



Los Alamos National Laboratory attracts record number of students this summer

September 7, 2010



Students are “pipeline” for the future

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, September 7, 2010—Los Alamos National Laboratory this summer attracted a record number of student interns, giving them the opportunity to conduct exciting and important research in a wide range of disciplines. More than 1,300 students interned in both technical and nontechnical fields. In addition to students, a record number of postdocs—415—are working at Los Alamos this year.

“Student interns and postdocs contribute significantly to the programmatic work of the Laboratory. At the same time, they further enhance their academic and research skills,” said Dave Foster, program manager for the Laboratory’s Education and Postdoc Office. “They represent the primary ‘pipeline’ for future employee hires,” he added, noting that 29 percent of all current employees first joined the Lab as student interns or postdocs.

The Lab attracted students from U.S. and other center of higher education such as the University of New Mexico, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Texas A&M, Stanford, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, University of Delhi, University of Munich, and many others.

Over the past four years, both the overall number and the ethnic diversity of student interns has grown, said Foster. This year also has seen an increase in funding for students from the Department of Energy's Office of Science, the National Nuclear Security Administration, and the Department of Homeland Security.

Materials science and engineering major Cameron Tracy interned at LANL for the second time. Tracy and his mentor Erik Luther continued their work from last summer: researching the development of inert matrix nuclear fuels. Last year, Tracy won first place in the Engineering category at the DOE-sponsored Science and Energy Research Challenge.

Irena Ossola of the Computational Earth Sciences group has been working with her mentor, Brian Travis, on a project geared to better understanding the effects of global warming on permafrost. She has now prepared her research for publication. Originally from Santa Fe, Ossola graduated from Columbia University with a degree in environmental science and a concentration in sustainable development. She plans to attend graduate school to pursue a doctorate in environmental science or environmental engineering.

Stacy Shiffler, who is double majoring in physics and math at the University of Arizona, interned at the Center for Integrated Nanotechnologies in Albuquerque this summer and also conducted research at Los Alamos' Center for Integrated Nanotechnologies (CINT). She studied the photosynthetic antennae of the *Chlorobaculum tepidum* bacterium, and said, "I would consider it to be by far the most enjoyable summer internship I've had the last three years."

Lara Preteska, a student at New Mexico State University, worked on developing methods of microbial identification (phylotyping). She and her mentor, Cliff Han of the Laboratory's Bioscience Division, are developing a method that would be faster and less dependent on culture media. Preteska presented their work at the Student Symposium in August.

The Lab offers students a plethora of programs, competitions, and other activities through its Students' Association, Community Programs Office, and other organizations. Events, such as DOE's Science and Engineering Research Challenge (SERCh) and the annual Student Symposium, give students an opportunity to present to their peers and the public the hard work they've done during their internship.

In addition, every summer the LANL Institutes, and the Material Physics and Applications and Materials Science and Technology divisions, organize a Summer Lecture Series. Well-known scientists and researchers from across the Lab give talks on their different areas of expertise. While these talks are aimed at students, they are open to all employees.

Students also are offered the opportunity to tour various Lab facilities, such as CINT, the Los Alamos Neutron Science Center (LANSCE), and Los Alamos's National High Magnetic Field Lab.

"Regardless of their ultimate career destinations, these students and postdocs establish lasting networks of professional engagement with the LANL community throughout their careers," added Foster.

More information about LANL student interns and student events is available on the [Students' Association Web site](#). For a list of LANL educational programs, go to http://community.lanl.gov/source/orgs/cpo/education_programs/lanl_education_programs.shtml.

About [Los Alamos National Laboratory](#)

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