



Meet the Intern

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Riley Adamski

Host Laboratory: Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Degree of Study: Neurobiology and biochemistry

Graduation: Spring 2027

School: University of Wisconsin



Tell us about your science background?

I had the very stereotypical, 'I want to help people' narrative. I saw science as something that I had a deep interest in and the study of new emerging technologies especially in chemistry and also in genetics and the neural sphere. So that was how I got introduced into sciences in high school.

How did you hear about the Public Health Laboratory Internship Program?

I got introduced to a lot of different paths when I got into college and I was honestly dumbfounded on where I should go. So I ended up searching for different internships to try to narrow down my scope and try to find something that I will not regret the rest of my life. I found APHL through Handshake and the internships program that they were offering and I decided why the heck not. I ended up getting matched with the lovely people at WSLH. And here I am.

How did this internship match or exceed your expectations?

It's very much exceeded (expectations). They've taken into account my capabilities outside of chemistry. I've been helping with Excel sheets and other projects. I've also been able to get into the laboratory and get hands-on experience with the inorganics laboratory here. So that translates to a lot of water testing. So I've been extremely happy because I was seeing this as I get in the laboratory, I'll have fun. But it's turned into this actually fits my skill set and capabilities. So it's a lot more exciting and fun to get into work and feel like I'm useful in to help other people.



Tell us what you learned from your mentor.

My mentor is extremely helpful. I share the cubicle with him, so whenever I have a question, which is quite frequently, I can always just go and ask him and he is extremely responsive. Even outside of the project, he's been helpful and I've been able to use him as a resource. He has given advice for how to reply to people and how to set up meetings and navigate Outlook and Teams without having to go through all of those hurdles that people would have to normally go through.

Tell us about your project assignments/laboratory roles.

I split between helping the inorganics laboratory because it's an extremely busy time of year for them. My main project is actually working on a comprehensive Excel spreadsheet that includes all the various tests that all the departments in WSLH perform specifically for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It basically is to try to mitigate these communication errors that could happen between the DNR and our analysts

here by providing common information like minimum sample sizes, bottle types, how the samplers should preserve the samples like with acid and such. There is a contact information sheet and there's a glossary to help with navigating this document. There's different panel breakdowns, price ranges, so on and so forth. It is extremely comprehensive.

How has your fellowship experience inspired you?

It's honestly opened me up to this whole public health field, I've actually now been considering continuing with the public health laboratory, or at least a state laboratory, after graduation. Also, I've learned a lot more about what public health means. That's helped inform me about decisions and future careers.

How would you describe the Fellowship to other students?

I would describe it as an experience that will shape your outlook on how laboratory environments are, especially if it's your first professional laboratory environment. But it also is terrific for the opportunities that they give for being able to branch out and learn more about the work sphere. You're able to go shadow and tour different areas of the laboratory that you might not normally get that opportunity otherwise. So I see it as an amazing growth opportunity for people with not that much experience or low experience in laboratory environments.

Aside from the laboratory and the science, did you gain any other beneficial life experiences?

I've learned how to publicly speak and present. I've had to break down my project and what it is to my mentor and co-mentor many times and had to tell them what I'm doing throughout the week and what I will be doing in the future. And I've also been able to advance my (laboratory) skills and gained a lot of experience with professional communications, with emails and Teams and other resources commonly used in office situations.

What do you believe the next step will be in your career path?

So I've toyed around with a lot of different possibilities. I have, of course, considered applying for a position here at WSLH. Another possibility is I have a friend that is working for a private company in Madison that I might try to check out. But I do very much want to stay in this chemistry sphere. I've honestly fallen in love with it more from this internship. And it's shown me that I could see myself doing this for at least a decent while.