Aug. 15, 2015 – If you’re wondering what the buzz is about, it’s the inaugural Bridge UnderGraduate Science (or, BUGS) program taking off this summer. We welcomed 17 undergraduate and high school students to participate in custom, individualized research projects in our laboratories as part of The Bridge@USC initiative.

We offered opportunities for these young students to engage in a cross-disciplinary research project toward the assembly of an atomic resolution model of man within a dynamic scientific community, cultivating their creative potential to impact both human health and performance.

Dedicated to the University’s vision for increasing the engagement of women and minorities in STEM fields, this year’s BUGS participants were dominated by women as students and mentors.

We worked proudly to instill in students a sense of curiosity and infinite possibilities in school, science and life. Mentors from several research labs at The Bridge@USC guided students through research techniques and problem-solving.

Our scientists-in-training also participated in lab meetings, read and discussed scientific articles in a journal club series, and heard several personal perspectives on the journey into scientific research in a special BUGS-focused series of career symposia. Engaging and inclusive social activities, including afternoon social mixers, trips to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles, and a visit to a Los Angeles Dodger’s baseball game, complemented scientific activities. The summer program culminated in a final symposium where students presented a summary of their efforts to their peers, families and guests, as well as Bridge faculty, mentors and staff. We’re very proud of our students.

Stay tuned for more on the first BUGS class — including a short video to be released soon — and information about recruitment and activities planned for the next BUGS group, slated for Summer 2016.