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Mitacs Globalink students gain research experience while sampling local culture

Undergraduate students from across the globe are expanding their learning at the University of Lethbridge this summer through the Mitacs Globalink Research Internship program.

The program allows undergraduate students from Brazil, China, France, India, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Vietnam to participate in a 12-week research internship under the supervision of Canadian university faculty members. The University of Lethbridge, with nine interns, is one of more than 45 universities in Canada to host Mitacs Globalink Research interns this summer.

Mayela Sosa, a third-year psychology student at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, studies neuroscience. She's working on a grasping study in Dr. Claudia Gonzalez's Brain in Action lab.

"I chose this project because of the professor and because it is more related to movement and neuroscience than other projects," she says. "I'm learning a lot. Many of my friends tried to get an internship in Canada so I'm really grateful Mitacs has given me this opportunity."

"The Mitacs Globalink program is outstanding. It identifies talented undergraduate students, who are highly qualified personnel, to come to Canada for 12 weeks to gain research experience," says Gonzalez, a U of L kinesiology and physical education professor. "As faculty, the program has provided me with the opportunity to have a pair of extra hands in the lab and a student to hopefully inspire or excite about research in Canada and at the U of L."

Santhosh Polubothu, an electrical engineering student at the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee near New Delhi, has been doing research in reversible logics under the supervision of Dr. Jackie Rice, a U of L mathematics and computer science professor.

“I have done some work in digital electronics back at my university so I thought it could be more useful for me. This project was my first choice,” he says. “The Mitacs Globalink Research Internship is one of the best programs in the world. It’s very hard to get in and the stipend is very good. It’s not about the money but the research we’re doing.”

Neeraj Prakash, who’s studying engineering physics at the National Institute of Technology Calicut, India, is working under the supervision of Dr. Adriana Predoi-Cross, a U of L physics professor.

“I’m having a good experience working in the lab. Even though I’m an undergrad, I’m getting the opportunity to work as a researcher,” says Prakash, adding he especially enjoys having input into the project he’s working on.

Houlin Yu, an undergraduate biology student at Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University in Yangling, China, is working in Elizabeth Schultz’s plant biology lab on a project to define the role of the FKD1 gene family using *Arabidopsis thaliana*, or thale cress. This is Yu’s first visit to another country and he’s soaking up as many experiences as he can.

“It’s spectacular to see the scenery and the people are hospitable,” says Yu. “I love the lab I am working in here. I want to come back here to do my master’s under Dr. Schultz’s supervision.”

The students have also managed to squeeze in some fun. They have visited downtown Lethbridge, Waterton Lakes National Park, participated in an escape room adventure, toured tecconnect, and celebrated Canada Day at Henderson Lake.

Mitacs is a national, non-profit organization that designs and delivers research and training programs in Canada to support industrial and social innovation in Canada.

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Contact:

Caroline Zentner, public affairs advisor
University of Lethbridge
403-394-3975 or 403-795-5403 (cell)
caroline.zentner@uleth.ca