School of Molecular and Cellular Biology
Spring 2010 Workshop Series

Exploring

FEDERAL INTERNSHIPS for BIOLOGY STUDENTS

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April 22, 2010  4:00 pm  164D Burrill Hall

STUDENT INTERNSHIPS

- Part 1: An Overview of Internships
  - Sources of student internships
    - Federal Internships: The STEP and SCEP student employment programs

- Part 2: Navigating the Fed internship search and application process
  - Your resources for finding student opportunities
    - How to search for a federal student internship
    - Hands on search
    - How to apply for a student position

INTRO TO INTERNSHIPS

Undergraduate internship opportunities are offered by:
- State and federal government agencies,
- Private industry
- Nonprofit organizations and
- Academia (colleges and universities)

Take a look at the “Internships” handout for:
- Univ. of Illinois Career Center resources
- Other academic institutions that offer a list of pre-filtered opportunities
- Federal Internships
- Industry internships
- FAQ’s about internships

Thinking about a permanent job now may help you:

- find out if you’re interested in federal career jobs in the future.
- discover the qualifications (including education, skills and experience) required for these jobs
- become more competitive for these jobs. For example:
  - What are the required major(s) or minor(s)?
  - What are the needed skills and how can you develop and document them?
  - Will you need a graduate degree?
  - What kind of student internship experience would be beneficial?
  - How can networking help to position you for these jobs?

Begin by thinking about your goals for an internship/job experience. Do you want to:

- Explore a job area that’s in line with your major and career interests?
- Learn about an area that’s more peripheral -- maybe to broaden your experience or identify a new angle?
- Find out whether you like the federal system or a particular agency or department?
- Network with other students who share your interests or others already working in your career area?
- Gain specific skills?
- Explore living in a particular location?
Where to start?

Starting your search: The federal government can seem large and complex. Where do you begin? Are there people ready to help? Networking can and should start with...

Classification of federal student internship/job programs

- Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)
- Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)

Federal Student Programs:

Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)

Description:
- Traditional internship
- Great program for a summer or short term experience

Eligibility:
- Any student in enrolled in an accredited degree granting institution

Additional:
- Always paid, usually at a GS-2/3 for undergrad
- Not required to be posted on USAJobs.gov or StudentJobs.gov

Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)

Description:
- A student works in an area related to their area of study or major

Eligibility:
- Student is enrolled in an accredited degree granting institution
- Agency must form an agreement with the institution the student is attending

Additional:
- Always paid
- Students work at least 640 hours (or less depending on academic achievement or prior experience)
- After experience, students are eligible to be hired into an agency non-competitively
- Not required to be posted on USAJobs.gov or StudentJobs.gov

Tools for your Federal internship search:

- USAJobs.gov: http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_AgenciesIndex.shtml
- Students.gov: www.students.gov/STUGOVwebapp/public

Search the Partnership for Public Service website for internship resources and tips.
The Partnership for Public Service is committed to connecting students with opportunities in Federal Service. Let them help you:

- learn about your prospects for federal careers.
- search for great student internships.
- maximize your application process.

Explore their website: Makingthedifference.org

What you’ll find at makingthedifference.org:

- Discover what kinds of Federal Jobs there are.
- Search the Internship Directory.

Wondering what federal careers are projected to be like?

“…193,000 mission critical jobs need to be filled (in the federal government) in the next two years!”

You can search for Federal Jobs by broad topic area – like “Biological Sciences” or “Medical and Public Health.”

Getting Started: Federal Student Programs

You’ll find more information about STEP and SCEP on the makingthedifference.org

Join the Partnership Facebook Fan Page

Net work with other students exploring Federal Jobs and Internships. Find out about Job Fairs and other Federal Events.

Tips on finding an internship: DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Search the more than 200 federal internship programs.
- Remember: internships are sometimes found only on agency websites.
- Want a list of all the federal agencies? Find it on usa.jobs.gov.
- Not finding what you’re looking for? Don’t give up quickly! If an agency doesn’t have any internships, offer to meet for an informational interview – it could lead to an internship.
Tools for your Federal Internship search

- **Making the Difference:**

- **USA.gov:**
  [http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml)

- **Students.gov:**
  [www.students.gov/STUGOV/webapp/public](http://www.students.gov/STUGOV/webapp/public)

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Your federal internship search: USA.gov

You can search the official USA.gov website by topic. Explore the U.S. Gov’s official web portal – find a list of all Federal agencies and departments here.

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Explore it: Students.gov

- **Welcome to students.gov**
  - Take this link to internships listed by agency.
  - Take this link to a broad range of student opps in Federal Gov: Co-ops, internships, summer jobs, the Outstanding Scholars Program, volunteer opportunities, and plenty of part-time and full-time jobs.

- **Check out the student gateway to the US government**

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Your federal internship search: Studentjobs.gov

“Studentjobs.gov is the one stop portal for a range of employment opportunities for students within the Federal Government...”

- **Looking for info about student internships?** Search studentjobs.gov for positions to help you learn about an agency and get your foot in the door.
Tools for your Federal Internship search

- Making the Difference:
  http://www.makingthedifference.org/index.shtml

- USA.gov:
  http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml

- Students.gov:
  www.students.gov/STUGOVwebapp/public

Your federal internship search: Federal agency websites

With all these resources, your best information is often found directly on the agency Web sites:

- Agencies are not required to advertise their student positions on Students.gov or USA.gov. So:
- Bookmark web sites of selected agency websites related to your interests.
- Find out about the agency – Do you see a fit for your interests and goals?
- Search their job information - Does the agency offer student jobs?
- Contact them with your questions

Examples: Federal student jobs in the biological sciences:

- National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- The United States Dept. of Agriculture: USDA
- The Dept. of Health and Human Services: Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- National Aeronautics and Space Admin (NASA)

Explore it:

Suggested search terms: "student", "summer", "internship", "undergraduate"

Agencies often, but not always, identify their student opportunities as STEP or SCEP positions.

Not currently accepting applications for an internship? You can still find details about the program, when to apply and how to do so successfully!
- Gen Info about the program
- Eligibility
- Application procedure
- What happens after you apply
Where are these training opportunities located?
Is this a paid internship?
What are the start and end dates?
Who should write me letters of recommendation?
Can you provide any advice on how to write a good application?
How can I find out about NIH investigators I might work with?
Where else might I find information on research opportunities?

A summary of your search for a federal student employment opportunity:

1. Familiarize yourself with makingthedifference.org, USA.gov and Students.gov websites -- they’re loaded with helpful information about the different federal agencies and student opportunities. Then --
2. Make a list of federal agencies you’d like to explore further. Go to their websites and search for student positions using key words like: student jobs, student employment, internships, summer, fellowships, etc.
3. Don’t see student opportunities listed? Contact the agency! Stay in touch about opportunities.
4. No student positions? Ask about an informational interview -- It might lead to an internship!
5. Wandering whether a student position is available close to home? Ask!

NIH: Anatomy of a student job/ internship

Summer Internship Program (SIP):
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

For high school, college, graduate, medical, and dental students
Summer internship program at the National Institutes of Health provide opportunities for student interns to conduct research in a variety of fields, including medical, dental, and veterinary sciences. The program offers a unique opportunity to work in a collaborative and supportive environment, and provides a platform for students to explore their career interests and gain valuable research experience.

Look for the program description which includes:
- overarching goals
- what student job is like
- enrichment aspects
- applicant eligibility
- data for start of job duration

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Hands on: Exploring Federal student jobs in the biological sciences:

- National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Now try these agencies and departments:
- The United States Dept. of Agriculture: USDA
- The Dept. of Health and Human Services; Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- National Aeronautics and Space Admin (NASA)
NIH: Anatomy of a student job/ internship

Stipends:
The stipend for interns is adjusted yearly, with supplements for prior experience. For details, see the Stipend page.

Application Procedure:
Prospective candidates must apply online. The application is available from mid-November to March 1. It requires submission of a curriculum vitae, resume, coursework and grades, a cover letter describing the applicant’s research interests and career goals, and the names and contact information for two references. Candidates may also specify the scientific methodologies or disease/target systems that interest them.

How to apply:
• Read carefully! Be sure to provide all application materials! For example:
  • resume
  • transcript
  • cover letter describing your interests and career goals
  • references -- contact information or letters

Be sure to read all application instructions carefully before you begin...and check your submission for completeness and errors.

Summary: Federal Jobs/Internships for Biology Students

• Think about your goals for seeking a federal student job: Choose opportunities that will help you explore interests and develop skills you want.
• Start your search close to home: family, friends, advisors, professors and Illinois alumni
• Narrow your search with online tools: Makingthedifference.org, USA.gov and Students.gov
• Use the individual federal agency websites
• Explore the two main types of federal student employment:
  • STEP
  • SCEP

Summary continued...
• Look into federal career positions. Interested?—tailor your internship with an eye to the future!
• Network with other students who are searching for jobs—and federal employers looking to fill student positions: For example, take advantage of online networking venues—
  • Partnership Facebook
  • Studentjobs.gov
• Contact the individual federal agencies with your questions!
• Be meticulous and thorough as you complete your application.
• Plan to apply for most internships Dec - Jan for the following summer!

Questions?

• MCB Advising Program: 333.6774 for appt.
  127 Burrill Hall
  email: mcbadvising@life.uiuc.edu
• The Career Center: 333.0395 for appt.