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Note: This month’s Education newsletter was authored by Hannah Olaniyan. Hannah is serving as a policy intern at the Institute for Emerging Issues through the Z. Smith Reynolds Non-Profit Internship Program (NPIP). Hannah will be graduating in the spring of 2016 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in Political Science and Public Policy.

Promoting Innovation through Engagement

Students across our state are marking the end of another academic year and the beginning of summer break. For our state’s K-12 students, the three months of summer vacation are often filled with volunteering, summer camps, youth groups, and more. Parents seek experiences that will engage and develop their children socially and academically, and responsive organizations aim to provide activities that will enlighten inquisitive young minds.

With the goals of providing students a meaningful and challenging summer activity that builds greater civic awareness and inspires our state’s young people to become more civically engaged, the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) is excited to announce its new youth engagement program, Summer in the Commons.

Featured Educators

This month’s featured educators are none other than former Gov. Jim Hunt and Mrs. Carolyn Hunt.

Featured Youth Engagement

As you plan summer activities for youth, I encourage you to add Summer in the Commons to your agenda. Click here to learn more.

Featured Report

Read more about youth civic engagement in the 2015 NC Civic Health Index.
IEI recently released the 2015 North Carolina Civic Health Index, a report that highlights huge disparities in rates of civic participation by age, education, socio-economic status, and race and ethnicity. As the report makes clear, North Carolina’s youth participate in their communities at significantly lower rates than do adults.

Summer in the Commons aims to provide facilitated visits for at least 1,000 students to IEI’s Emerging Issues Commons, located in Hunt Library on NC State University’s Centennial Campus. Participants will play the role of a North Carolina Senator, and use the Commons’ interactive touch screens to explore big issues facing our state. Students will share their own ideas for how to best tackle community challenges. “By presenting these challenges and sparking these innovative ideas from our state’s future leaders,” notes IEI education policy manager Kendall Hageman, “we are planting the seeds of change in communities across the state.”

Through an IEI-Hunt Library partnership, Summer in the Commons visits will also include a tour of the Library’s famous bookbot and technology showcase.

For more information or to schedule your group for a visit, please contact Simone Collman at (919) 513-7039, rccollma@ncsu.edu, or visit our website at http://iei.ncsu.edu/summer-commons/.

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Do you know a teacher who is working hard to help students succeed? Let us know, and s/he could be featured in the next education issue!