

2014 summer interns build experience in research and presentations

By Kelly Lenox

Students in the 2014 NIH Summer Internship Program (SIP) at NIEHS experienced a summer rich with research, seminars, workshops, and new connections, as the Institute continued its efforts to develop a new generation of skilled and inspired environmental health scientists.

Organized by Debbie Wilson, coordinator of SIP, with key involvement from Tammy Collins, Ph.D., director of the NIEHS Office of Fellows' Career Development, nearly 40 interns began their summer research projects in May and June and finished by presenting research posters in a July 24 competition.

Linked Video

[Learn more about the NIEHS summer internship program \(3:56\)](#)

Workshops combine topical studies and fun

The summer program held a rich variety of learning experiences (see [story](#)), including two workshops on hot topics among environmental health scientists. The first, on June 27, explored Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHAD), and the second, on July 10, focused on Climate Change and Human Health.

At each workshop, after initial presentations, the interns worked in small groups to research specific questions. For example, in the climate change workshop, one group studied increasing rainfall in the Great Lakes region. Organized and assisted by trainees and staff (see side bar), the groups presented their findings on the problem, its causes and public health effects, and recommendations for how to mitigate those health impacts - all in only three minutes. After all groups had presented, organizers tested the interns with lively contests formatted as popular game shows.

Poster session and awards sum up great learning experience

Despite organizers' efforts to control the crowd by splitting poster presenters into two groups, Rodbell Auditorium buzzed with activity July 24, as interns presented their summer research to NIEHS leadership, scientists, family, and interested staff.

It didn't take long, while mingling with the well-spoken interns, to begin to feel one was talking to tomorrow's award-winning researchers. "The quality of the interns each year is just amazing," said Thomas Kunkel, Ph.D., head of the NIEHS Replication Fidelity Group.

That excellence was celebrated in an awards ceremony and ice cream social later that afternoon. "About half of these interns were presenting posters for the first time," remarked Bill Schrader, Ph.D., NIEHS deputy scientific director and emcee of the awards ceremony. Three best poster awards were given out - one each to a high school, undergraduate, and graduate student. Following the ceremony, one last competition was held - a trivia game covering everything from pop culture to NIH arcana.



Bill Schrader, Ph.D., NIEHS deputy scientific director, poses with poster award winners. From left, William G. Enloe High School senior Emma Gierman; Schrader; and Tulane University sophomore Tanika Bantukul; and Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine graduate student Kaitlyn Gam. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



There were two awards for NIEHS Scholars Connect Program (NCSP) interns, who are just at the beginning of their research year, and DeAsia Lewis, center, a junior at St. Augustine's University, won both - best poster and overall presentation. Cathy Jamison, right, program coordinator for NCSP (see [story](#)), made the presentation with Schrader. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

2014 Summer Intern Workshops

Developmental Origins of Health and Disease

Team Leader: Bonnie Joubert, Ph.D.

Team Members: Miranda Bernhardt, Ph.D.; Sophia Harlid, Ph.D.; Rui Liu, Ph.D.; Sabrina Robertson, Ph.D.; Alisa Suen; and Joy Winuthayanon, Ph.D.

Presenter: John Balbus, M.D.

Climate Change and Human Health

Team Leader: Sara Andres, Ph.D.

Team Members: Palmyra Romeo; Cathy Jamison; Joy Winuthayanon, Ph.D.; and Suchandra Bhatteerjee, Ph.D.

Advisor: Bono Sen, Ph.D.



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In the climate change workshop, interns worked together to research their presentation and compete in the game show afterwards. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



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The small groups in the climate change workshop enjoyed the lighter side of the exercise, as they enthusiastically competed in the game shows, which combined questions everybody knew, with some that stumped most contestants. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



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Jamison helped lead the climate change workshop. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



4/8

Balbus, NIEHS senior advisor for public health and lead for the WHO-NIEHS Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health Sciences, discussed policy aspects of global environmental health and DOHAD. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



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The workshop groups used handouts and online resources to research their assigned problem and prepare three-minute presentations. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



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"I'm one year away from a master's in public health," said Andrew Nguyen, a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), during the poster session. Nguyen is applying to both medical school and graduate school, as he determines which direction will best meet his goals. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



7/8

Oriana Yost, a rising senior studying animal science at North Carolina State University, described her research to Darryl Zeldin, M.D., NIEHS scientific director. Yost was recommended to the program by a mentor, Shweta Trivedi, Ph.D., a former postdoc at NIEHS. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



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Daniel Gehle was interested in DNA replication research, a change from his lab work at UNC, where he's a rising senior. "I also wanted to get a feel for what research outside of academia is like," he said. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

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