



News Release

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ECBC Graduates Second MUSIP Class, Enhances Army Future Readiness

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. — The U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) recently celebrated the graduation of its second group of summer interns who participated in a program aimed at providing undergraduate students with the opportunity to work with top scientists and engineers on challenging research projects in support of the nation's defense.

ECBC partnered with the Oak Ridge Institute of Science and Education (ORISE) and the U.S. Army Research Development and Engineering Command (RDECOM)'s Minority College Relations Program (MCRP) this summer to facilitate the second session of the Center's 10-week Minority Undergraduate Student Internship Program (MUSIP).

"Now in its second year, MUSIP has already yielded excellent results," said MUSIP coordinator Debbie Buckless. "With 25 percent of last year's participants returning and another 25 percent finding employment with ECBC, we believe that both the students and the Center have realized a great opportunity."

In support of the Center's ongoing goal to strengthen its workforce, promote diversity and encourage students to pursue careers in science and engineering, MUSIP offered 10 undergraduates the opportunity to enhance their education by working on real-world science, technology and engineering research projects alongside ECBC's top scientists and engineers.

Each student was assigned to an ECBC employee who acted as a mentor throughout the internship's busy schedule of activities, which included: a tour of the Pentagon, a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment training, brown bag luncheons, coffee with the technical director, a windshield tour of ECBC and a specialized research project.

"I truly enjoyed spending time with my MUSIP colleagues during lunches other organized events, but everyday was a new and exciting experience with my mentor Chika Nzeliibe and the Advanced Design and Manufacturing team," said Morgan State University junior Michael Bennett Jr. "When I showed up on the first day in a suit and tie and was told that I should come the next day in boots and a T-shirt, I knew I made a good decision with this internship."

"In addition to working on the Chemical Air Monitoring Suite fabrication and installation plan, I was asked to present my findings at the project's Critical Design Review," Nzeliibe added. "This allowed me to see the heavy-lifting and deep-thinking aspects of the work that is done here at Edgewood."

The summer program was first conceived in 2008 by ECBC's Diversity Advisory Committee and Workforce Management Office, and later staffed by ORISE for the inaugural session in 2009. This year, the RDECOM MCRP assisted ECBC in enlisting two new students from local historically black colleges and universities (HBCU).

"The MCRP mission is to develop and administer aggressive outreach strategies that promote mutually beneficial collaborative partnerships and relationships with HBCUs, tribal colleges and universities, and Hispanic serving institutions," said RDECOM Minority College Relations Program Manager Neslie Etheridge. "By partnering with such institutions we aim to enhance Army programs and future readiness by recruiting a highly-skilled workforce from local and national minority institutions."

The undergrads completed the program with a graduation ceremony that celebrated their hard work and highlighted their accomplishments during the summer-long internship with individual presentations to senior leadership. During the ceremony, many of the students commented on their enthusiasm for working in an organization that supports the warfighter and the nation.

"I have always wanted to work for the federal government," said Morgan State University junior Richard Negri. "And doing this internship has shown me how many people it takes to keep our soldiers and homeland safe. I am thrilled that ECBC and the MCRP have given me this opportunity."

Following the graduation ceremony, MUSIP participants hosted a casual poster presentation session where they discussed and highlighted their personalized research projects with help from their ECBC mentors.

Aiming to build upon the success of this second MUSIP session, the Center is already preparing for a summer 2011 session.

For more information about ECBC, visit <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/>.

ECBC is the Army's principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. ECBC has achieved major technological advances for the warfighter and for our national defense, with a long and distinguished history of providing the Armed Forces with quality systems and outstanding customer service. ECBC is a U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command laboratory located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. For more information about the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, please visit our web site at <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/> or call (410) 436-7718.

30

Editor's Note: Photos are available upon request