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THE NASA PLANETARY BIOLOGY INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

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By providing students from around the world with the opportunity to work with established scientists in the fields of biogeochemistry, remote sensing and origins of life, among others, the NASA Planetary Biology Internship (PBI) program has successfully launched many scientific careers. Begun in 1980, the PBI program has sponsored 100 interns in the past decade in over 50 different laboratories studying the effects of life on Earth at a planetary scale. The PBI program (from 1980-1986) has been described in the NASA document "The Internship Experience."

Each year approximately ten interns participate in research related to planetary biology at NASA centers, NASA-sponsored research in university laboratories, and private institutions. The PBI program also sponsors three students every year in both the Microbiology and Marine Ecology Summer courses at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The internships are open to all graduate students and senior undergraduates accepted in graduate programs regardless of nationality and generally last 6-8 weeks. In stressing the truly global nature of PBI, we have awarded approximately one-fifth of the internships in recent years to students from outside the United States. The internship consists of an award of \$2000 in addition to a \$1200 travel stipend (for 1990). In an area of fiscal constraints, the PBI program is rare in awarding young scientists travel funds and access to NASA supported research. These unparalleled opportunities have led to an increase in both the quality and number of the applicants every year.

The PBI program is supported by the Life Sciences Division of NASA and is administered by the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Massachusetts through the MBL Education Committee. Applications are due the 1st of March, 1991, and can be obtained from Gregory Hinkle, Department of Botany, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.