April 4, 2014

Undergraduate Summer Internship 2014

There are two undergraduate summer internships available in the Plant Polymer Research Unit at the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research in Peoria, Illinois.

The Plant Polymer Research Unit utilizes biobased polymers from agriculture and agribusinesses to create and evaluate new plastics for use in commercial products. PPL focuses on polymer chemistry and engineering using carbohydrate and protein components. We chemically and physically modify biobased polymers, using green principles, and demonstrate their effectiveness as replacements for petroleum-based plastics.

The first position, under the direction of Dr. Gordon Selling, will involve the production of protein based films and fibers, which have various degrees of cross-linking, and then monitor the rate of release of the desired reagent.

The second position, under the direction of Dr. Victoria Finkenstadt, will conduct biobased plastics engineering research; specifically developing active packaging materials using bio-based nano-composites for controlled release.

Information on the research interests of Drs. Selling and Finkenstadt, the Plant Polymer Unit, and NCAUR may be found on the USDA Agricultural Research Service website.

The position is full-time (40 hours/week) for 8-12 weeks during the summer. Partial funding is provided by the Midwest Area.

Applications are due April 18, 2014. Applicants should submit a resume, a cover letter that includes career goals, a copy of the most recent college transcript, and one letter of recommendation. Interviews will be scheduled for the week of April 21-25, 2014. Please include your availability for an interview and a contact telephone number in your cover letter. Selected candidates must be United States citizens and submit to fingerprinting and a background check. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

Applications must be emailed to Dr. Victoria Finkenstadt (victoria.finkenstadt@ars.usda.gov) before 5:00 p.m. (CDT) on April 18, 2015. We will accept applications by snail-mail but the complete application package must be delivered to NCAUR by April 18, 2014 to be considered.