff is responsible for the safety of your children. The safety of our students is our number one priority.

Q: Are the SIG students in a separate living / study area from the college students that may be on campus

A: For the most part yes, students are not in the dorms during the summer. However, there are some students who are college staff (RAs for example) as well as some residential professors who live on campus throughout the year and have permanent residences in some of the dorms we use. While many of these staff elect to go away for the summer, there are some exceptions.

Q: Is vegetarian food also offered for residential students?

A: Yes. Each of the residential / commuter campus dining halls has a large variety of food types to choose from. The day program lunch menus also contain a vegetarian option. Please be sure to indicate special dietary needs on the residential forms received after acceptance into the program.

Q: How are the students supervised? Are they chaperoned around campus - from dorm to class etc?

A: Students are always supervised. They travel in groups with their counselors. If a student needs to visit the nurse or go to a different part of the campus for any reason he or she will be escorted by a counselor.