

Personal Experience

Brooke Cosko

When I was accepted into the SCIPP internship program I was, admittedly, terrified. I had no idea what to expect, I didn't know a thing about the equipment we would use or even what we were going to study, but I've come a long ways in the past few weeks.

The first week was spent in the conference room, being lectured. The lectures were always engrossing and were given by people who really knew what they were doing. I am honored that they took time out of their work to talk to us about things they have been working on for years.

Melissa and I were assigned to a specific project, the Muon Lifetime Project. While we worked on it we encountered problem after problem. We would spend hours on one thing only to have another thing go wrong. Problems we'd thought we'd solved resurfaced. We were reduced to insulting and cajoling the equipment while we worked on it ("You better work this time, you worthless hunk of metal," or "I'll love you forever if you just don't die!") We learned our equipment inside and out. We gained an intimate understanding of the voltage regulator box and even have a muddled feel for how the bases work. But more than that, we learned how to work on our feet, identify problems, and that the words "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong" have a deafening ring of truth to them.

This was also the first time I've worked in a group for an extended period of time. Despite the fact that we were all working on different projects we worked

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together. Each group constantly “stole” other people, for their expertise, mostly people who knew how to plateau on my end. Since five of us worked on muon-related projects we could collaborate on what we were doing wrong (or ignore each other if everything was running smoothly.)

Even though our project never collected data we came very far. Melissa and I have worked out how all of the equipment works. Hopefully, the work we did will contribute to the project next year. And maybe the year after that.

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