

**MUREP Small Programs:
Achieving Competence in Computing, Engineering and Space Science
(Project ACCESS)**

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES DATA SUMMARY

Narratives Only

FISCAL YEAR 2007

**Compiled by
NASA Research & Education Support Services**

ACCESS - Achieving Competence in Computing, Engineering and Space Science
(Project ACCESS)

Dr. Virginia Stern
(202) 326-6672

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

ACCESS (Achieving Competence in Engineering, Computing, and Space Science) is designed to discover and develop talent among undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities who are pursuing technical careers. It is a 10-week summer internship program, managed by the American Association for the

MUREP Small Programs
American Association for the Advancement of Science
Washington, DC 20005

MUREP Performance Outcomes Data Summary (FY '07): Project ACCESS

Advancement of Science (AAAS) that recruits students with disabilities for summer placement in all NASA sites, including Headquarters. Interns must be full-time college undergraduate or graduate students and be majoring in science, math, engineering, or computer science and some business. ACCESS arranges internships with all NASA agencies, which provide competitive positions, accommodations as needed, and mentors who advise the students on future coursework and career plans. With new skills and real-world work experience on their resumes, many of the internship recipients are now working in science, technology, engineering, or business positions, via conversions, or are pursuing graduate degrees in relevant fields.

Perspective interns must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and reflect gender, racial, geographic, discipline, and disability diversity. Students are recruited from accredited institutions across the country and are U.S. citizens. Successful internships can lead to co-ops, graduate research study, and full employment.

Mentoring and follow-up are key elements of the ACCESS program. AAAS monitors the progress of all ACCESS interns, encouraging them through the continuation of their studies and post-education employment. Careful documentation of the number of students who enter graduate school or are employed in a STEM discipline lends credibility to the success and goal of the ACCESS program.

PROGRAM RELEVANCE TO NASA

ACCESS is both an exposure and a feeder program. It is a gateway to co-ops and other NASA programs that can lead to permanent employment. Students who successfully complete the 10-week ACCESS summer program are encouraged to pursue co-ops, graduate student research programs, or other mainstream NASA internships to enter and remain in the science and technology pipeline.

PROGRAM BENEFITS TO SOCIETY

Society needs a talented and diverse technological workforce to meet the nation's ever-changing needs. Disability is an integral part of human life. The continuous focus of the AAAS Project on Science, Technology and Disability makes it possible for AAAS to assemble and expand, and contribute to NASA and society a pool of intellectually talented students with disabilities who are pursuing rigorous courses of study in computer science, mathematics, information technology, physics, biology, and all areas of engineering.

PROGRAM GOALS

- To recruit and place talented students with disabilities, majoring in STEM fields at NASA installations as an entry point into the NASA workforce.

- To provide opportunities to talented students with disabilities to experience a NASA environment and contribute their skills to a research team of scientists.
- To track and encourage students with disabilities who successfully intern at NASA to persist in their studies and pursue a science, technology, mathematics, or engineering NASA career.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In 2006-2007, more than 500 students inquired about participating in the ACCESS program. Thirty-three candidates submitted complete portfolios that met the ACCESS requirements for summer 2007. Student portfolios were sent to every NASA site whose programs matched the students' background. AAAS gave all sites a diverse pool of one-to-four students for consideration for summer internships.
- In summer 2007, 16 students with disabilities, studying at 16 colleges and universities, were placed in eight NASA sites, including NASA Headquarters through the ACCESS program.

STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The students who participated in NASA internships had the opportunity to work with teams of NASA research scientists and contribute to a NASA project. In addition to using their particular set of talents, students gained new skills and built solid relationships with mentors and other NASA scientists who can encourage them to continue their education in a STEM field.

PICTURES (none)