Things to consider before you apply to a summer research program

Before applying to any summer programs, make sure you take the time to think about what you want to get out of an internship. What are your interests? What are your career goals? Are you applying to the right program for the right reason? Do you really want to spend your summer in a lab or would you prefer to work in a clinic, a policy think tank, a company, the field, etc.?

If you are already participating in a research lab that you enjoy, don't feel like you have to go somewhere else for a summer research program. Talk to your research professor to see if s/he is willing to employ you for the summer. If you stay in your current lab, you already have a running start into your research for the summer and are more likely to produce publishable results during your time at Rice. Many labs at Rice and elsewhere in the Texas Medical Center are affiliated with summer programs, so you may be able to stay in your existing lab AND apply to participate in activities sponsored by the affiliated summer program. Students who have secured research positions with BioSciences faculty are eligible to apply for the BioSciences Summer Research Institute (https://biosciences.rice.edu/UG_Research.aspx#5). Baylor College of Medicine, UT Health, and MD Anderson Cancer Center all have summer research programs affiliated with their graduate programs.

If you are not really interested in the sort of research featured in the summer program, even if you think the hosting institution/city is cool, please don't apply to that program. Follow your interests! Many/most summer programs are hosted by graduate programs and are designed to increase the flow of students into that field, to increase the flow of particular demographics into a field for which they are traditionally underrepresented, and/or to recruit students to the hosting graduate program. Those reviewing applications are likely looking for students who are interested in graduate school in that field (unless the application specifically states otherwise).

Summer research programs usually require recommendation letters. These letters, unlike medical school recommendations, have to be completed separately for every program and often require different submission formats. You are asking a professor to put a lot of work into their letters so do your homework in advance!

Make sure that you…

1) request your letter well in advance of the deadline
2) do NOT apply to too many programs
3) follow through with your application after you have requested a letter (Don’t ask for a letter you don’t need)
4) think about what each recommender can actually say about you. Try to ask professors/employers who know you or your work enough to meaningfully endorse you.

Please be thoughtful about your applications, because you expect faculty members to be thoughtful about your recommendation letters. Hopefully this gives you a little to think about as you seek out summer opportunities!

We post a number of summer program ads on the BioSciences Opportunities Owl-Space site and in paper form outside of 340 ABL. What we post/display is in no way comprehensive and only represents what has made its way into our inboxes. For more comprehensive lists, see the following sites:

- National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates (NSF-REU)
- Association of American Medical Colleges Summer Internships
  http://www.aamc.org/members/great/61052/great_summerlinks.htm
- Amgen Scholars Program (various sites around the country)
  http://www.amgenscholars.com/
- Co-op/Internships and Summer Research Opportunities in the Life Sciences
  http://people.rit.edu/ghtfsbi/Symp/summer.htm
There are many different summer options for those with biological or biomedical research interests!

Many of the following links can be found on the BioSciences undergraduate research page:
http://biosciences.rice.edu/UG_Research.aspx

1) Work in the lab of various professors at Rice or elsewhere in the Texas Medical Center
Visit various departments’ faculty lists to identify a professor whose research is of interest to you. Express interest and ask them if they would be willing to hire a summer undergraduate researcher. Many research internship postings can be found by joining the BioSciences Opportunities Owl-Space site. To join, log in to Owl-Space and select “My Workspace”-> “Membership” -> “Joinable Sites” and select Biosciences Opportunities.

There are also a number of more formal internship programs (below). These feature research in a faculty lab but also have some enrichment activities (seminar series, ethics discussions, social outings, etc.).

2) Rice undergraduate biological science summer programs
Institute of Biosciences & Bioengineering Undergraduate Internships
http://ibb.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=74
IBB Summer Research Institute (for those already in BioSciences labs)
http://biosciences.rice.edu/UG_Research.aspx#5
NSF REU in Multi-Scale Biomolecular Networks
http://ibb.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=563

3) Houston summer science programs
Baylor College of Medicine SMART Program
http://www bcm.edu/smart/
UT Houston McGovern Med School Summer Research Program
http://med.uth tmc.edu/administration/edu_programs/medical-education/srp/index.html
UT MD Anderson Cancer Center Summer Programs
www.mdanderson.org/summer

4) Directories of internships around the country
National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF-REUs)
http://www nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.cfm
Association of American Medical Colleges Summer Internships
http://www.aamc.org/members/great/61052/great_summerlinks.htm
Amgen Scholars Program (various sites around the country)
http://www.amgenscholars.com/

5) Co-op/Internships and Summer Research
This listing, compiled by Tom Frederick, emeritus professor at Rochester Institute of Technology, contains links to internships at private biotech companies as well as those at academic institutions.
http://people.rit.edu/gifsbi/Symp/summer.htm

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