Johnson Space Center Resort

How I spent my summer vacation.

An alternative to the typical summer fare

by Debbie Nguyen

Summer vacations aren't what they used to be. Instead of sandy beaches, sleeping in late and family road trips, nearly 300 students from around the country chose to spend their summer vacation working at Johnson Space Center.

These students represent the next generation of explorers who will be needed to fill the shoes of upcoming NASA retirees. At JSC, there are close to two dozen student employment programs that enable NASA to attract, train and retain the brainpower and talent needed to augment the present and future workforce.

"Each year we are fortunate to get some of the brightest young individuals to participate in our student employment programs," JSC Center Director Lt. Gen. Jefferson D. Howell Jr. said. "They come because they have an interest, a passion or even a dream. Their experience here often leads to employment either with NASA or one of the many great contractors that supports NASA. They are the next generation of engineers, scientists and leaders and no matter where they work, they will contribute to all of our collective futures."

In addition to offering students an opportunity to experience NASA, the student employment programs also contribute to organizational needs.

ATTRACT

To inspire the next generation, several programs focus on high school level and minority students.

NASA Summer High School Apprenticeship Research Program (SHARP): High school students who excel in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) are partnered with mentors who help develop their skills during the summer months at participating NASA centers – as well as select colleges and universities across the country.

NASA Scholars: Various programs offer students who attend minority-serving colleges an opportunity to participate in summer internships at JSC in their pursuit of NASA-related majors.

TRAIN

Through the student employment programs, students are able to hone their abilities by working in a hands-on environment.

Office Education (OE) Program and Education and Training Cooperative Program (ETC): Both programs are operated by Universities Space Research Association (USRA) and offer high school seniors and college undergraduates the ability to gain experience in the fields of business and accounting, while earning money for college and attending school full time.

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Julie Len participated in SHARP in the summer of 2002 and 2003 and now attends Stanford University.

Undergraduate Student Researcher Program (USRP): JSC's White Sands Test Facility located in New Mexico also offers a great learning test ground for student interns. In USRP, the students work 10 to 15 consecutive, 40-hour weeks researching under the supervision of a NASA technical mentor. The students must submit a paper on their NASA-USRP research experience at the end of their term, which they can discuss in public forums and in NASA-sponsored colloquia and workshops.

RETAIN

NASA can use these programs to recruit and strengthen the science and engineering pipeline with already-trained employees.

Cooperative Education Program (Co-op): This is the largest student employment program and a path that is used by many students to become a federal employee at JSC.

The Co-op Program provides students with practical experience in applying the principles and theories learned in the classroom. The Program benefits JSC by providing the Center with a source of future employees for engineering, science and administrative positions.

"Engineering considers the Co-op Program to be an invaluable resource – both to the organization and the individuals involved," said Deputy Director of Engineering Lauri Hansen, who started as a co-op in January 1984. "The majority of our new hires are from the Co-op Program, and we find that the individuals' co-op experience provides the background for them to step in and perform jobs that would generally be thought of as too difficult for a new hire, fresh out of school. Send us more!"

Participants are full-time students, both graduate and undergraduate. They work alternate semesters or quarters at school with semesters or quarters, also known as "tours," at JSC in a paid, full-time position directly related to their field of study.

As NASA's future missions inspire the next generation, JSC's student employment programs will help prepare the students of today to be a part of it.

JSC's Education Office manages all of the JSC student employment programs. More information can be found on their Web site at: **http://education.jsc.nasa.gov**.

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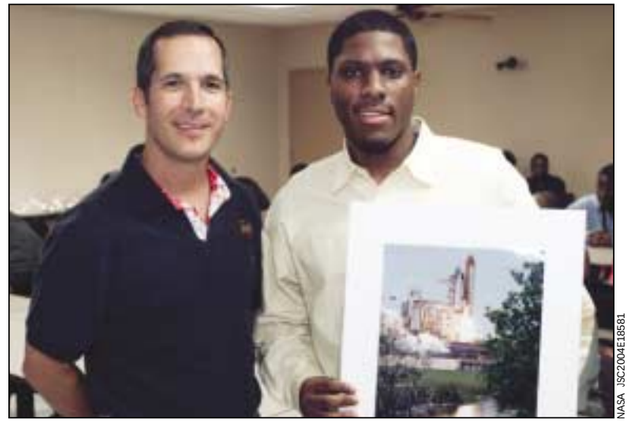
Kenny Armijo, from the University of New Mexico, has been a NASA Scholar since his sophomore year in 2000. Armijo pipelined into the NASA Cooperative Education Program and just completed his third tour in the Thermal Systems Branch of the Structural Engineering Division.

By pipelining from OE to ETC, 20-year-old Aracellie Chavera has been a four-year veteran in the Supply and Support Services Branch where she played a major part in the Just-In-Time Program that provides almost 300 users site-wide the ability to order from the Boise Cascade Office Supplies Web site.

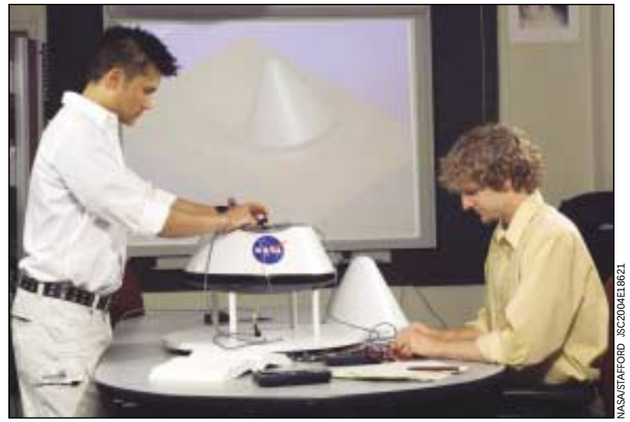
NASA JSC2004E16112

Astronaut John Herrington presented an award to NASA Scholar student Derrick Barrett at the 2003 JSC Equal Opportunities Program Office summer student award luncheon.



NASA JSC2004E18581

During their third and final tour, aerospace engineer majors Chris Tanner, from Georgia Institute of Technology, and David Wiese, from the University of Texas, worked on an Apollo capsule, which did an impact testing in April, for the Advanced Mission Design Branch.



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