

NIHERST-NASA I² 2018
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MID-INTERNSHIP UPDATE

HOW WAS ORIENTATION AT NASA-ARC?

The initial days at NASA were a whirlwind of badge processing, safety briefings and uncontrollable excitement. It was unfortunate that our late arrival meant that we missed a lot of the tours accessible to new interns (It is reassuring that these tours will be repeated coming down to the end for us late interns). The orientation itself was informative and exciting. It was a mixture of ensuring that we kept safe and secure and telling us to enjoy our summer to the fullest.

Upon arriving to my branch, the first person I met was Haley Cummings – an inspiring young woman who told me about her plans to work at NASA as well as pursue further degrees. As we walked through the NASA base I reveled in the cold, crisp air and the sheer number of people bustling by during the lunch time rush. But my biggest surprise was when we arrived at the building in which my office was situated. Opposite was a holding bay of sorts with planes both big and small just sitting. It is a view I walk by every day.

I then met my mentor who held a short meeting to describe what was expected and planned of us. Dr. William Warmbrodt is a character I cannot describe in a few words. He is enthusiastic, fun, caring and genuine to put it as simply as possible. There is no better mentor here at NASA-ARC than him. I am very lucky to have been chosen to be one of his many interns here for the summer.



My mentor, Dr. William Warmbrodt.

PROJECT PROGRESS

The first two weeks were mainly spent catching up with all the literature on my project as well as studying for an intern exam we had to do. My project so far is progressing nicely. I am writing a data report for a project related to the wind tunnel. I am also currently testing out a probe that will be used in the wind tunnel in the coming weeks and helping to assemble an experiment to be conducted very soon. It is all a lot of fun and for the most part – things I have never done before. I am extremely excited about getting to work in the 80 by 120 ft wind tunnel (Which is the largest in the world!). I am also learning to work in a team environment which is completely new for me. I am inspired every day by my teammates who are hardworking and driven individuals.

We also have a poster presentation that is upcoming. This event is for the entire base – all interns will present their projects and talk about what they have been doing. I am very excited about discussing what I have been doing so far and what we are planning to do with the rest of the NASA-ARC community.



Two of my teammates and I in one of the labs. We were cutting sheets of plywood for our project.

ADVENTURES

Aside from the academic excitement, there have been many thrilling adventures with all the wonderful people I have met here. My roommate, who is for sure a lifelong friend, and I love to go hiking. We always seem to run into danger. On one of our hikes we met a huge rattlesnake – and its baby sometime after. And on another hike – what we thought was a mountain lion chasing us was two beautiful deer darting through the forest.



My roommate, Meiliu and I. I think we could handle a mountain lion.

On a separate occasion some NASA interns and I went on a camping trip where driving up the mountain during the night a mountain lion jumped out at the car from the foliage. It was one for the books. We stopped high up on the mountain where we gazed at the most spectacular view of the Milky Way. We were so high up I felt as if my friends and I were swimming in the galactic core.



Here we are high above the mist.

OVERALL EXPERIENCE AT AMES

Being at Ames thus far has inspired me greatly to get back home and continue my studies. Seeing everyone here be so focused, driven and most importantly, so passionate about what they are doing has filled me with energy and motivation. Getting front row seats to listen to NASA scientists talk about their work – it is something they organize every week for us interns – has been an opportunity of a lifetime.

The one talk that stood out the most to me was done by Dr. Pete Worden who was director at Ames for eight or nine years before his retirement (and subsequent work with private companies). His field is astrophysics which is the field I hope to find myself in. His talk was not just inspiring by merit of its content but by who he was and what sort of achievements he had earned along the way. Interacting with him if only for a few minutes made the entire internship.

I look forward to what the next five weeks will bring!



Dr. Pete Worden, former NASA Ames Director