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Bentley Labs  
Biochemical Molecular Genetics Intern

Briefly describe the duties that your internship entails

I help out all the researchers in the lab with their projects. This involves me doing various tasks including such things as performing colony PCR's on yeast and E. coli, and running the DNA out on a gel to test for the desired change engineered in to the organism. I also extract and purify proteins from these yeast and E. coli, performing assays to test for expression levels. We also work with quantitative RT-PCR, which allows us to determine the expression levels of genes in real time. These assays reveal the complex processes controlling the timing and level of the different genes and explains a lot about how the cell works. This research can lead to treatments of bacteria, viruses and cancer.

In what ways is your internship helping you to achieve your learning objectives?

I'm a biology/chemistry major, so working with Bentley Labs parallels what I'm learning in my classes. I get to take what I learn in my classes and go even farther with it in the lab while simultaneously gaining high quality work experience. Most labs (both academic and commercial) prefer to employ those with experience; this is why doing an internship is an important step in obtaining a preferred job. It's also a good way to make sure this is the type of job one wants to do for a career. Experience is the best teacher.

Did you encounter anything unexpected? What, if anything, surprised you?

I was surprised by how laid back the atmosphere was in the lab. There is a relaxed dress code, everyone is friendly and always willing to help and answer questions. Once a week, a different lab will host an afternoon coffee break where everybody can come and hang out for a while. This is a hard working environment with long hours; the good part is that we set our own schedule as long as we are getting the work done. I'm also surprised by just how much information there is and how many new things are going on.

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