

Writing a Personal Statement for a Research Internship

A summer research internship can be highly competitive. The personal statement is your chance to differentiate yourself from the other applicants. You are trying to sell yourself by convincing the application evaluators that you are motivated and qualified for the position. An REU is a little different from a job because the purpose of the program is to provide research experience to undergraduates, so you also need to detail how you will benefit personally and professionally from the experience just as much as the value you will add to their program.

To assist you, I've attached an advice sheet from Carroll College about writing a personal statement for an REU. You also might want to read this blog post from astro-bites:

<http://astrobites.org/2013/01/05/so-you-want-to-apply-for-an-reu-heres-how/>

Assignment

1. Choose one REU from the NSF list (http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.jsp). It does not have to be an astronomy REU, but it should be an REU in a STEM field.
2. Write a one page (~500 word) personal statement as if you are applying to the above internship opportunity. Include in your essay: 1) why you are interested in this program, 2) your career goals, 3) your interest in the subject area, 4) your relevant coursework, 5) your programming experience, and 6) your research experience.
3. Archive your personal statement and use it as the framework for any future applications and cover letters you have to complete. Remember that REU application season starts in December and ends by February!

DUE: Friday, October 23rd at 5pm

To accompany the lecture I have compiled a (partial) list of resources for finding summer research opportunities (see slides on course website). Note that REU applications usually open in **December** and are due by **February 1** (with notification by **April 15**). Other programs vary with deadlines. As always, you can email Brett or me or come to our office hours if you have any questions about the application process. Also, your mentors are a great resource for advice.