
- Rachael Grudt (Chemical Engineering, 2016)
- Science Undergraduate Laboratory Intern (SULI)
- Full-time, 40 hours per week
- Paid

What do you do as an intern at this organization?
I am working with the bioenergy technoeconomic analysis group. Under the guidance of my mentor I am using Aspen Plus to develop a model for the chemical conversion of methanol to olefins. I am responsible for writing a paper and presenting a poster on this topic at the end of summer.

How did you find your internship?
Searching the internet.

What do you enjoy most about your internship?
Everyone who works here is excited about renewable energy and loves to tell you about their research. I have had the opportunity to learn about and see many cutting edge technologies. The culture here is to work hard but it’s not competitive or high stress and everyone is very helpful and supportive.

What do you find challenging?
Daily I face challenges getting my simulation to converge and run properly while optimizing results. Another challenge is that as a rising junior I don’t always have enough chemical engineering background knowledge but I have done extra readings and my mentor is very supportive and helpful.

What advice would you offer to someone who wants to make the most of an internship like yours?
Take every chance that you get to take a tour of a research building or talk to someone about the work that they are doing. This is both a chance to network and to learn about potential career options. The deadline for the summer SULI application is the beginning of January.

About the Organization
National Renewable Energy Lab/Department of Energy
Golden, CO

At the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), we focus on creative answers to today’s energy challenges. From fundamental science and energy analysis to validating new products for the commercial market, NREL researchers are dedicated to transforming the way the world uses energy.