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Qualcomm Institute Hosts Game Design Career Showcase for San Diego Students

VR Club president Connor Smith speaks to the Link2 visitors; and students experience the VR development process.

Some 150 high school students and 50 UC San Diego undergraduates converged on Atkinson Hall May 22 to learn something about jobs of the future, notably in game design and virtual reality. They were part of the Link2 San Diego program, launched by the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC) in 2015 to introduce local students to exciting career opportunities in order to grow and retain talent for the San Diego region.

The visit to the UC San Diego campus, sponsored by the Qualcomm Institute and the Design Lab, was part of the first Link2 Game Design program. Most of the high school students came from Mission Bay, Vista and Carlsbad High Schools, including students from AP Computer Science, robotics clubs and pre-engineering. The event was advertised as an opportunity to get the "inside scoop" on game design and digital arts as well as augmented reality, virtual reality and software development. The

Panel discussion (r-l) QI's Jurgen Schulze, CSE alum Stephen Foster, entrepreneur Russ Patterson, Jinx's Sean Gailey, and Daybreak Game's Emmanuel Valdez.

students heard from UC San Diego students who are already active in those fields, among them, Connor Smith, president of the student-run Virtual Reality Club (VR Club).

The 10am-2pm program in the Qualcomm Institute (QI) included a tour of QI's TourCAVE and other VR environments, as well as the QI Prototyping Facility, and its Experimental Game Lab (in addition to the gallery@calit2). Technology demos included 3D VR apps from the VR Club and the Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination (also based in Atkinson Hall).

Visiting the Experimental Game Lab on the first floor of Atkinson Hall.

A panel discussion and Q&A featured QI research scientist Jurgen Schulze (who is also a lecturer in CSE); CSE alumnus Stephen Foster (who is CEO of ThoughtSTEM); Sean Gailey, CEO of the game design firm Jinx; Daybreak Game Company CEO Emmanuel Valdez; and mobile game development entrepreneur Russ Patterson, who is also VP of Engineering for the Cookie Jam franchise, and formerly at Zynga and Electronic Arts.

At previous Link2 events, students got the opportunity to network with industry representatives and hear about job opportunities within some of San Diego's coolest and most innovative companies and industries. Link2 events have explored other high-growth categories such as Cyber (focusing on cybersecurity jobs, mainly for computer science students), Design, Manufacturing, and Downtown (which introduced some 100 computer science students from UC San Diego and SDSU to the startup and incubator scene in downtown San Diego).

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