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NPS STEM Internship Program Begins Candidate Selection

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U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Ehrlich

By MC2 Michael Ehrlich

More than 140 high school students from all corners of California met in Reed Hall for an opportunity to earn a summer internship in the NPS Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Internship Program, Jan. 10. NPS Provost Dr. Steven R. Lerman welcomed the students, and encouraged them to keep an open mind toward the vast opportunities in the STEM field.

"These sorts of internships are transformational experiences," said Lerman. "Make the most of this opportunity, it will be a great experience to spend your summer at this institution. It's a place with great lab facilities, fascinating experiments going on, people doing all sorts of great work, and when internships go well you become part of a larger team."

Eleventh grade student Samuel Moser of Vallejo High School is looking forward to the hands-on application of engineering in NPS labs, which will help him define the career path he is most interested in within the STEM fields.

"I'm excited to be able to work on a real-world project rather than a theoretical one that might be applied some day," said Moser. "I hope to meet the mentors ... and to find direction toward a major while making contacts for when I get out of college."

Over the past five years, NPS STEM internship programs have provided regional high school students with unique opportunities to research real-world issues alongside NPS faculty and students. Leading the charge over the years has been STEM Internship Coordinator Alison Kerr, a project manager with NPS' Cebrowski Institute, who says she has high hopes and expectations for this year's candidates.

"For those that get selected for a summer internship, my biggest expectation is that they apply themselves fully to the experiential learning process, and take advantage of the experience and guidance of their mentors," said Kerr. "Being on campus is exciting, and I hope they would participate fully in the breadth of opportunities that NPS is fortunate to have."

High School junior Carolyn Duan of Monte Vista High School in Cupertino, Calif., is excited for the education and challenges the internship offers.

"It's an exciting opportunity to do research in ways I haven't before," said Duan, "I'm interested in the practical application of computer science, and how we can use it in other fields to solve real-world problems. Probably the biggest challenge to an internship at NPS will be adapting to new content quickly. I think I'm going to get thrown in the deep end, but I'm up for the challenge."