

## Finding Summer Internships and Creating a Personal Statement

Tri Beta Biological Honor Society Meeting, MWSU  
Sept. 21, 2006



## Objectives

- Determine the value of internship experiences
- Learn where to look for and identify programs of interest
- Begin formulating a personal statement/statement of interest

## What are the benefits of participating in a summer internship?

## Benefits of Programs

- YOU GET PAID -- normally a stipend for research experience
  - Sometimes extra for housing, travel expenses, etc.
- Real world experience
- Mentors and network
- Group of other scholars and peers
- Experience other academic settings
- Stands out on your applications for postgraduate programs or jobs
- Can get MWSU biology credit

## Questions

- What are the different types of programs available?
- Where do I find opportunities?
- What is the application process all about?

## Types of Programs for Science Majors

### Research Experiences

- 8-10 weeks
- Includes hands-on, mentored project
- Seminars and/or workshops
- Some have GRE/other exam preparation
- Present your work at the end of the summer
  - **Note – there are programs specifically targeted for underrepresented minorities, first-generation college students, students from non-research-intensive universities, etc.**

*Ideal if you want to pursue a graduate (M.S., Ph.D.) or professional (M.D., etc) degree, careers in research, industry, teaching, pharmaceuticals, etc.*

## Types of Programs for Science Majors

### Medical Education Development (MED) Programs

- Intense coursework similar to medical school (immunology, biochemistry, anatomy, etc).
- Health and medically related seminars
- Tours of medical school/interactions with M.D.s

*Ideal for students going to Medical School*  
[www.med.unc.edu/oed/med/](http://www.med.unc.edu/oed/med/)

[http://www.ecu.edu/ascc/SPFD2\\_06.htm#Eligibility](http://www.ecu.edu/ascc/SPFD2_06.htm#Eligibility)

## What if I'm a Senior?

- Limited number of programs may fund students graduating with a Bachelors
- Laboratory technician – universities, companies, etc.
- Start grad program early
- Science outreach at museums, youth programs, summer camps, etc.

## Types of Programs for Science Majors

### • Post-Baccalaureate Programs

- For graduating seniors
- Intensive research experience + coursework
- Better prepare you for graduate school
- Often 1-2 year programs

*Ideal for students who have not had extensive research experience (beyond a summer internship) and/or for students who want to increase competitiveness for grad school admissions*

## Application Process

- Application forms – basic info
- Transcript
- Statement of Interest/Purpose/Personal Statement
- Recommendations from faculty
  - Someone who knows you well
  - Give them info about the program, your goals, etc.
  - Ask early!

### Timeline and Checklist

#### September – December 2006

- Think about projects, programs, locations, and mentors that you are interested in pursuing
- Identify potential programs to apply for, check out websites, talk to other students and professors
- Start working on personal statement



#### December 2006

- Revisit websites. Select final list of programs to apply for, check application deadlines
- Prepare application:
  - Ask for letters of reference (at least 3-4 weeks before deadline)
  - Request Transcripts (at least 3 weeks before deadline)
  - Finalize personal statement



### January – March 2007

- Send out final applications by mail or submit online  
Many deadlines are early in January & February
- Follow up with program coordinator to confirm receipt of application

### March – April 2007

- Receive acceptance letters  
Choose final program



## Where Do I Find Opportunities?

- Check with faculty at MWSU or other institutions if you have specific interests
- Ask other students
- Google
- National Science Foundation REU site  
– [http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu\\_search.cfm](http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.cfm)
- R.I.T. Internship/Co-Op site  
– <http://www.rit.edu/~gtfsbi/Symp/summer.htm>

## Some examples

- Marine biology: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute Summer Student Fellowship Program  
<http://www.whoi.edu/education/undergraduate/summer.html>
- Botany/museum science: Chicago Botanic Institute Summer Science Program  
<http://www.chicagobotanic.org/reu/index.html>

## Some examples

- Biomedical Sciences:
  - University of North Carolina SURE Program
    - <http://www.med.unc.edu/pmbb/reu/index.htm>
  - Baylor College of Medicine SMART Program
    - <http://www.bcm.edu/smart/?PMID=0>
- Multiple areas of biology, and more local:
  - Mizzou LS UROP program
    - <http://www.lsurop.missouri.edu/summerOther/index.htm>

## Personal Statement/Statement of Interest

- Purpose:
- Tell A Story!
  - Expression of who you are, what you want to do and WHY – be specific
- 1-2 pages (unless otherwise specified)

## Do's

- Include **justification** for why you are applying to that program/graduate school, etc
- Keep **focused**, remember your **audience**
- Explain research interests, areas of science, accomplishments, sources of **motivation**
- Address specific aspects of a particular program and **apply** it to your career goals
- Give your essay to at least 3 other people to provide **critique** and suggestions for improvement

## Don'ts

- ...don't make up experiences you never had
- ...don't say you "want to help people"
- ...don't send in a first draft
- ...don't wait to start your essay until the night before the due date
- ...don't plagiarize from someone else
- ...don't make it too long (or too short)
- ...don't use an inappropriate email address on your application (ie, [sexysexy123@yahoo.com](mailto:sexysexy123@yahoo.com))

## Questions to Think About

- Why do you want to participate in this research area/graduate program/medical school program, etc?
- What experiences make you qualified?
- What are your areas of interest and why, why not other areas of science?
- Personal experiences/influences helped guide your path – mentors/family/friends

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