

Internship Experiences

Brooke Barger on her internship experience

During the summer of 2004, I participated in the Pre-Service Teacher program offered by the Department of Energy. I worked in the Nuclear Science and Technology division. My project involved using Monte Carlo Methods to model particle interactions on radiation detectors. The first several weeks were somewhat overwhelming, as I was flooded with information about new computer programs, the methods used in radiation detection, and the foundation of nuclear physics. After the first month, I felt a little more confident, and was able to take off on my own project. My assignment involved studying the effects of a parameter in the computer software Monte Carlo N Particle (MCNP). Another component of my assignment was to write a high school level unit plan that incorporated my laboratory research. I chose to compose my unit on the topic of analyzing error in simulations. Overall, this internship was a great learning experience for me. It stretched me beyond my comfort zone and forced me to apply my mind in new ways. While the application to my field of study in education was not as concrete as I had hoped, the internship helped me to learn more about the scientific environment and research methods.

Jonathan Bundy on his internship experience

During my internship I worked under a division of the Corporate Actuarial section of Conseco. I did miscellaneous projects such as product testing as well as web page design. In addition to that, I helped with preparing reserve exhibits for two life insurance companies. When not working on those projects, I was also able to attend meetings with the people in my department. The majority of those meetings dealt with the Sarbanes Oxley act, and how that affected the company.

Sheamus Parkes on his internship experience

During the summer of 2003, I worked at a summer internship for Towers Perrin in St. Louis. Towers Perrin is a pension consulting firm for the most part. That means, I spent all summer helping to do calculations on clients' retirement plans. Also, since it is a consulting firm, the whole office was filled with only other actuaries doing similar work. It made for a great learning experience.

The people at Towers Perrin were very friendly and helpful. They had a nice structure to the program, but were still able to adapt it to fit my abilities. There were many fun things to be done in St. Louis, too. I particularly enjoyed the very large 4th of July celebration. I had a great time and learned all sorts of new things at the same time.

Tamara Bleke on her internship experience

During the summer of 2004, I interned at Nationwide Financial in Columbus, OH. I worked in Investment Life Actuarial, which made up a small portion of the Corporate Owned Life Insurance department. In this area, the actuaries worked with insurance policies that had very large face amounts. One of the main projects I had over the summer was a commission study for these large policies. With the use of pricing software, I ran different scenarios of a plan while varying criteria such as commission levels and premium amounts. After running the plan, I modeled the resulting data in a chart using Excel. My manager then used this chart to explain to brokers why the company must give lower percentages of commission for larger face-valued policies. Besides working with pricing software, I also learned to program in Visual Basic 6.0 and Visual Basic.NET. The actuaries in my department were converting their software to Visual Basic.NET, and I was able to help them by creating some forms that transferred data from Microsoft Access to Excel, and others that computed premium values and face amounts. From this experience, I gained a vast amount of knowledge about the life insurance industry and computer skills. I also obtained a broader view of the different fields of actuarial science by listening to different presentations from other actuarial departments. This internship was a great learning experience, and it has better prepared me for entering the insurance world.