

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do we meet the first day? We will meet at the Los Alamos Research Park (4200 Casa Grande Dr., Los Alamos, NM 87544) Suite 300 at 8:00 on the first day.

(<http://www.la-rp.org>)

What is the dress code? People dress very casually at LANL, particularly during the summer. Shorts and T-shirts are O.K. We like people to have closed shoes (no flip-flops, athletic shoes are O.K.) when working in the lab. It is not O.K. to go bare foot while on sight at the summer school.

What will the weather be like? Los Alamos is located at approx. 7200 ft elevation. Mornings are bright and sunny, but, toward the end of June, it will cloud up almost every afternoon with local thunderstorms, as is typical throughout the Rocky Mountains. High temperatures are typically in the mid 80's. It does get cool with temperatures as low as the high 50's in the evening, particularly after a rainstorm.

(<http://www.weather.lanl.gov/>)

Why is the summer school just nine weeks long? The duration of the summer school is limited by the funding provided to pay for the students' and mentors' time. The schedule of mid-June through the second week of August is based on a compromise between schools that are on a semester system, which typically get out at the middle - end of May, and schools that are on a quarter system that tend to get out later in June. Note: In 2009 we extended the summer school from 8 weeks to 9 weeks.

How much will I be paid? You will receive a fellowship that is comparable to regular undergraduate or graduate summer hires' pay and includes funds for travel to and from Los Alamos. The fellowships are provided at three different funding levels that depend on the amount of school completed upon arrival at the summer school and the distance you are traveling. Pay rates for undergraduates and grad students (make sure you look at Technical Series) are summarized at:

(<http://www.lanl.gov/education/undergrad/salary.shtml>)

(<http://www.lanl.gov/education/grad/salary.shtml>)

These pay scales form the basis for your fellowships.

What about housing? Housing during the summer is always an issue, because the Laboratory hires more than 1000 students during the summer. Our program administrator will help you find housing. It cannot be emphasized enough that it is important to take care of housing as early as possible.

Will I be reimbursed for travel expenses to and from the school? Yes, but indirectly. We have factored additional funds into the fellowship to cover travel costs.

How long is the workday? Typically, the workday will begin at 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM. The mentors will make arrangements to keep the facilities open longer if students feel they need additional time to work on their projects. A mentor must be present to work in the labs after 5:00 PM.

What is a typical workday? You will be in a week-long tutorial (e.g. signal processing) from 8:00 to 9:30 each morning. The rest of the day, you will be working as a team of 2-3 students on a research project. On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, guest lectures are held from 3:30-5:00 PM, discussing various dynamics and cyber-physical systems research topics. Additionally, during the second and third week of the summer school, you will have a mini-project to work on. Various tours will be arranged throughout the summer.

What computer resources will be available during the summer school? Each student will have their own desktop PC with MS Office, and access to Matlab. In addition, each project group will have a laptop computer for data acquisition that runs Labview or other data acquisition software. Because we have a limited number of Matlab licenses, students are encouraged to bring their own laptops and use their Matlab software if they have it.

What project will I be assigned to? We will send out descriptions of the projects and allow you to rank them based on your level of interest. We will then assign people to the projects based on these rankings. In the past, everyone who has responded by the deadline has been able to get his or her 1st or 2nd ranked project. However, if too many people choose the same projects, then we may be required to assign people to one of their lower-ranked selections. By May 1st we will attempt to notify students by e-mail regarding the project they will work on, who their mentor will be, and also provide some background reading material. Also note, that in contrast to lab projects you have been engaged in during your undergraduate curriculum, these projects generally don't have a "known" outcome and as such are much more representative of a research project that a graduate student would be involved with.

Do I need a car? A car is not absolutely necessary, but it will make life a lot easier for you if you do have one (see advice from previous students). Also, there are a lot of interesting places to visit around New Mexico, which will require a car, as public transportation is very limited outside of Los Alamos. The summer school site is located about 2-3 miles from the portion of town where most student housing is located. There is a free bus service that will take students from town to the summer school (<http://www.losalamosnm.us/transit/Pages/default.aspx>), but it is limited and does not run on the weekend. Generally, students have been very good about car-pooling and giving rides to those without a car.

What is unique about this summer school? Some of the unique aspects of this program include projects that have a hands-on component, the lectures provided by world-renowned experts in various fields of dynamics and access that the students have to these experts after their lectures, the field trips to some unique facilities at Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories, and developing and presenting a paper at an international professional conference.

What after-hours activities are available? Los Alamos is a very small town with a population of about 14,000 people. The town is surrounded by national forest and Native

American reservations (Pueblos). There is an abundance of outdoor activities that can be done locally, including backpacking, hiking, mountain biking, golf, rock climbing, and the highest altitude Olympic size swimming pool in the US. The Laboratory has a weight room with lots of aerobic exercise equipment. Santa Fe is about 35 miles away and is a big tourist attraction; hence, it has a lot of nice restaurants and some nightlife. See <http://visit.losalamos.com>, <http://www.santafechamber.com/>. The advice from previous students suggests lots of after-hours activities.

Advice from Previous Students

Note: Many of the students have given advice about housing. Housing arrangements have changed each year, so some of the advice related to this topic may no longer be applicable.

Sarah Dalton, 2011

1. Read up on literature and theory related to your project before you get to LANL. It will really help speed your project along, and impress your mentor!
2. Live in an area with a bunch of other LADSS students.
3. Take in as much in as your brain allows you to. You probably won't have this many experts in the area at your fingertips again in your life. So ask questions when you have them, and often!
4. Make sure someone has a car. There are a lot of good day trips within driving distance.
 - White water rafting/ floating or tubing the Rio Grande near Taos.
 - Shopping in Taos and Santa Fe.
 - Bandelier, Valles Caldera, and Jemez National Parks.
 - Natural Hot Springs.
 - Wineries.
5. There are a lot of good hiking trails in Los Alamos. My favorite was Cave of the Winds.
6. Get to love red and green chilies. They are a New Mexico staple.
7. Eat at:
 - El Parasol, Hilltop Diner, and Chili Works in town.
 - Maria's and Santa Fe Baking Co in Santa Fe.
8. New Mexico has issues serving alcohol to people with a vertical ID, even if you are older than 21. So if you plan on getting a drink with dinner and have a vertical ID, make sure you bring your passport with you to use.

Trevor Avant, 2011

1. Make plans in case of a wildfire evacuation.
2. Try to live with other LADSS students.
3. Go hiking in the Jemez Mountains.
4. Walk around Santa Fe.
5. The Rail Runner goes between Albuquerque and Santa Fe and is \$3 for a student.

Lisa Monahan, 2011

1. Try to live around other students (LADSS or other LANL students).
2. Create a dinner group with other students.
3. Try to travel around the area on weekends - great hiking all over the area.
4. If you wind up in Santa Fe, try the Santa Fe Baking Company.

Rose Long, 2011

1. Choose your project wisely. You will be married to it for 9 weeks.
2. Completely read the background material, twice. Even if you do not understand it.
3. Research the guest lecturers before they come so you have an idea of what they will talk about/if you want to study under them. The school is great for networking. Use it!
4. Review translating between the frequency and time domains. Laplace transform. Z transform. Review one and multiple degree of freedom models. Review analogs between mechanical and electrical systems. Bring your Dynamics textbook and notes.
5. Live in 9th street apartments with all the other students. If you do, get a room on the 9th street (east) side of the building. The other (west) side gets the afternoon sun, which is suffocating.
6. Have a plan in case something happens. This involves sharing phone numbers with everyone (make a telephone list or tree) before the first weekend. Have somewhere to stay in case there is an evacuation. Have Jutta's number (663-5649). Register for the Los Alamos emergency notification system.
7. Go on all the tours and ask people to see their labs if you can. The Laboratory has a lot of really interesting science going on. Don't miss the Sandia tour.
8. You will be tempted to travel during the weekends. I encourage you to climb Wheeler Peak (if you are fit), go to the Spanish Market in Santa Fe, and go to Carlsbad (worth the drive). In Los Alamos, go to the Friday night concerts (especially the Red Elvis's if they come) and explore the trails.
9. If you don't have a car, bring a bike.
10. The library (town) is of very high quality here. Books on anything you need.
11. Go to the free food and volleyball at the corner of Canyon and Central every Monday (across from the aquatic center). The food is great.

Noel Spurgeon, 2011

1. Do some group bonding. Even if it's just going out to lunch or something, knowing about your group members and making the effort to get along will make your life a lot easier.
2. Split up work. If you feel like you're doing too much, say so.
3. Communicate. Tell each other if something's not going well, or not working out. It prevents a lot of fights later.

4. Have a good naming convention for your data files. Something that seems like it would be helpful at the time can get confusing if you're trying to find a specific data run out of 50 different files.
5. Don't get discouraged. Sometimes, things happen (like the mountains catching on fire) that blow your plans out of the water. It's okay. You'll be fine.
6. Listen to the comments you get on your presentation! Actually, listen to all of the mentor's comments in general.
7. Hang out with your fellow LADSS students on the weekends. Plan trips. They're cool people, and you should get to know them, even if you don't live near them.
8. Go explore Los Alamos. There's a lot to do here: the concerts, farmer's market, hiking, whitewater rafting, and more. If you're bored, you're not looking hard enough.
9. Bring your notes. Bring your notes. BRING YOUR NOTES. They'll save you a lot of time trying to decipher Wikipedia articles.
10. Join a dinner group. You don't want to eat the same thing every day for a week.
11. Santa Fe is a groovy place. You should visit at least once. Try to go there when there's some kind of fair or festival going on, because it's even better. Also, the Blue Corn Café and India Palace are delicious.
12. Try a breakfast burrito and at least one thing covered in green chili.
13. Sometimes you just need to have a five-minute dance party. Don't question it.
14. Have fun and keep a sense of humor while you're working. When you get frustrated, it can make things a lot better.
15. Don't be afraid to be yourself. We're all weird.
16. Have periodic group meetings to check up on everyone's progress. Having an actual agenda is pretty helpful.

Jenni Rinker, 2011

1. The 9th street housing has its pros and cons. Pros: nicely located near the one grocery store, the one bar, a nice park, the library, the bus stop; cheap; if enough of you live there you get to bond more with your fellow LADSS; you can meet other students working at the lab. Cons: it's an efficiency, so your kitchen is a bit limited. It has a mini-fridge, some cabinets, a small stove with four burners, a sink, and an oven that may or may not work, all crammed into something that looks suspiciously like a closet. I still give the whole thing a thumbs-up because you're only here for 9 weeks and you can still cook yourself pretty much anything that isn't super temperature-sensitive. In my opinion, the location and proximity to other students outweighs the lack of a good kitchen.
2. There are free concerts Friday nights at the parks. They're fun, you should go.
3. You need to go to the post office to register yourself to get mail. It's free and worth it.

4. The buses around Los Alamos are free and run M-F. They're a great way to get to work.
5. The library has lots of books and movies, and you can register for free.
6. One person's Smith's card can service up to 3 people because they give you extras.
7. There are Ultimate Frisbee Monday and Wednesday evenings at upper Pueblo field at 6 pm.
8. The Canyon Bar (pretty much the only bar in Los Alamos) is about 1.5 blocks west of the 9th street housing. It has free pool Mondays and Wednesdays.
9. Free movies in the park Wednesday nights.
10. Student BBQ at Urban Park Monday nights.
11. If you're staying in 9th street housing, don't buy the wireless Internet there. Comcast is better.
12. Get your mini-project done first and fast. Don't spend more than three days on the whole thing, and make them the earliest three days possible.
13. Planning is good. You will run out of time.
14. GET HOUSING EARLY. Or you may end up overpaying to live 45 minutes away without running water.

Ezra Jampole, 2011

1. Have a roommate. It makes free time (there will be a lot of it) much more exciting.
2. Live in the UNM housing. It is crappy housing but cheap and makes the weekends very exciting.
3. Do things on the weekends. Between rafting, hiking, rock hunting, cliff jumping, and sky diving, there are a lot of things you just can't do elsewhere.
4. Bring your notes from school. They will save you a lot time on Google and Wikipedia.
5. If you play an instrument, bring it. They are an endless source of entertainment.
6. If you have a car, bring it. Else you will be helpless.
7. Play basketball Sundays at 3 at the high school. The locals can be pretty competitive.
8. Get a YMCA membership. It is dirt-cheap.
9. **Eat the chicken fingers and potato wedges from the grocery store. They are cheap but delicious.**
10. Create a dinner group in which everyone cooks for the others once a week. It is a great way to socialize while eating well and cheap.
11. Go places other than Los Alamos. Santa Fe is okay, Albuquerque at least resembles a real city, and Denver is far but will make you feel less homesick if you come from a place like Boston or New York. If you only stay in Los Alamos, you will be bored out of your mind.

Ryan Menefee, 2011

1. Find housing early. If you wait too long, you might end up living in Jemez. The Caldera is pretty, but it's a ways away from the Laboratory.
2. Get a Smith's card. It's the only grocery store in town.
3. Stay on top of your project, because you never know when a wildfire might sneak up on you. A week or two of lost time hurts.
4. Be sure to pay attention during the lectures. They will usually have something applicable to your project.

Michael Martin, 2010

1. Housing may be a problem, search online and find a house, preferably.
2. Definitely turn paperwork in on time to prevent registration and work complications.
3. Talk to the mentors about graduate school.
4. Enjoy the outdoor activities happening in Los Alamos; there is a ton to do here. Bring camping and climbing equipment if possible.
5. Works on the project diligently, 9 weeks go by very fast. If your project requires people outside of LADSS, be sure to constantly be in contact.
6. Try to learn as much as possible from the lectures, there is a lot of material, but it is presented by some of the best.
7. Be respectful and thank the mentors for their time.

Abraham Light-Marquez, 2010

1. Start your project early and work diligently; 9 weeks go by in a flash.
2. Hang out with the other students; it will make your time spent more enjoyable.
3. If you're a golfer, try to get out and play Black Mesa; it's a bit expensive but it is worth it.
4. There are lots of outdoor activities (soccer, ultimate Frisbee, tennis, volleyball), and the people are very friendly. Get involved.
5. Make housing arrangements early or you're going to regret it.
6. Go to an Isotopes baseball game; the stadium is awesome.
7. Try to visit Carlsbad Caverns, it's a long trip but it's one of the most amazing natural phenomena in the world.
8. Talk to Gyuhae as much as possible he'll make you laugh every time.

Ramon Silva, 2010

1. Find a place to live early!!!!!!
2. Bring a road/mountain bike. All the cool people do it!
3. Enjoy the outdoors! Bring gear to rock climb, hike, camp, and backpack with.
4. Having a car makes things easier, but isn't required in my opinion.
5. Carry an umbrella all the time! Trust me on this...

Lucas Chavez, 2010

1. Get a place to live as quickly as possible.
2. There are lots of outdoor opportunities. Make sure to bring all your equipment.
3. There is no Wal-Mart, so plan accordingly. The closest one is in Espanola (20-minute drive).
4. Urban Park has a good volleyball court.
5. A Facebook group will help when planning our activities.
6. Try do get things done as soon as possible, because the last day of work will sneak up on you.
7. Go to all the planned activities.
8. Explore the trails of Los Alamos - they are amazing.
9. For those who rock climb, the only indoor wall is at the YMCA.
10. There are great outdoor climbing places in Los Conchas and White Rock.

Daniel Easton, 2010

1. Get to work early on your project, and, if you are held up, consider a change of direction.
2. Go rock climbing outdoors, or start at the YMCA and then go outdoors.
3. Try to bring a car. But if you can't, you'll always be able to get a lift from someone else.
4. Go camping, hiking, take trips, leave town on the weekend. Vegas 4th of July!
5. Play football (soccer) on Tuesdays or Thursdays. Watch out for the old guys – they are better than you.
6. Sort out accommodation early; don't wait around. It's a bit of a mad dash.

Elizabeth Cross, 2010

1. The dress code at the Laboratory is very casual, shorts and a t-shirt every day are fine, so don't bother bringing any suits. Instead you should pack moisturizer, it is really dry up in Los Alamos and your skin will suffer.
2. Sort your housing out as early as you can, there are a lot of students here in the summer and it's small town.
3. Be patient in the first week, there is a lot of not too fun training to get through, but it is necessary.
4. Bring your MP3 player; you will need it, as you'll most likely be in the office a lot.
5. The library has a bookshop that sells old books for 50 cents, or occasionally gives them away for free.
6. Come a few days early if you can and sort your Internet out. Comcast is only open during work hours.
7. If you're going to do the night hike don't drink too much before hand, it's hard to suppress the giggles.

Alex Schlichting, 2010

1. Reserve your housing ASAP, things will disappear fast.
2. Don't live in Iris street apartments if you want a clean/good kitchen and bathroom.
3. Take the higher rent over a place that wont pro-rate and will charge you for all of the month of August.
4. Make sure you turn in all necessary documents to ensure you're on the right pay scale ASAP; going to grad school makes a difference, too.
5. Get a Smith's Card - it's free.
6. Take the Atomic Shuttle to work and back, it's always on time.
7. Be proactive in doing your work and thinking of things to do that your mentor doesn't tell you to do, a few setbacks can leave you with nothing in the end.
8. If all the people in the program who don't living together, eat lunch together and do stuff together outside of work, work hours will be more fun.
9. If you are not an outdoor person, at least give it a try, otherwise, you will miss out on group activities and will find yourself sitting around watching TV while everyone else is camping or doing something fun.

Clinton Carlson, 2010

1. The biggest piece of advice that I can offer is that an overwhelming feeling is okay. I thought that I had plenty of knowledge in structural dynamics when I arrived in Los Alamos, but I quickly realized that one class was not enough. If you are worried that you are way behind everybody at the school, stop worrying. Ask questions and talk to the mentors and guest speakers and you will learn a lot.
2. Make sure that you do activities with the other students no matter what it is. That way you make friends and get to tell all your jealous friends back home about what you did. For example, mud volleyball.
3. Look for housing very early. There aren't too many places to live in Los Alamos and those places fill up quickly when all the students start coming here for the summer. You could rely on a lot of luck, but I wouldn't recommend it.
4. Take any athletic activities easy for the first two weeks. You will notice the change in elevation. Once you are accustomed to the elevation, take advantage of all the outdoor activities that are here in Los Alamos. Make sure to drink a lot of water, too. And use sunscreen no matter what.
5. Go to Ruby K's. That is a really good breakfast restaurant.
6. Don't pay attention to the sheet that has acceptable forms of identification. Bring your driver's license and passport or official copy of your birth certificate. You can get by with your driver's license and social security card the first day, but you need your passport or birth certificate to get your badge. They don't have any sympathy for you.
7. Have a camera.

Daisy Zheng, 2010

1. Bring casual clothes for work! Even if you want to dress up, keep in mind that in some of the labs only jeans and tennis shoes pass the safety rules.
2. Get a Smith's card. I'm serious. It's like the center of town.
3. Bring sports equipment if you're outdoorsy. There will definitely be a large amount of students here who are interested in anything you want to do.
4. Movies here can be a little pricey, but if you go to Santa Fe, there's a one dollar movie theater.
5. Ask as many questions as you can to your mentors, they're the best resources here.
6. Have fun! This summer school has some of the coolest, intelligent people you'll ever meet.

Colin Haynes, 2010

1. Make an effort to hang out with the other interns. There's plenty to do in the Los Alamos area and it's always more fun with good company.
2. Bring your favorite sporting equipment—it will come in handy.
3. For those of you who golf, play Black Mesa golf course. It is worth every penny.
4. Make housing arrangements early.
5. Take pride in and ownership of your project. You will have a more satisfying and successful summer school experience if you do.
6. Portable music players (or at least headphones) are strongly recommended.

Alexandra Sobin, 2010

1. If you like coffees... get a coffee card at Java Rocks right away. You will find yourself going there more than you think.
2. Bring all of your camping equipment with you from home. It's worth the haul so you have everything for weekend trips without having to borrow from others.
3. Try rock-climbing at least once outside with the Rock-Climbing Club at LANL. Even if you don't like it, at least you can say you've tried it and it's a great place to socialize and make new friends.
4. Walk around the Farmer's Market in Los Alamos (Thursdays) + Santa Fe (Saturdays) and the Flea Market (Saturdays) between the two towns. People watching and just bumming around shopping is great there.
5. Take advantage of the hiking around Los Alamos. There are a lot of good hikes just minutes away.
6. The YMCA is a great place to work out and also rock-climb indoors. It's pretty cheap for young adults and if you live close to the 9th Street Apartments, it's a quick walk. Take advantage of the fun classes, they are a blast!
7. If you can, try to gather people up for weekend adventures camping, hot springs, hiking, rock-climbing, etc.
8. And last but not least, always get a jump-start on your project and ask LOTS of questions to your mentor (that's what they are there for!!).

Dustin Harvey, 2010

1. Take care of housing as soon as you know you are coming. There are a lot of students in Los Alamos over the summer, which is great, but housing fills up.
2. Spend time with your peers outside of work. They're pretty cool.
3. Lastly, take advantage of all the outdoor activities in northern New Mexico. It's all here: climbing, hiking, sports, cycling, backpacking, etc.
4. If you have the chance to spend a summer in Los Alamos and work at LANL, don't miss it!

Scott Ouellette, 2010

1. It is beneficial to be outgoing and try to make friends with your fellow students. LANL brings in hundreds of students each summer for internship/research opportunities, and most of these students are willing to hang out, go hiking/camping, play sports, etc.
2. The altitude can be a difficult transition at first. Drink lots of water and try to do some cardiovascular exercise on a regular basis. Before you know it, you'll feel great and be in amazing shape when you return home.
3. A brief review of how and why the lab (LANL) came to be, and some of the notable figures (J.R.Oppenheimer, R.P. Feynman, H.A. Bethe, Gen. L. Groves, etc.) who made significant contributions to its success is a good start towards understanding the unique environment in which you will be working.
4. Cooperate with your team! Very rarely will one student know how to do every task involved in the research project. Try to divide the work evenly, but work together on important tasks (e.g. presentations or the conference paper). Consult your teammates first if you have any questions, your mentor is here for guidance, not solutions. A weekly 'To-do' list is very useful for staying on-track with project objectives.
5. Don't wait for your mentor to hold your hand throughout the project. There is not enough time in the program to wait for step-by-step instructions. Also, don't be afraid to suggest new ideas or try new things. That's why we are here, to experiment and learn.
6. On every project-related email you should always 'cc' these people: Dr. Farrar, your mentor, and your teammates.
7. Be appreciative of how hard the mentors and administrative staff work to make your life easier.

Stephen Neidigk, 2010

1. Find a place to live as early as possible. Places fill up fast.
2. Take advantage of the taxi service that any LANL employee can use.
3. Expect delays in your project, so start as early as you can. We had unforeseen issues in our project that took more time to research and implement than the project itself.

Unfortunately, no surveys are available for 2009!

Walter Kruse, 2008

1. If you get accepted, get all your hiring paperwork done right away. Read through the acceptance letter CAREFULLY and make sure you take care of everything early. If you don't get your paperwork in on time, you'll be delayed in getting your badge, getting training, and starting your project. That said, the HR people at LANL are pretty friendly, so don't be afraid to call in if you have questions about the paperwork or where you need to send stuff.
2. To my knowledge, there is not a single residential building in all of Los Alamos with air conditioning. Bottom line, leave the sweaters at home, and get yourself a fan.
3. Try to move in a few days before the summer school starts. It's nice to have some time to get settled in and get to know everybody before you get into all the work.
4. Los Alamos gets a good bit of rain in the summer. Bring a raincoat or an umbrella.
5. If you're coming from a place at sea level, you'll probably feel pretty tired as you adjust to the altitude. You'll be fine in about two weeks. If you feel sick all the time or start passing out, see a doctor.
6. Public transit to and from the Laboratory is pretty reliable. If you don't bring a car or a bike, get a brochure for the bus system.
7. Unless the housing situation changes, most people will probably room in the UNM-Los Alamos student apartments (because it's hard to find housing anywhere else). Other than being hot and having about two 3-prong outlets (bring extension cords and power strips), the rooms are pretty nice, and it's great to be around everybody else. Be sure to get in touch with the housing director early. The housing department at UNM-LA is kind of wishy-washy, and it can be hard to get stuff fixed or replaced (which you will probably need – the place is pretty old). You'll have to go down to Comcast to get Internet access (it's in a shopping center right next to the UNM housing office).
8. If you want to go out to eat or buy something, go early. This town is officially closed after 8:00 PM (except for the bars, the grocery store, and the gas stations).
9. It's really hard to work on a project all day long when you're tired. Get some sleep. (You probably won't, but trust me, it helps).
10. If you see a tour you want to go on, SIGN UP AS SOON AS YOU SEE THE ANNOUNCEMENT! They fill up in about a billionth of a second.
11. Hang out with people. Go to the cookouts/socials the mentors put on. Go to the LANL Student Association events. Sing karaoke at the Canyon. HAVE SOME FUN.
12. Call Pete Avitable 'Grandpa Pete' if you want him to go to the bar with you. If he puts on a cookout, BE THERE. We had a great time with Pete.
13. Don't aggravate Gyuhae Park, or else he'll kill you (or at least threaten to). But seriously, he's a great guy. Even if he's not your mentor, you can ask him about or for anything. He helped just about all the teams with something or another at our summer school.

14. All the mentors will help you with your project if you need it. Everybody's really approachable, and they all want to see you succeed. It helps to remember what mentors have which specialties.
15. Stay focused on your project, get things done early, ask for help as much as you like, and keep your lab notebook up to date. You're going to have a hard enough time getting your project done as it is without forgetting what your test setup looked like or misplacing all your test data.

Ryan Hodge, 2008

1. Figure out housing early and make sure it is clear how much you are paying and for what months you are responsible for paying.
2. If your apartment comes with cable TV, it's easiest to get Internet by visiting the local Comcast office on Diamond Dr. and they will give you a kit that has the modem and everything you need (mine was \$38/month). It might be cheaper to do online but may be quite a hassle, because the landlord is in charge of the account. Look up the office in the yellow pages because it's not on Comcast's website.
3. Bring your car if you like the independence to run around whenever you want.
4. There are cops everywhere so don't speed in town.
5. The car wash is on Knecht St. off of Trinity next to McDonald's.
6. The dress at work is casual so you can wear shorts all summer but you need close-toed shoes for the lab.
7. Get webcams if you have a girlfriend/boyfriend.
8. Bring a fan or buy one because the apartments do not come with A/C (though it's really not too bad).

Molly Nelis, 2008

1. Chili Works has the best Breakfast Burritos, and learn how to make your own, too.
2. Visit the Jemez Mountains; there are hot springs, jumping cliffs, wilderness camping, and great climbing all in a couple of miles.
3. If you want to climb in White Rock, go early (7am) and wear tons of sunscreen, or go late (4pm) and climb in the shade.
4. There are online climbing guides for all of the local crags, so print them out at work so you know what you are getting yourself into.
5. If you are a roadie, the town is pretty bike friendly. It is tough to find rides that are not hilly, but it isn't tough to ride 15-20 miles and still stay in town.
6. If you volunteer at the beginning of the summer to belay once a week, you get a free membership at the YMCA. It is the best deal for getting to use the climbing wall and all the other aspects of the Y.

Trevor Collins, 2008

1. Take the tram up the mountain if in Albuquerque.
2. Climb a 14000'+ peak in Southern Colorado and have a dark beer at the top.
3. See the Lisa Kristine photo gallery in Santa Fe.
4. Check out Los Conchas for sport climbing and cliff jumping nearby.

5. Know that all the mentors are top notch. A few of the speakers are tremendous.
6. Meet a scientist in Canyon Bar and play pool with a pitcher of beer in VFW.
7. When going to Canyon Bar for karaoke on Thursdays, look for a man they call "the Legend".
8. Join the YMCA for the gym because the Laboratory gym is not adequate.
9. Buy a 10-pack at the aquatic center and swim a few workouts to get your lungs in shape.

Andrew Reich, 2008

1. Try to set a realistic, focused goal early in the project. It will make it much easier if you have some direction to begin with.
2. Climb Wheeler and Blanca Peaks, and have a Roswell Alien Amber on the top.
3. Hit up the VFW. The beer is better, colder, and cheaper than the Canyon, and the TVs and pool tables are nicer.
4. Make Chuck host a BBQ. In fact, make him host 2 BBQs, he owes us.
5. Sing YMCA at the Canyon on Thursday nights, and choreograph it. Look for the Legend (you'll know him) and watch out for Admiral Angstrom.
6. Try to live near everyone else. It makes the nights a lot more fun.
7. Have a good time and relax; this place can be awesome if you let it.

Chris Warren, 2008

1. Drive out from wherever you are. Having a car to get around is priceless. There are so many amazing things outside Los Alamos that you need a car to get to. Also, the experience of the road trip is worth it, especially if they're going to reimburse you for your travel expenses. Assuming your car doesn't break down, you can end up making a few bucks in the process.
2. Definitely try to live all together in the same building and try to coordinate some cookouts. The mentors do a decent job getting you all together, but it usually takes a few weeks. There are grills (with free propane) at the 9th Street UNM dorms, but make sure you bring your utensils.
3. Make sure that when you go down to Santa Fe that you walk along Canyon Road. The galleries there are amazing. An artist said that SF has the 4th largest original art market, only after New York City, Chicago, and Paris. Just be warned: the work is ridiculously expensive for a college student's income.
4. The pool tables at the Canyon are free on Wednesday nights. They have a poker tournament there every week that night, too.
5. Karaoke on Thursday nights at the Canyon is epic.
6. Climb a 14er. There is a bunch in southern Colorado within 3-4 hours of Los Alamos. Blanca was a fun climb, and if you camp at Lake Como (@ 11.7k feet), you can hit up Ellingwood, too. Make sure that you summit before noon, because precipitation usually sets in after that. We didn't camp at Como, so we did over 6,000 feet vertical (that's just up) and 15 miles round trip in a day (the base is @ 8k feet). The view was amazing, as were the mountain meadows and lakes. For more info, check out <http://www.14ers.com>.

Luke Amer, 2008

1. Do not be afraid if you have a limited background in structural dynamics. All the lectures are conducted at a level comprehensible to anyone with very little mechanical engineering background.
2. Do not spend too much time working on the mini-project. The temptation can be there to try getting it perfect; but is much more important to do well on the main project.
3. Start as early as you can on the main project; with morning and afternoon lectures it can seem like you have almost no time within a given day. The earlier you start working, the more complete your project will be in the end.
4. Spanish Market in Santa Fe is the last weekend in July. It is definitely one of the most culturally diverse and unique events you will ever attend.
5. All the mentors are completely approachable and informative; if ever in doubt with something, just ask.
6. If you are into running, swimming, or cycling, talk to Chuck. He will definitely inform you about what Los Alamos has to offer in each area.

Megan O'Brien, 2007

You really don't have much time here (it goes by quickly), and this place is filled with different things to see and do. Try to get out and do something new every weekend, especially with the other students. Cabezon Peak is an amazing hike/climb, and cliff diving is certainly worth a try, at least once! Also, don't be afraid to talk to people or ask questions: your mentors, fellow students, and other Laboratory employees can give you unique insight about graduate school or career options. It's definitely a great opportunity to expand your knowledge and abilities, as well as make connections for the future.

Erik Moro, 2007

The LADSS program is a fantastic way to explore exciting opportunities in cutting edge engineering career pathways. Make sure to talk to your mentor, your guest lecturers, and anyone you run into at the Laboratory if you are looking for help with your project, a fresh perspective, or advice on grad school and life decisions. These people, aside from being really intelligent, are your friends and they are here to help you whenever they can. Try to hit the ground running with your project, because the summer will go by all too quickly and you are going to want to have some sort of end result which you can reflect on with feelings of pride and contentedness as opposed to terror and remorse!

Northern New Mexico is a unique part of the country, and especially if you are not from the area you should use your free time, especially your weekends, to do as much exploring as you can. Make some friends in your program right away and use these excursions as an opportunity to get to know them better. You'll be surprised how much your fellow students have in common with you. Bring some good hiking or camping gear if you have it (especially good hiking shoes/sandals) and if you can afford to bring a car, do so. It is really useful having a car down here, and it makes exploring that much easier to do (not mentioning how much it helps with packing).

All in all, do your best to balance a challenging job with all the adventure Los Alamos has to offer and you will have a blast!

Stephen Schnelle, 2007

- Go to Bandelier Monument and see the Native American Ruins. The Tsankawi section of Bandelier is cool, but the Falls Trail wasn't that spectacular if you have seen waterfalls before.
- The Church in Chimayo is awesome!
- Play volleyball at Urban Park. Although the sand's a little rocky, the court is nice.
- If you are looking for the Natural Arch trail, it is a sharp climb and not an obvious trail. If you start climbing a mountain with a lot of not-so-steep switchbacks, you're probably on the ski hill trails instead.
- The Laundromat near the apartments is very expensive.

Bill Cash, 2007

- Get out hiking there's a lot of great things to see around Los Alamos.
- Make friends and hang out with the other students as much as possible.
- There isn't as much time to work on the project as you may think. Start working on it early.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Camping at White Sands is amazing.
- Avoid Roswell and its UFO museum.
- Book a real caving trip at Carlsbad. Make sure you do it a month or more in advance.
- Go wine tasting at the vineyard in Ponderosa and swim at the Soda Dam on the way back.
- Climb Baldy or Wheeler.
- Watch an Isotopes game and ride the aerial tramway in Albuquerque.

David Burt, 2007

- The Badging Office needs you to bring a proof of citizenship (original Birth Certificate or Passport).
- Start doing and planning activities with the other summer school students from day one. On weekends, go on hikes and climbs, and visit the nearby cities. Ask the people at the Laboratory, especially former students if any are around, about places of interest.
- Bring hiking gear if you have some. If you don't, consider buying some (a camelback is one of the best investments you can make). New Mexico is a great place for enjoying the outdoors.
- Get to know the mentors and the guest speakers, they have great knowledge to share and are also great contacts for the future.
- Go to karaoke at the Canyon Bar on Thursday nights, and get the other students to go, too. Singing in groups is the best.

George Khoury, 2007

- The eight weeks go by really fast, try to enjoy it and experience the area in your spare time.
- If you're over 21 and still have a vertical ID (like I did) strongly consider bringing a passport or getting a new license. I wasn't able to get into many bars due to this annoying law.
- Get to know your teammates early on, contact them once you find out whom you're working with. You will be working with them for the next few weeks, and a good group dynamic will help a lot. The project may not go as planned, but it will work itself out, as long as you stay focused. Don't be afraid to ask the mentors for help or advice. Everybody dresses very casually to work. You won't need to bring anything very dressy, most of the groups dressed up for the final presentation, though.
- You will get to know all the other students in the program (and probably some students outside the program as well). As everybody will tell you, plan activities such as parties, dinners, cookouts, sporting events (soccer and sand volleyball were pretty big our year), and hiking trips.
- Bring hiking boots (and hiking socks as well), plan to go on a couple of trips, I really enjoyed going to Mt Baldy and Mt Wheeler. Both are daylong trips (and could include camping as well), but reaching the summit is great. Try to visit Carlsbad and go caving, keep in mind that you'll need to reserve way in advance.
- Albuquerque is a bit of a drive away, but there are a couple of things to see. We checked out the Sandia Peak Tram (which would have also made a good hiking trail) and watched an Isotopes baseball game, all of which was a lot of fun.
- There are a bunch of restaurants in town. Some good ones include China Moon Buffet, The Pyramid Café, and Bob's Bodacious Barbecue.

Daniel Whisler, 2007

Do not be afraid to stop and ask questions if you have any concerns or require clarification on the material. All the mentors are very nice and willing to help you prepare for a successful summer and hopefully, graduate school as well. The lectures are often a little longer than the typical hour classroom lectures, so pace yourself and do not fall asleep in class. I would also recommend trying all the summer activities arranged by the student association and arranging your own travels with fellow students, as it can make the stay much more enjoyable. A Smith's card will save you quite a bit of cash while you are staying at the apartments.

Sebastian Guerrero, 2007

Work related:

- Setbacks and problems are an inevitable part of research.
- Utilize your mentors' knowledge and experience.
- Keep good records of everything and develop a filing method to store files on the computer.
- Distribute work equitably and get all team members involved in all decisions and project stages.

Outside of work:

- Partake in activities outside of work with other students.
- Get to know the area. There are a lot of cool things to do around.
- Get a YMCA subscription if you like to exercise.
- Go to Ponderosa winery.
- There are lots of hiking trails.

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