Project Goals

- Introduce/demonstrate the concept of scientific research to rural students and emphasize how scientists question the world around them.
- Share the research that we have done on Red Bull energy drink as an example of the scientific method.
- Inspire students to become more interested in science while opening their eyes to the opportunities that are available to them at UW-Madison.
- Establish a long-lasting connection between rural school districts, UW-Madison, and the Biocore Program.

What We Learned

- Science can be made interesting and fun. During our visit we saw:
  - Great experimental designs.
  - Application of ideas presented in the Experimental Checklist.
  - Creative and independent thought.
  - Greater interest in experiments because students had designed them themselves.
  - Students having fun.
- Inquiry-based learning is key.
- Students’ favoring parts of presentation were designing their own experiments and then carrying them out. Inquiry-based approach helps students better understand the scientific method and makes learning more enjoyable and rewarding.
- We met with the administration at Wisconsin Heights High School to discuss ways to incorporate more inquiry-based learning into their science curriculum.
- Outreach can rectify misconceptions about science.
- We gave rural students a better understanding of what scientists do.
- We helped break down the stereotypical image of scientists, which our students defined as “old, white-haired men.”
- We served as role models that science can be done by anyone.
- Outreach is important for understanding rural students’ attitudes about UW-Madison as well as informing them about the opportunities here.
- Many students said they did not consider UW-Madison as an option for college, even though they had strong academic credentials. However, some students said they would be more interested in attending UW-Madison after participating in our presentation.
- Some students said they and their families felt distant from the University of Wisconsin and identified more closely with smaller local colleges.
- If UW-Madison continues to reach out to rural Wisconsin, it will not only educate the Wisconsin community, but will also better learn the needs/concerns of rural students and recruit promising young scholars.

Future Directions

Due to our project’s success, the Biocore Program is sponsoring more student-led outreach endeavors. Every year, new “Outreach Ambassadors” will be recruited from current Biocore students to engage in outreach projects. It is our hope that Biocore and the University of Wisconsin will continue to foster relationships with and extend their resources to the Wisconsin community for years to come.