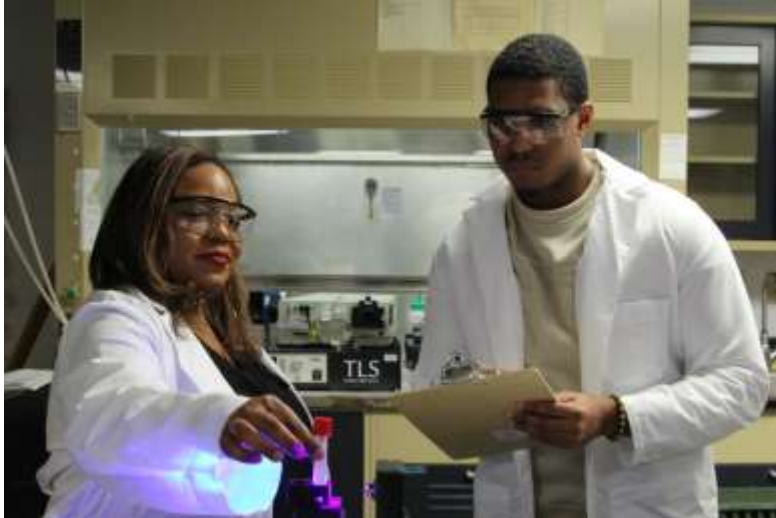


For Information: Richard Arndt, 410-436-1479

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Center Participates in DOD Research Program for HBCU/MI Students

By Aerial Storey



Gerita Cochran (left) and Simeon Sykes (right) are current U.S. Army Capabilities Development Command Chemical Biological Center employees who previously participated in the DoD HBCU/MI Summer Research Program. They gathered test information for their research program during their internships at the Center. (U.S. Army Photo by Ellie White).

Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD -- The U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Chemical Biological Center (DEVCOM CBC) is completing the internship assignments for the annual Department of Defense (DoD) Summer Research Program. The program is aimed at developing future generations of the workforce by increasing the number of interns from historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions (HBCU/MI) at laboratories throughout the DoD.

The program outreach spans over 30 HBCU/MI campuses throughout the United States. This year, 100 students – out of approximately 900 applications – from these universities were accepted into the program. Applications open every year in November and close for review in January.

The program begins in June and lasts through August. It offers students the professional experience of working in a real-world laboratory and performing research that is relevant to the defense mission while under the guidance of DoD scientists and engineers who serve as mentors. The initiative takes place at various labs across the country, spanning 11 weeks throughout the summer. Students are provided with a stipend, housing, and transportation during their internship, funded by the DoD.

“The aim for the DoD is to get out and bring in the bright minds of students at HBCU/MI. We provide a project for students to work on during the summer within their major with the goal of offering those students job opportunities for the future to build the workforce,” explained Eugene Vickers, program coordinator and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Officer for DEVCOM CBC.

Since 2017, DEVCOM CBC has worked to coordinate students with projects related to their major. One student conducted literature research on nitric oxide treatments for



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<https://cbc.devcom.army.mil>

acute respiratory distress syndrome in COVID-19 patients. In another project, a student used her background in biology to determine warfighter health and readiness by collecting physiological data from wearable devices.

Students are screened and matched to projects and mentors within their chosen fields. When assigned to a project, students are given tours of laboratories and testing sites where they will be given the hands-on experience navigating a professional work environment. The exposure also gives students an extensive networking experience as they train alongside experts in their field and are given the opportunity to present their research projects to senior leaders and division chiefs. The program also includes resume-writing courses, leadership lectures, and personal development through regular one-on-one discussions.

When discussing the benefits of the student experience, Vickers explained, “This gives students the opportunity to work in their field. I’ve had students that didn’t want to go home for the summer because of how their neighborhood is. We can offer them the opportunity to experience a different environment where they can open their mind and see what is available for them.”

The program offerings have enabled students with various interests to gain professional experience in areas such as biology, chemistry, strategic planning, engineering, entrepreneurship, and more. DEVCOM CBC regularly hosts upwards of 20 students each year, with some graduating students receiving job offers.

“For me, to see the change in students from experiencing something that they really enjoy and that they really like, it’s rewarding to see that transformation in someone,” Vickers said. He plans to continue the expansion of the program at DEVCOM CBC by conducting outreach with additional institutions.

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For more information about the DEVCOM Chemical Biological Center, visit <https://cbc.DEVCOM.army.mil>

The U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Chemical Biological Center (CBC) is aligned under the U.S. Army Futures Command (AFC) and U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM.)

AFC provides Army modernization solutions (integrated concepts, organizational designs, and technologies) in order to allow the Joint Force, employing Army capabilities, to achieve overmatch in the future operation environment. DEVCOM is a major subordinate command of AFC. DEVCOM leads in the discovery, development, and delivery of technology-based capabilities to enable Soldiers to win our nation’s wars and come home safely. DEVCOM CBC is the Army’s principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering, and field operations. DEVCOM CBC is headquartered at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

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