

PLU College of Natural Sciences



SUMMER RESEARCH 101

Nov. 25, 2025

Rieke 103B

11:40 AM - 12:05 PM

Prof. Neal Yakelis

he/him

PLU Dept. of Chemistry

Pre-Health Sciences Advising Team



amazon



Summer jobs



student
painters
House Painting

**Hold on! I can get a
summer job doing
scientific research?**

What is your why?



A word cloud featuring various scientific and academic fields and concepts. The words are arranged in a dense, overlapping manner. The colors of the words include white, orange, blue, and grey. The words are: stemcell, fieldresearch, foodscience, bioinformatics, publichealth, engineering, interdisciplinary, science, syntheticbiology, biomedicalresearch, curiosity, astrobiology, graduateschool, careers, newcures, masters, phd, progress, network, cuttingedge, explore, cancer, biostatistics, neuroscience, malaria, biogeochemistry, materialscience, pharmaceuticals, awayfromhome, oceanscience, independence, vaccines.

**Summer research internships can literally open doors:
careers, education, mentors, & what you are going to do with your life!**

Application Process: November - March

- 1. Discern and explore opportunities**
- 2. Talk to PLU professors – Letters of Rec.**
- 3. Prepare a STEM-focused resume**
- 4. Personal Statement**
- 5. Download unofficial transcripts**
- 6. Apply, apply, apply, apply, apply.**

NSF REU ♦ SULI ♦ SURF ♦ SURP ♦ INTERNSHIPS

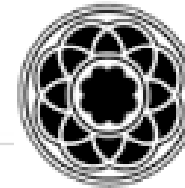
Overview: SUMMER UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMS and INTERNSHIPS

- Typically run 8-10 weeks
- Full-time positions, pay stipend approx. **\$5000-7000**
- Often, housing stipend or arrangements are included
- Often, travel is covered if out of state
- Provide opportunity to learn about grad school & careers
- **MOST ARE HIGHLY COMPETITIVE, but depend on location and research area**

1. Discern and explore opportunities

Division of Natural Sciences

🏠 // Summer Undergraduate Research Program



PACIFIC
LUTHERAN
UNIVERSITY

Natural Sciences Summer Undergraduate Research Program



- ◆ <http://www.plu.edu/nsci/undergraduate-research-program/>
- 5-10 weeks (June - early Aug)
- PLU faculty members mentor students
- 2025 stipend \$6512/10 weeks
- **Application launches January/February 2026**
- **RIEKE RENOVATIONS IMPACT SUMMER 2026**

1. Discern and explore opportunities

APPLYING TO EXTERNAL SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Natural Sciences

Home

Values, Mission & Vision

Departments & Programs



Research & Internships



> Natural Sciences Summer
Undergraduate Research
Program (NSSURP)

> Applying to External Summer
Research Programs



<https://www.plu.edu/natural-sciences/applying-to-external-summer-research-programs/>

1. Discern and explore opportunities

National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU)

- 8-10 weeks
- Faculty/grad student/postdoc mentors
- Professional skills and social activities
- Housing often included (dorm, shared house)
- Stipend \$5000-\$7000
- Application deadlines vary, **but start in Dec.**
- Some targeted programs (first-years, international experiences, etc.)
- Some are in PNW: UW, WSU, UO, OSU, etc.

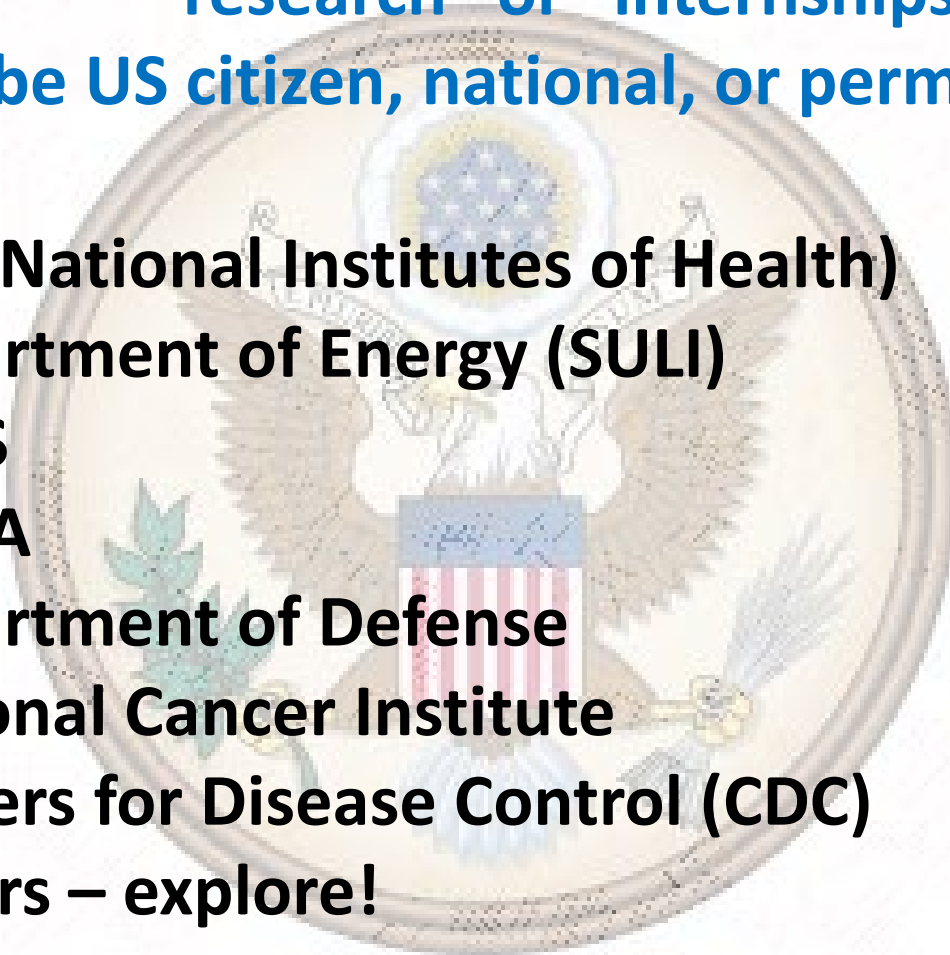
1. Discern and explore opportunities

◆ Other federal agencies to explore

Google with “undergraduate research” or “summer research” or “internships”

* Must be US citizen, national, or permanent resident

- NIH (National Institutes of Health)
- Department of Energy (SULI)
- USGS
- NOAA
- Department of Defense
- National Cancer Institute
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- Others – explore!



1. Discern and explore opportunities

◆ Individual companies/institutes

Google with “undergraduate research” or
“summer research” or “internships”



FRED HUTCH™



BOEING



OHSU



Microsoft



ALLEN
INSTITUTE



Freedom from Infectious Disease

1. Discern and explore opportunities



FRED HUTCH™

**Catalog of Biomedical Internships
(updated each year)**

fredhutch.org/content/dam/www/about-us/internships/surp/internships.pdf

2. Talk to PLU professors – Letters of Rec.

Before selecting letter-writers, reflect upon:
What would a professor write about you?

- Set up an appointment to chat with some STEM professors, advisors, or mentors about your interests and goals. Maybe even alumni via LuteLink?
- What happens when a professor writes a letter behind *the curtain*?

Longest step and most work – writing a letter

Super easy/quick – submitting it to lots of programs.

APPLY BROADLY – 10+ is common

3. Prepare a STEM-focused resume

- STEM COURSES YOU HAVE TAKEN OR ARE TAKING Jan/Spr
- RESEARCH and LAB COURSE PROJECTS
- LAB TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS
- SOFTWARE/HARDWARE KNOWLEDGE
- WORK EXPERIENCE (summarized)

See examples on web page ...

5. Download unofficial transcripts

- PLU from Banner (print as PDF)
- Any two-year community colleges or other institutions

4. Personal Statement

Ex: Personal statement writing prompt for summer research programs:

Describe your primary motivations for wanting to participate in this summer research program. Identify three faculty members whose research you are interested in, and briefly explain why.

How do I start writing one?

How do I avoid clichés?



❖ *What's your story in science?*

- What has inspired you?
- What are you most curious about?
- Who has inspired you?
- Why is studying science meaningful to you?
- Why did you come to PLU to study science?
- What goals do you consider?

❖ *How do your specific life experiences shape who you are as a student now & the impact you want to make in the world?*

Personal Statement Tips

Audience = Potential research mentors (PhDs) reviewing apps

1. **Answer the questions** that are asked of you
2. **Narrative** is powerful.
3. **Be reflective** – what impact did experiences have on you?
4. **Connect the dots** for the reader.
5. **The hook!** Hook in your reader in first sentences.
6. **Do your web research.** Mention specific groups, projects, and articles that are interesting to you. Remember your audience is the mentors looking for motivated students.
7. **A perfect final draft.** Grammar & spellcheck. Proofreaders like faculty and Career Services.
8. **Avoid clichés.** “I like science and want to help people.”