Students Spend Summer Vacation Working At NASA Wallops Flight Facility

Students in the 1998 Summer High School Apprenticeship Research Program (SHARP) and the Space Club Scholar Program have spent their summer vacations working in various locations at Wallops.

Both programs offer an intensive science and engineering apprenticeship and are designed to increase, strengthen and diversify the pool of students for mathematics, science and engineering college majors and careers. During the apprenticeship, students have the opportunity to conduct meaningful research and participate in a variety of educational and professional activities.

The SHARP students include Nicholas Holden, Arthur Morrison, Candace Snow and Carlton West. Returning for the second year as a Space Club Scholar is Michael Cropper. Other Space Club Scholars are Julian Avila, Robert Blessing, Scott Heatwole, and Andrew O’Brien.

The Public Affairs Office would like to thank everyone who supported these two programs this year.

Students in the National Space Club Scholars Program spend six weeks, and SHARP students spend eight weeks with a scientist or engineer. Students are selected on a competitive basis for placement. Once selected, they are assigned to work with a mentor in a specific area of science or technology.

Experiments are being conducted by undergraduate and graduate students from the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) and four of the member institutions of the Virginia Space Grant College Consortium. The Virginia students are from Old Dominion University, the College of William and Mary, Hampton University and Tidewater Community College, all of which are located in Southeastern Virginia. The first of the two scientific balloons and experiments is currently scheduled for launch from the Wallops Flight Facility during the early morning of Aug. 11.

The flight for the Virginia students will last from three to four hours and reach a maximum height of 90,000 feet (17 miles). An onboard imaging experiment will provide high resolution digital photos of the flight. These images may be viewed real-time on the Internet at: http://ixeab2.larc.nasa.gov/~killough/vgvc.

The 100-pound payload includes the gondola, which houses the experiments as well as support systems. In addition to the onboard imaging experiment is a high altitude air sampling experiment and equipment to record temperature and air pressure changes. The equipment will rely on a GPS receiver to determine altitude and trigger the opening of a series of collection tubes.

“We hope to collect air samples to measure concentrations of various pollutants in the air at different altitudes,” said Dr. Bruce Bukiet, associate professor of mathematical sciences at NJIT who is the project principal investigator.

Once each balloon has reached altitude and completed the desired flight duration, NASA operations personnel will send an electronic signal to the balloon to terminate the flight. A small tear will develop in the balloon material and cause it to fall to the ground. An onboard parachute will deploy allowing the gondola and experiments to descend. The students will then be able to retrieve their experiments and conduct post-flight evaluations.

In late August, students from Prairie View (Texas) A&M University, will be participating in the program and will conduct their balloon launch from the National Scientific Balloon Facility, Palestine, Texas.

More information on the NASA Student Launch Program and Scientific Balloon Program may be obtained by visiting the Wallops homepage: http://www.wff.nasa.gov
NASA has selected Nationsbank, Charlotte, NC to be its next credit card provider for fleet, travel and purchase cards. Nationsbank is one of six banks awarded master contracts by the General Services Administration (GSA). NASA will issue a task order agreement for all three card types through GSA, to be effective Nov. 30, 1998, for up to ten years, including options.

NASA spends approximately $100 million per year through credit card services. This no-cost agreement with Nationsbank for all three card types will allow NASA to pursue integrated services that will streamline processes and gain efficiencies.

NASA currently uses three different GSA card providers: American Express for travel cards, Rocky Mountain Bank for purchase cards, and Wright Express for fleet cards. The existing card agreements expire on November 29, 1998.

Commonwealth Graduate Engineering Program

The 1998 fall semester of the Commonwealth Graduate Engineering Program will begin Aug. 29 at the Old Dominion University (ODU), Sept. 2 at the University of Virginia (UVA), Aug. 31 at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI).

Through this program, scientists, engineers and certain technicians can take graduate engineering courses on-site at Wallops leading to a master of science (VPI), master of engineering (UVA), or master of engineering management (ODU) degree. Classes are conducted by an interactive telecommunication system that provides two-way voice communication and live television instruction from the appropriate universities broadcast studios.

Students interested in participating must first apply for admission to ODU, UVA or VPI. Application forms may be obtained by calling the Commonwealth University Program Office at (757) 683-3787 and requesting the specific program application.

Call Sherry Kleckner for the 1998 fall semester course schedule and tuition fees for all schools.

Employees who are accepted for admission by the universities should complete a Request for Training form and Purchase Order and route it through your management and training coordinator to Nichole Richmond, Code 114 by Aug. 21, 1998. If you have any further questions about the program, contact Nichole on x66-5757.

Fish Fry
All-You-Can-Eat
August 14
4:30 p.m.
Building F-3

Early Retirement Authority Expires

NASA’s voluntary early retirement authority expires Sept. 30, 1998. The early out authority permits eligible employees to retire at age 50 with 20 years of creditable Federal service or 25 years of creditable Federal Service, regardless of age. Many of the NASA Centers, including Goddard, have been successful in their downsizing efforts, and OPM has indicated it will not approve early retirement extensions for Centers whose downsizing is complete. Therefore, Goddard’s early out authority will not be extended past the Sept. 30 date. The Office of Personnel Management has extended the voluntary early out authority through Sept. 30 for KSC, MSFC, JSC and Code M at Headquarters.

The early out window for the Goddard Space Flight Center will expire on Sept. 30, 1998. Any employee hoping to take advantage of the opportunity to retire under the early retirement authority must be off the Center’s rolls by that date.

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Johnson, x1151.

Back To School Shopping Trip
to Jamaica, NY

Saturday, Aug. 22, 1998
Tentative Bus Departure Points*
Four Corners Plaza, Onley
Arcadia High School
Roses Plaza, Pocomoke
Salisbury Giant Plaza

*Subject to change as needed.

Tickets: $35 - must be purchased by August 14

Contact: Sandra Banks @ x2526, Rebecca Beach @ x1559 or Lisa Johnson @ x1151