

#ILookLikeAnEngineer

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My name is Taylor McCrady, and I am a rising 5th year Masters student in Biomedical Engineering. I recently accepted an internship with LaCell, LLC, a company in the New Orleans BioInnovation Center (NOBIC). [NOBIC](#) is an incubator for Louisiana biotechnology start-up companies. They provide business & legal assistance, office & laboratory space, and so much more.

[LaCell](#) is a start-up company, founded in 2010, that provides quality human stem cells to researchers and scientists in the biotechnology field. As an engineering intern for LaCell, I will be working on multiple projects. The main objective for each project I will work on is to quantify and analyze the data they gather.

There are a few things I would like to learn during my time at LaCell. First, I would like to apply my engineering education to a professional, business setting instead of the traditional, academic setting. This was one of the primary motivations for me to find an internship, because learning how to be an engineer in a classroom is widely different from learning how to be an engineer in the real world. My experiences with LaCell will give me a glimpse into how engineers affect real businesses and problems before I start my career.

Second, I would like to understand how engineering can help solve problems outside of the traditional field of engineering. I am one of the few people at LaCell with an engineering background (most past and current employees have gone to/are currently in medical school), and I can still help solve their problems by bringing another perspective to the table. This will not only improve my ability to problem solve, but it will also make me a better engineer because I am able to find ways to use my education to help more than just other engineers.

Next, I would like to expand upon my currently limited knowledge of image analysis. The projects I am primarily going to be working on require me to use software (ImageJ or MATLAB) to extract information from a photograph, such as the length of an object.

This leads me to my next learning objective, which is to find ways to balance working on multiple projects. During my time at LaCell, I will be working on multiple projects at the same time. Balancing my work in those projects will aid in my professional growth, since engineers are often asked to work on multiple projects at once.

Finally, I initially reached out to NOBIC for internship opportunities because I have been following the work they do for a couple of years now, and I am intrigued with how NOBIC affects the beginnings of a start-up company. Since it is a personal goal of mine to one day own my own business, understanding the inner workings of NOBIC will help me to understand the role of an incubator in the life of a start-up company.

Since I accepted my internship in February, I have already begun working on the projects I will be working on over the summer. I also have met the rest of the LaCell team, and either emailed with or met the other collaborators on my projects. The head start on the projects will allow me to hit the ground running once I begin to

work for LaCell over the summer.

I am personally excited to have the opportunity to grow professionally when my professional career has not even started yet. In addition, I am excited to have the opportunity to expand upon my engineering education through learning more about image analysis. My experiences at LaCell will have a lasting impact on my professional career.

My internship with LaCell is in perfect alignment with the mission of the Newcomb College Institute's mission of educating undergraduate women for leadership in the 21st century. The projects I will be working on not only have a women's focus, but they also uniquely position me for the rigors of being a woman in the engineering field. Since women are generally under-represented in the field of engineering, I will be a stand out candidate to employers not only for my choice of major, but for my breadth of knowledge and experience with diverse projects both academic and professional. I am grateful to the NCI for aiding me in this opportunity to learn and grow as an engineer and young professional.