

Working at the Ohio Aerospace Institute

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Abstract

The Ohio Aerospace Institute is a wonderful place to work. I enjoy coming to work everyday knowing that I will be surrounded by smiling faces. My mentor, Mary Auzenne, is the Program Manager of the LERCIP College Internship Program, however, I spend most of my time working with Akua Soadwa, the Assistant Program Manager. She is in charge of planning, coordinating, and managing every event that is involved with the college internship program such as the socials, picnic, banquet, workshops, and research symposium. My job is to make her job easier. I help out with the planning, coordinating, and managing of these events. When I first got on board Akua was in the process of planning the second social for the interns. The social is a way for the interns to interact with one another as well as to find out more about where the other interns are working at NASA. We ordered the food, went shopping, and set up the Guerin House for the party. I made sign-in sheets, which helped us get a rough count of the attendees. The next event was the Technical Presentation Workshop and the Professional Development Workshop. These workshops are designed to enhance skills of the interns. We were there to sign people in and direct them to the room where the presentation was to take place. I also took pictures of the workshop and provided copies for the presenters, as well as our files.

The next order of events was Research Symposium I and the Picnic, which took up all of my time. As the abstracts were turned in by the students my job was to keep track of them, type the titles in the schedule, type up the evaluations, make badges, and create the evaluator's folders. I made arrangements for refreshments and helped Akua put up signs of the schedule, and signs directing the people to the designated rooms. The picnic was a lot of fun to plan. I was in charge of keeping track of the replies for the picnic and there were days when I would receive hundreds of e-mails throughout the

day, making feel very popular. I made arrangements for renting a cotton-candy machine and a frozen drink machine, I also made arrangements with the DJ, kept track of when people were volunteering for each activity, corresponded with game leaders to find volunteers, helped Akua buy decorations, took pictures, and caught thieves trying to steal frozen drinks. The weather was not the best and it started raining towards the end, but I never had so much fun getting drenched!

The next event was the banquet. I did not have a lot of responsibilities with this event. I would like to however, give myself credit for coming up with the color combination: red and gold. I helped buy decorations and ordered the balloons. I picked up the balloons, took pictures, and worked the registration table. I would also like to give myself credit for getting a backdrop, which gave a completely different dimension to the main cafeteria.

The final event is Research Symposium II for which I have the same responsibilities as for the first one. And while doing all of this I was also helping out with the newsletter. Another assistant program manager, Giovanna Mignosa and I were responsible for three articles each week: Meet the Staff, Meet the GRC Staff, and Quote of the Week. I took the pictures of the staff and organized it in Microsoft Word, I conducted an interview with NASA GRC's Center Director, Dr. Julian Earls, and the Deputy Director, Rich S. Christiansen, and looked for inspirational quotes online. In between all of this, I was also working on the workshop summary reports, organizing the evaluations and abstracts from the first Research Symposium, sending out the evaluations to the interns, contacting interns for their follow-up sessions, helping Akua distribute paychecks, and reading all of my e-mails and answering questions that students may have had about upcoming events, etc.

This has been a wonderful experience for me. Prior to this internship I was not a very friendly person, however, this position allowed me to meet all of the interns and this has enhanced my communication skills. I learned to work with people and in return learned to listen more, and I even became much more patient and understanding. I learned that a key to success is wanting perfection. I also learned multitasking, which is very hard if you are not used to it at first. The important thing to remember is to write everything down and to prioritize!

Now I would like to take this opportunity and thank some people without whom this internship would not have been as successful. I would like to thank Beth, Catherine, Ila, Joyce, Kelly, Dave, and Mark for making my tenure at the OAI such a wonderful experience! I would also like to thank Mary for being a great mentor, and finally, Akua, with whom I have worked most closely with and who is just really fun! Never once did she get frustrated with all of the questions that I asked her and never once did she make me feel like I was not doing a good job. Thank you Akua for making me feel special!