

Advice from LADSS Alumni

(There's a lot! We've had lots of students over the years.)

Gary Adkins, 2018

1. Bring your own lunch during the week. There are places to eat at the lab, but you'll save a lot of money and time by cooking for yourself. You can also have a lot more variety in your diet that way!
2. Check out Savers in Santa Fe if you enjoy shopping at thrift stores. I only discovered them during week 7, and I wish I'd known sooner!
3. Bring a camp chair for the concerts at Ashley Pond.
4. Air pressure! When I first used my body wash (brought up from sea level and stored upside down), half of the contents came rocketing out! Be aware of this and don't get sprayed by shampoo or spattered by yogurt.
5. Plan and perform your experiments as early as you can, but remain flexible. We intended to do most of our experiments on metal AM parts, but always had a plan for something useful we could do with the more easily available plastic parts while we waited for the metal ones. This was fortuitous, because we didn't get the metal ones until late in week 8. Because we had continued to do a variety of other experiments throughout the summer we were still in good shape for our paper and presentation at the end, using the metal parts as validation for the plastic rather than as our main focus.
6. Test your PowerPoint presentations in the viz-lab a day or two ahead of time. The computers don't all have the same versions of windows, and it can play havoc on your formatting, particularly of videos.
7. Bring wired headphones if you like to listen to music while you work. You can't use Bluetooth at the lab.
8. If you like coffee consider using reusable K-cups (available at Smith's). They're cheaper after about 20 cups, more environmentally friendly, and offer a far greater selection since you can use any ground coffee that you like.

Greta Colford, 2018

1. Start data collection early, it might take more time than you think to understand your testing equipment and signals you are collecting.
2. Document everything, and PowerPoint is a good way to keep track of plots or trends/abnormalities in your data. PPT is also a good way to show your data to your mentors. I also found that keeping a running project log was helpful.
3. Take data management seriously, you might have to deal with GBs or TBs of data.
4. Get a Smith's Card (local grocery store coupon card) to save some money.
5. Attend student events and attend LANL sponsored talks. There are so many students here in the summer it is a great opportunity to meet new people from different fields.
6. Hike Wheeler with all the LADSS students, it's a great bonding experience and you get to hike a mountain.

Cedric Hayes, 2018

1. Set dates for when you plan on achieving certain milestones and finish deliverables the first week you are here; having a solid schedule for your project will keep everyone on task, and

- break the work into its components that will be easier to achieve as you go.
2. There are tons of talks and presentations at the lab during the summer that are not part of the LADSS program. Take the time to go to presentations that interest you.
 3. If you need software installed on your computer or equipment in the lab, ask for it early on. It can take time to get equipment ordered or moved so the sooner you let someone know you need it, the more time you will have to use it.
 4. Have fun. Be excited. Learn stuff.

Emilio Herrera, 2018

I have but five suggestions
Planning is prudent
Never run out of questions
Bike, hike, swim, and run
Nine weeks goes by really fast and you need to be prepared for road blocks and lab issues slowing down your progress
Don't forget, have fun

Sam Myren, 2018

So you've been admitted to LADSS,
Bring a bike, trust me, it's rad,
Find a house in Los Alamos.
You might meet Darwin (not in the Galapagos).
Work hard, make your mentors happy, not mad.

Extra advice:

1. Hike a 14er, it's fun.
2. Talk to people to get involved. Slightly competitive soccer is played every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. Join the run club.
3. Utilize the rock-climbing wall at the YMCA and pay attention to YMCA events by looking at their calendar.
4. Communicate with mentors as much as possible.
5. Many live shows in Santa Fe, go see them.

John Pederson, 2018

As far as picking summer internships,
LADSS is quite the program, as you'll hear;
They asked us to provide assorted tips
To help out students in the coming year.

First thing - the place is excellent for hiking.
The mountains, valleys, cliffs, and desert plains
Are all enchanted, beautiful, and striking -
Enjoy them all before the summer rains.

Keep at your work, and it will fall in place -
Just have a plan, and work until it's done.

Talk with your team, and keep a steady pace;
It makes the daily grind that much more fun.

And lastly, don't forget to learn a lot;
You will regardless, but that's all I got!

Now for other tips:

1. Even if you've never hiked before, make sure to try it! Seriously, even if you're unathletic and from the big city like me. The rock formations are stunning, the mountains are beautiful, and the sunrises, sunsets, and starry nights are gorgeous. You'll get more and more in shape as the weeks pass if you do it right, and you'll have tons of fun along the way.
2. Bring / buy / use sunscreen. Trust me on this one. Hats are also great.
3. It gets pretty cold in the mountains at night, so if you're camping overnight there, bring a sweater, jacket, or blanket.
4. Santa Fe's a great place to go on the weekends - visit the Canyon Road art galleries, the cathedral, the town square, the restaurants, Meow Wolf, and the Violet Crown movie theater.
5. Make sure to try New Mexican dishes. I'm probably biased, as I love my Houston tex-mex, but the restaurants here and in Santa Fe are pretty great. Breakfast burritos are awesome here!
6. Split up the work / project with your teammates. No one of you can do the project alone, so work together! There are also plenty of opportunities for doing things together on the weekends = team bonding.
7. Spend the extra hour or two, before or after work, before the last week of your project - you'll thank yourself later.
8. There's swing dancing on Thursday nights, figure drawing on Wednesday nights and Sunday afternoons, and yoga on Monday nights. There's something to do every day of the week if you look.
9. There're tons of churches here. Go to one at least once - even if you're not religious.
10. You can swim at the Aquatic Center on Canyon - I trained for the Chuck Chase sprint triathlon there. (And by trained, I mean barely being able to swim the 400m necessary.)
11. Try rock climbing at the YMCA.
12. Go to the Friday night concerts. They're super fun, and the food isn't bad either - especially Jambo.
13. There's a piano in the Otowi Cafeteria, and two pianos in Fuller Lodge downtown. You can play in Otowi before 8:00 am, and whenever Fuller Lodge's doors are unlocked and there's no event going on. I was able to learn a new piece here and duet with my friend this way!
14. There's a magnificent book store at the Mesa Public Library. They have lovely vintage books you could never get elsewhere, for insanely low prices - 50 cent paperbacks and \$1 hardcovers!
15. Before you leave, try to arrange chats with people at the lab working on things you're interested in. (Ask Chuck if he knows anyone / let him know you reached out.) This is great if you're remotely interested in working at the lab again, and you could score a wonderful opportunity.
16. Have fun! It's honestly hard not to.

Dewey Potts, 2018

Out of Work Stuff:

1. Meow wolf, in Santa Fe, is a really unique place and is definitely worth seeing. They have concerts there Thursday nights that are exquisitely rad. Buy a ticket and go early to explore the exhibit --the concert ticket includes a ticket to see the exhibit if you get there early.
2. YMCA! I think it's like \$36/month for students. There is a climbing wall there with regular belay and a self-belay. A non-member can go climbing up to five times if they go with a member.
3. Trails - The trails around here are phenomenal! There is an app called "LA trails" that has good maps and descriptions of the local trails. I loved trail running them in the morning before work.
4. Santa Fe - I think we ended up going to Santa Fe like 6 times. Canyon Street has 30+ free art galleries that are really good. The food there is great as well. Warning: everything in New Mexico pretty much closes by 5pm or 6pm, so you will want to get there early if you want to get into anything.

Work advice:

5. Each day, determine what needs to get done and make objectives. Split those objectives into three so you can all work in parallel.
6. Don't waste too much time on the mini-project.
7. Start writing the paper early! Work on in little-by-little throughout the summer. You should be able to write the background/intro after the second week, methods after about the 4th/5th week, and then the results whenever you get them.

Greg Taylor, 2018

When looking for a place to stay
It's best not to just wait and pray
Also don't push your luck
And bring up a truck
Time shouldn't be wasted away

Sudeep Dasari, 2017

My advice for future students is to read up on your project as much as possible beforehand, and try to make feasible project goals ASAP.

Oscar McClain, 2017

Los Alamos National Laboratory is a great place to enhance your knowledge in regards to what you are studying in school and what you may want to do in life. I have come out to this magnificent place two summers in a row, and I must say that my experiences here are remarkable and one to remember. I advise all of you to take advantage of this opportunity because opportunities like this does not come around everyday. Also, you would want to socialize with any and everybody that you see because they may have an opportunity that would just fit you. The lab is so big to where it seems endless, and there are top-notch scientists and engineers all over the place. Life is about who you know, not what you know, so get to know people. I would also like to say that the city of

Los Alamos can get pretty boring if you do not have a car. So, if you can bring your car, I would advise you to do so. Enjoy your summer experience!

Charles Liang, 2017

1. Find housing early, but by early April should be fine (I found a very good option in early April)
2. The summer flies by quickly, so good project planning is very beneficial.
3. Reading some background info in advance helps the team have a good start on the project.
4. Try to ask questions at lectures/talks (your colleagues will also benefit too)

Jennifer Yasui, 2016

1. Before arriving at Los Alamos, do an extensive literature review to prepare for your project. This may save weeks of work that you could use for experiments rather than reading. Also discuss with your mentors early on what your project will encompass over the summer.
2. Bring a fan to or buy one when you're here, many apartments don't have air conditioning.
3. Figure out your experimental setup and DAQ as early as possible, otherwise you may have to redo experiments.
4. Order supplies early so you don't have to pay for expedited shipping.
5. Develop a set of guidelines for your teammates and mentors to follow. For example, set weekly meetings with your mentors, agree on paper/presentation formats, CC your teammates when emailing your mentors, etc.
6. Take advantage of student resources and opportunities! You'll often get emails about lab tours, resume workshops, professional talks, etc.
7. Don't expect to have your paper finished by the end of LADSS, you'll most likely be writing/editing your paper after you leave. However, this doesn't mean "don't work on the paper during LADSS," some schools start only a few weeks after LADSS and it may be difficult working on the paper while attending school.
8. Expect to work more than an 8-5 work day.
9. Try to spend your lunch breaks with LADSS students and mentors.
10. Try to get outside of Los Alamos on the weekends and visit places with other LADSS students.
11. Beautiful Hiking Places: Mt. Wheeler and Tent Rocks
12. Great Restaurants: Rancho De Chimayo, Maria's, Gabriel's, Harry's Roadhouse, Bumblebees, the Teahouse
13. Fun Day Visits: Santa Fe - the Plaza & Meow Wolf Museum, Taos, Roswell - UFO Museum, Albuquerque

Nicholas Diskerud, 2016

1. Read all previous advice
2. Get a Smith's card. It is cost effective, and Smith's is awesome, you should want to be a member.
3. Find lodging as soon as possible, and know what kind of amenities you have. The summers are hot, so if you don't have air conditioning, know who does. Smith's has a café area, and library cards are free.

4. Read the entire literature review included in your project's abstract as soon as you get it. Not only so you can hit the ground running, but find out what you might not fully understand about what you will be doing.
5. In my opinion, Timeout Pizzeria is better than Homerun. Take that as you will
6. Pay attention to all the morning lectures, and if there is the slightest chance that what is covered applies to your project, ask the instructor. Worst-case scenario, you made a networking opportunity.
7. Often, the people you learn from the most are your groupmates. Get to know each other, and each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Derya Tansel, 2016

1. Places to explore: Santa Fe, Mt. Wheeler, Tent Rocks, Roswell
2. Places to eat in Santa Fe: Harry's Roadhouse, Bumblebee Cafe
3. Places to buy postcards: Smith's, Nature Center, CB Fox
4. It will take some time to adjust to the altitude if you are coming from sea level.
5. Go for a run! The view is amazing in every direction. If you need motivation, there's a 4th of July 5k and a triathlon in the summer.
6. Don't worry, most of the students are equally lost in their projects. Ask the mentors for help, even if they aren't your mentor. They all provide a unique perspective.
7. FIND HOUSING EARLY!!!
8. Join the Los Alamos Student Facebook page. Some people post places for rent there.
9. Go to the Friday night concerts.

Jaden Martz, 2016

1. Hike the Sandia Mountains in Albuquerque.
2. When you play basketball, play at East Park.

John Ward, 2016

1. See all advice from past years
2. Use Tab Auto Reload Add-on for Firefox to keep your Outlook web app from timing out all the time
3. Find any locals in the program and use them
4. Ask around when you're looking for hardware
5. Challenge your mentors to the triathlon
6. Get a good idea of the big picture of your project early

Jacob Senecal, 2016

1. Connect with other LADSS students once you know you'll be participating in the program. You can find some good roommates this way.
2. Arrive in Los Alamos a few days early to get everything sorted out, and explore the area a little bit.
3. Hike Mt. Wheeler, the caldera, and the mountains east of Santa Fe.
4. Playing pick-up sports during the week is a good way to get to know other lab members.
5. With regard to your project, try to get everything you'll need for your experimental set-up early on, even if you won't be performing experiments until later in the summer.

6. The guest lectures are great, and so are the weeklong classes. Most of the time you'll be given information relevant to your project as well.
7. Use your fellow LADSS members as resources.

Alex Roeder, 2016

1. Make sure that the test setup is setup correctly for the beginning work on the project and that you know how all measurement devices work. Learning on the fly is good, but it helps to start with a solid understanding.
2. Get started on the conference paper draft early so it does not all need to be done at the end when things are at their most busy.
3. Don't be afraid to adapt/modify/rethink your project if you think it will aid in achieving the project's goals. Just be sure to have a rough plan and discuss it with your mentors.
4. There are a huge number of recreational groups (mountain biking, ultimate Frisbee, soccer, disc golf, etc.) in the Los Alamos area. Research them on Facebook or ask locals. They are very welcoming and are a great way to relax from work.
5. Go to the Gordon's Concert Series on Friday nights at Ashley Pond (Pond). It is a great Friday outing to do with other interns.
6. Go down to Carlsbad Caverns. It is well worth the drive. If possible, camp overnight in the Guadalupe Mountains just south of the caverns.

Phillip Graybill, 2016

1. The Aspen Studio Apartments are in easy walking distance from Smith's Supermarket, downtown, the YMCA, and many restaurants, which is pretty important if you don't have a car. They do not have air conditioning, but that seems sort of standard for Los Alamos. Many of us LADSS students (and other summer interns) ended up here, so it was easy to find someone to car pool to the lab with.
2. Apparently, our summer was on the hot side. I got by without air conditioning. On weekdays, you're at the lab during the hottest time of the day. On weekends, you can hang out at Starbucks during the hottest time of the day. If you don't have air conditioning at your apartment, you will definitely want a fan or two.
3. If you like to run, check out the Atomic City Road Runners Club (atomicrunners.com). They have an informal 5k "race" every Tuesday where the winner is the person who predicts his or her time the most accurately. Race location varies week to week around Los Alamos and White Rock.
4. If you're flying in (rather than driving), and you're old enough to rent a car, it can work out well to rent a car from ABQ to LAM (Los Alamos Airport). You can do a 24-hour rental and use the remainder of your time to go to Wal-Mart (in Espanola) or Smith's to get needed furnishings. If you live in downtown, LAM is an easy 30-minute walk. Consult with the LADSS program coordinator (Ellie Vigil) before you rent; she may be able to give you a LANL discount code, which can save you a lot of money.
5. If you like hiking, you picked the right internship. Of course, there are trails around town. A short drive from town is the trailhead for Cerro Grande. This is a beautiful and not-too-difficult out-and-back hike to the top of a peak overlooking the Valles Caldera. If you're in decent shape and have a car (or can find someone to take you), it's totally worth it to hike Wheeler Peak (highest peak in NM), which is in the Taos ski area (around 2 hours from Los

Alamos). It took us about two hours to hike up and two hours to hike down, and there's a grade almost the whole way, so it's not easy, but definitely do-able for most twentysomethings. The views from the top are absolutely spectacular.

6. East Park (toward the airport) has a relatively nice basketball court that is usually open.
7. Los Alamos is at about half a mile higher than Denver. If you're coming from a lower altitude, you'll get out of breath much more quickly when you try to exercise or physically exert yourself. It took me about a month to feel comfortable running here, but my times were still pretty bad. But don't let that stop you from signing up for the 5k on the Fourth of July or the triathlon toward the end of July. Everyone here is just a little slower here because of the elevation.
8. Forming a Facebook group greatly aids in coordinating group events. We had a fantastic group that got along really well and enjoyed doing stuff together. Hopefully you'll have the same chemistry.
9. If you need to get rid of random furnishings at the end of the summer (or buy things at the beginning of the summer), there is a useful Facebook group called "Los Alamos Yard Sale."

Kevin Keller, 2015

1. Try to get a place at Canyon Village Apartments. They are the nicest.
2. Go to Mount Wheeler.
3. Go rock climbing Tuesday and Thursday with the Los Alamos mountaineers
4. If you like rock climbing go up to the Jemez close to the Caldera. It has some of the best rock climbing around.
5. Join the YMCA. They are the cheapest in town and have a climbing wall.
6. Make sure you read all of the material before you arrive.

Kyle Neal, 2015

1. Finding housing should be your first order of business. I lived at Ponderosa Pines and had a great experience there.
2. Find a means to get in touch with other students before you arrive in Los Alamos. This will help organize housing and possibly transportation.
3. I drove my truck from Tennessee to Los Alamos and was glad I did. I would suggest bringing a vehicle, but there were many students who got along fine by riding the bus or carpooling.
4. Be prepared to learn. There is a lot of information thrown at you during the lectures.
5. If you are interested in graduate school, the summer school is a great opportunity to make connections with potential graduate advisors and other future graduate students.
6. By the end of the summer you will have accumulated a massive number of files and data; it will help everyone if you keep it well organized.
7. Remember you will hand off your work (including code) to your mentors after the summer, so make it clear.
8. There are a lot of recreational activities and fun events designed for the summer students. There is always something to do!

Brian Page, 2015

1. Secure housing as soon as you know you are coming to Los Alamos, things get booked up pretty quick.
2. Bring a bike (or two) if you can. The trails around town are great for mountain biking, and the road route is also pretty nice. Commuting by bike is also definitely an option with great bike lanes and covered storage at the lab.
3. Get up into the Valles Caldera and Bandelier at least once. Bandelier is good hiking, while the Valles is great cross-country mountain biking.
4. Get a Smith's loyalty card the first time you go. Its free and saves you money on food and gas.
5. Plan a couple of weekend excursions to go do cool stuff in the area, be it hiking, downhill mountain biking, rafting, or other stuff.

Ethan Robinson, 2015

1. Get housing early! Several people in the group had to live in Santa Fe (~1-hour commute in the mornings). Losing two hours of the day really cuts into your weeknights.
2. If you climb, bring all of your gear. You will want it here! Check out the community top roping events with the Los Alamos Mountaineers on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are some very interesting people there. Make sure to make it up to Las Conchas for a very different climbing experience from the White Rock crags.
3. Hike Wheeler Peak. If you're an avid hiker, make sure to take the Wheeler Peak trail (the longer one) up and down. It's worth the extra effort. Go very early to avoid the inevitable afternoon thunderstorms.
4. Join the Y. It's very cheap and a convenient way to workout when it's thunderstorming (AKA a lot of the time). The climbing wall there is surprisingly well set.
5. Have weekly group bonding activities. We would cook a nice dinner together every Sunday and it made working together even more pleasant.
6. There are a lot of intelligent people in this town who have interesting research, make sure to learn as much as you can while you're here.

Patricia Tan, 2015

1. Los Alamos can get boring at times, especially on the weekend -- bring a car to drive to Santa Fe and Albuquerque
2. I know everyone says it, but it's true: try to get housing as early as possible, otherwise you'll get into this weird situation where you're house-swapping with strangers you don't know.
3. Learn to love hiking.
4. When it rains, it pours. Bring a good camera for lightning, but also be prepared to get wet.
5. Go on lots of group trips. New Mexico has a lot to offer, and it's easier to get to know people on those group trips.
6. Choose your project wisely. Choose your project wisely. Choose your project wisely. Otherwise it's going to be a very long 9 weeks.
7. Try the food as often as you can. Christmas chile is your friend.

8. Hang out with you fellow LADSS friends as much as possible, and try to keep in touch afterwards. You might actually miss them.
9. Participate in LANL events that you can attend -- usually there's free food and free stuff.
10. Write postcards home. Someone will like to receive them. Smith's has a limited selection of postcards, but visiting the Historical Museum and the Fuller Art Lodge will help you get more.

Jesse Coffey, 2014

1. First of all, make sure you hit the ground running. Your project will seem like a lot to handle, and don't let it overwhelm you. Break it down into manageable pieces you can accomplish on a daily basis, and from there you can easily chip away at the overall project. This way you have a feeling of accomplishment for each day that gives you the motivation to keep working hard the next.
2. Your mentors are invaluable. Remember this is a summer SCHOOL, and that you are there to learn as well as work. More learning is accomplished in the lab than anywhere else, and the mentors are there to help educate you. Don't be afraid to ask questions when you don't know something. You're not supposed to know everything coming in.
3. As far as life in Los Alamos, make sure you don't spend all your time just working. There are some incredible outdoor experiences in the area that are very easy to get to. Make sure you take full advantage and get out there as much as possible. You should never spend a Saturday hanging out in your room.

Nick Martinez, 2014

1. Choose your project wisely. Thoroughly review each project scope and referenced material when making your decision.
2. Once you are assigned a project, familiarize yourself with the required theory and background literature before the start of the summer school.
3. Immediately familiarize yourself with the experimental hardware setup. This will expedite your project's progress, especially if you are unfamiliar with the specific hardware/software.
4. Make an effort to spend time with your group members outside of work. Bonding with group members creates great team chemistry.
5. Soak in as much knowledge as you can from mentors and guest lecturers. Don't hesitate to ask questions, as you will find all the mentors and guest lecturers to be very approachable.
6. Take advantage of Los Alamos' geological location and plan trips (camping, hiking, etc.) with your peers.

Jason Bossert, 2014

1. Make dinner plans with the whole group. There are barbecues areas around Ninth Street, and at Urban and Rover parks.

2. The nine weeks go by incredibly fast. Don't slack on your project in the first five weeks, or you will suffer during the last month. Also, make sure to travel and socialize with the other LADSS students, as your time together is also quite limited.
3. Work on your project as a team, and make sure everyone understands everything. You have to work together or you will not finish.
4. Make sure to visit Overlook Point in White Rock for a sunset. In fact, try and watch every sunset, because they are fantastic.
5. Read up on lightning safety, and bring a rain jacket and some warm clothes if you are interested in hiking. New Mexico may be a desert, but July-August is monsoon season, and it gets very wet.
6. There is lots of excellent camping around, so bring gear if you are interested. Look into camping at Abiquiu Lake, and get some cliff jumping in.

Dustin Kraus, 2014

1. Take advantage of the readings and advice your mentor sends to you before the program begins. The more knowledgeable you are about your project going into the program, the more you will be able to contribute to your team and come up with the best solution.
2. Work hard during the week, but play hard on the weekends. There are a lot of outdoor things to do around Los Alamos.
3. Make sure to get all your fellow students on some sort of group text messaging system and go do things together on the weekends and after work during the week.
4. This is a great program so go into it expecting to learn a ton, and have a really good time.

Christian Guzman, 2014

1. Los Alamos is small so be prepared to travel to Santa Fe for access to malls and such.
2. The Smiths store has everything you need for grocery shopping. Get a card as it really helps save money.
3. Pump gas at the Smiths gas station and use your card there for additional savings.
4. Los Alamos is the perfect place for outdoor activities, so find a group of people to do things with.
5. Go to the concerts at the pond every Friday for fun activities and socials.
6. Find housing early, it fills up very quickly and there is not a lot of room.
7. Go to the museum to see the history of Los Alamos.

Joe Brown, 2014

1. Do the background research before you get to Los Alamos! It will make it easier to jump into your projects.
2. Expect to work late sometimes if you're nearing a deadline.
3. You are getting paid to go to lectures. Be on time and stay awake.

4. Read your daily LANL emails, and keep an eye out for cool things happening that you can go to (i.e. Bill Gates speaking) - If you can bring a car, do it. A road trip to New Mexico can be really fun, and it's useful for doing things around Los Alamos. You can get around ok without a car though. Make friends with people with cars.
5. There are a lot of good apartments in Los Alamos. I really liked living at Canyon Village – really nice apartments and landlord, within walking distance of the research park.
6. If you're religious, don't worry about finding a church. There's one for pretty much any denomination you could want.
7. Swing dancing, Wednesdays at the Canyon Village Clubhouse. If you want to do it, make it happen.
8. Go to Bob's Bodacious Barbeque. It truly is bodacious, and incredibly fast service.
9. Karaoke (Tuesdays at Pajarito's) is only fun if people sing.
10. Smith's Marketplace will change the way you view grocery stores. And Los Alamos.
11. Go to the Bradbury Museum at some point – you'll regret it if you don't (trust me).
12. If you only go to one of the free concerts, make sure it's Igor and the Red Elvises. You will be having fun.

Robert Klein, 2014

1. Live near the other students.
2. Take advantage of the outdoors.
3. Go to the Friday night concerts with friends.
4. Order parts early.

Hannah Ross, 2014

I know many other students have given similar advice, but I would like to emphasize again the amazing opportunities that living in Los Alamos presents for engaging in outdoor activities. I spent many weekends, and even afternoons after work, rock climbing, hiking, camping, backpacking, cycling, swimming, or running. We even went cliff jumping! And, many of these activities can be done nearby, from hiking the local canyon trails or the ski hill to rock climbing in White Rock. Take advantage of these opportunities at the beginning of the summer especially, before the project work gets too crazy!

Adam Gannon

1. The YMCA runs a summer special where you can sign up for 3 months at their student rate, so check that out.
2. Set up a regular meeting time with your mentor.
3. Reserve your housing early. No seriously, as soon as you possibly can.
4. Try to live with other students (LADSS or other LANL interns)
5. Read all your background material before you get to Los Alamos, Nine weeks goes by fast and its best to hit the ground running.

6. If you're a cyclist, bring your bike. There are tons of trails to ride if you have a mountain bike. Road cycling is good too (try climbing Pajarito Mountain) but don't expect anything to be flat for more than a mile.
7. Outdoor activities are the main form of entertainment in Northern New Mexico during the weekends. There are a lot to choose from! Make sure to bring some camping and hiking gear if you have any.

Cassidy Fisher, 2014

1. Get up early on a Thursday morning and hit up the Farmer's Market.
2. Try and get any big hikes like Wheeler or Lake Peaks done early in the summer before the storms start- there isn't any cover once you get to the top and the hail comes down hard.
3. Get on housing early and look and if you can find people in the program to room with.
4. Go to Monday night Trivia or Karaoke at the brewpub or start your own weekly event (we started a swing dancing group on Wednesday nights!).
5. Take advantage of the trail system in Los Alamos, the views from the different mesas are incredible.
6. The mentors are great resources for discussions about your future as well as help with your project.
7. Be prepared for some super late nights those last few weeks no matter how on top of things your group is throughout the summer.
8. Enjoy the incredible surroundings that are so unique! You'll be spending your summer with a great group of like-minded people and there are plenty of things around to help you make the most of it!

Kyle Embry, 2014

1. You can make some really great friends, and have one of your best summers yet here if you embrace it. Go on every weekend trip you can, and do your part to help plan them. Do some new things every week.
2. My favorite trip was a camping trip at Abiquiu Lake, where we went cliff diving, and visited Ghost Ranch. I'd recommend all of that highly.
3. We had pretty regular get-togethers on Wednesday and Friday nights, and I think that helped to keep the group close. Again, try to go to every social thing you can, the summer goes by fast and you'll miss these people by the end.
4. As for your project, try to sit down with your mentor early and get a few things defined, like the expected completeness level of your project, and the bounds of your project scope. They won't be able to give you an exact answer, but it's helpful to get a sense of these things as early as you can.
5. There are some really excellent lectures, guest speakers, and field trips, do your best to get as much as you can from them.

6. Your mentors are excellent resources for help, but remember that you are going to ultimately be responsible for the project. Enjoy that autonomy, and do your best to make something awesome.

Michelle Gegel, 2014

1. Create a Facebook group several months before the start of the program. One of the LADSS students thought to do this and almost everyone posted an introduction for themselves. I used this group to find an awesome roommate in mid-March and we started looking for housing in April.
2. Several of us ended up staying in Canyon Village Apartments and the clubhouse there is great for hosting game nights, swing dancing, and movies.
3. You can get a library card to check out movies for free, if Redbox doesn't cut it and you don't have Netflix.
4. Comcast internet is great and you can save a little money if you pick up a self-install kit in Santa Fe.
5. Several weeks out, e-mail your mentor (unless they've already contacted you) for recommended background material to study for your project, although you may not make sense of it until you actually start face-to-face discussions.
6. Bring any notes and books that you own and think might relate to your project.
7. Go around and meet all the other students on the first day -- don't be shy and put it off. The sooner you're all friends, the more fun you will have!
8. Find out and celebrate each others' birthdays.
9. Take lunch breaks with other students and eat outside.
10. Don't be afraid to ask for help from other students or mentors but also don't be afraid to try finding answers for yourself.
11. Absorb all of the great advice about grad school. Ask mentors, guest lecturers, and other students about their individual career paths.
12. Hardware doesn't always work the way you expect. Account time for ordering parts or fixing unexpected issues.
13. Although the equipment for each team was different, I used my laptop like crazy. Have a reliable laptop, find out if you can get free software from your school (e.g. Matlab), and install it on your machine.
14. There are so many spectacular hiking trails to hit after work in Los Alamos. You can find maps and updates on trail conditions at this website: <https://www.losalamosnm.us/parks/trails/Pages/LACTrailNet.aspx>. Plan to get back before dark!
15. Get a Smith's rewards card; it's the only grocery store in town and has all you could ever want. Why the self-checkout automation thanks you as a "loyal customer" (as if you could go anywhere else), I'll never understand.

16. Hike to Chimney Rock at Ghost Ranch; it's breathtaking. Then cool off in Lake Abiquiu nearby.
17. Use the local Friday-night concerts as an excuse to hang out.

Axel Haaker, 2014

1. Immediately after being accepted into the program start looking for housing in Los Alamos. Real estate is very expensive here, and you can easily get stuck paying \$600-\$700/month for a beaten up apartment.
2. Bring a fan! Most homes and apartments here do not have air conditioning, so it gets really hot. Also, the air conditioning in the lab spaces is turned off after hours, so it can get uncomfortable there as well.
3. Do what background research your mentor recommends before the program starts, so you can get started a bit faster.
4. Don't expect the summer school to be an 8-5 affair, or you're going to have a bad time.
5. Show up on time for the lectures, pay attention, and ask questions. A lot of the material is a review, but you will probably be surprised by something new. A lot of the lecture material is useful for the projects as well, so paying attention will pay off.
6. Bring a bike, and a pump. Los Alamos is a small city, and you can commute without much trouble. There are also a couple of good rides around here. For instance, starting in town, taking 501 south, then following 4 West to the Cerro Grande parking area and returning is a 25mi ride with about 2700ft of ascent. Also, I don't recommend going east on East Jemez road, there isn't a shoulder and the speed limit is high. There is another lane on the westbound side though, so it's not bad riding up the hill.
7. Expect it to rain at about 2:00pm every day in July.
8. Try to get enough sleep, you'll need it.
9. Don't make a habit of going out to eat. The restaurants are expensive (\$11+ a dish), but not very good.
10. Drop off your recyclables at the local high school on the west side of Diamond. Check the Los Alamos city website for details about what is recycled here.
11. Car pool when you can, or take the bus, it's free.

Kyle Brown, 2014

1. First, you will have a great experience if you do everything you can to OWN YOUR PROJECT. That means working hard, *especially* in the first few weeks, to learn everything you can about the project. Do a lot of background research/reading. Ask your mentor to explain things that you don't understand. Make sure that you really understand the scope. Every research project is different, but the best way to succeed and enjoy your project is really to become an expert on it as quickly as possible.

2. Second, LEARN. Don't just float. Ask questions during guest speaker presentations and lectures. If you are having trouble understanding a concept that pertains to your project. Ask your mentor about it.
3. Third, HAVE FUN. There are tons of awesome places near Los Alamos; you can go hiking, camping, rock-climbing, cliff-jumping, mountain biking, and it's all within a few hours of Los Alamos.

Jordan Thayer, 2014

1. Try to plan a hiking/camping excursion for the first weekend. This will allow you to bond with the other summer school students quickly!
2. Carpool with other students early in the program for the same reasons above.
3. Try and meet other students outside of the program. They will make your excursions/get-togethers even more fun!
4. Join a gym of some kind or find some activity to do during the week. It's fun to train in the high altitude, and others will usually want to join you!
5. Pay attention to the week-long lectures. Some of those concepts will surely become relevant to your project even if you don't expect it!
6. Start playing around with your sensors/instrumentation/code as early as possible to get used to how things work and debug! You will need all the extra time you can get.
7. Use all of the mentors and students as resources! Don't be afraid to ask others for help. Remember that the people around you all specialize in different topics. Use this to your advantage and learn everything you can!
8. Explore beyond Los Alamos (Santa Fe, Taos, Jemez Mountains) and even Northern New Mexico (Albuquerque, Colorado, Arizona). There are so many beautiful sights and fun activities within just a few hours!

Kaitlyn Kliewer, 2014

1. Go out of town and explore the area on the weekends, there are a lot of really great places to hike and camp around Los Alamos.
2. Bring your notes from classes with you.
3. You will meet wonderful people from all over the US, make an effort to hang out as a group outside of work, especially if people are living in different areas.
4. Go to the Friday night concerts at Ashely pond.
5. Santa Fe is a great city to visit/explore.
6. It can be challenging to find furnished short-term rent apartments, start looking early.
7. If you don't have a car, make friends with someone who has one.
8. The city buses, the atomic transit, are free and run during the weekdays and a great way to commute to work.

Jordan Jameson, 2013

1. Be sure to spend time with your team, working on your project and having fun. It is very important to have a good connection with those you are working with.
2. Live close to as many other LADSS students as possible. There were so many good times and adventures that we were able to experience together.
3. Take time to learn from the mentors and lecturers. These are incredibly intelligent people with vast amounts of experience in their fields and sometimes you can find information that will help with your project.
4. Travel around the area. Santa Fe has some great food and culture (be sure to try Maria's in Santa Fe). Taos is a beautiful area.
5. When you work on your project, try to absorb as much information as you can. This is a perfect time to try new ideas and learn from your teammates.
6. Get a feel for this experience, as it will prepare you for future research.
7. Free food and volleyball on Monday nights – you should go. It is lots of fun and the food is home-cooked.
8. If you're into Reubens (the sandwich), try the one that is served at Pajarito Grillpub. It's a delicious sandwich.
9. Any tour that you get a chance to experience, you should. Los Alamos National Lab is a top research facility, as is Sandia National Lab.

Cole Brubaker, 2013

1. Live with or near other LADSS students
2. Don't be afraid to try new things and step outside of your comfort zone; its amazing how much you can learn in just 9 weeks
3. Ask LOTS of questions
4. Talk to the guest lectures about their research and try to make good connections
5. Review all the literature provided by your mentor before you start the summer school
6. Plan trips with other students: Santa Fe (the Plaza and Canyon Road), Taos, Albuquerque, Jemez, Bandelier, hot springs, hiking, mountain biking, camping, etc.
7. Also, the Carlsbad Caverns are amazing and a great weekend trip if you're willing to make the drive. Get a group together and go, you won't disappointed
8. Monday night volleyball at the pit; free food, volleyball and the opportunity to meet other students working at LANL for the summer
9. Eating in Los Alamos: Chili Works, Pajarito Bar and Grill, El Parasol, Sonic milkshakes

Will Warren, 2013

Ask your mentor for the 3 publications that are most relevant to your research topic and take time to study them thoroughly (prior to arriving in NM). Fully understand these papers no later than week 2.

Nipun Gunawardena, 2013

1. Know how to use Linux, and be comfortable with the command line. You will almost undoubtedly use it during your time here.
2. Know a programming language other than MATLAB. I recommend Python.
3. It doesn't really matter whose name goes first on the conference paper.
4. You will probably pursue dead ends when doing research. Try not to get stuck in them.
5. If you get lost during the tutorials, don't feel too bad. There's a lot of information in them.
6. The guest lectures are awesome, pay attention to them. You will be expected to ask a question during them – don't worry about it, the questions will come naturally
7. Know the other LADSS students strengths – they're an invaluable resource if you need help.
8. Help other LADSS students.
9. On your presentations, make sure all aspects of your plots are readable from far away.
10. Expect and plan for delays due to safety approval. It's how the lab works, get used to it.
11. Take a lot of pictures (with a lab approved camera).
12. If you need new basic equipment (tools, electrical components, etc.), ask David. He will get them.
13. Stack Overflow is your friend.
14. Know how to solder.
15. Have fun.
16. Try to live with other LADSS students if possible. It makes everything more fun.
17. The Pajarito Brewpub and the Blue Window both have very good food.
18. The Comcast store on Diamond Drive can get you Internet.
19. Chili Works makes a very good burrito.
20. The YMCA is a great gym. It has everything.
21. There's good hiking and mountain biking nearby. Come prepared if you do those
22. Thunderstorms can come out of nowhere.
23. Travel! There's a lot of stuff to do if you're willing to drive a little. I highly recommend visiting Carlsbad Caverns.
24. The bakery by the high school has pretty tasty donuts.
25. If the church does volleyball on Monday nights, go to it. It's a good time.
26. Bring a rain jacket.
27. Don't drink too much.
28. Have fun.

David Goodman, 2013

1. Live with fellow LADSS students. The comradery is amazing and close friends are required to stay sane over long work weeks.
2. Venture out of Los Alamos! Taos and Santa Fe are worth the gas.

3. Chili Works is a must. Continue on Burrito Friday next year.
4. Take pictures of absolutely everything. At the end of the summer as you are preparing your final presentation those pictures will make everything easy.
5. Make slides as you go. Don't wait to your presentation to start making slides.
6. Get to know your mentors. They are all really nice people worth hanging out with.
7. Learn how to edit papers as a group and take criticism on writing. This papers you publish are collaborative and require teamwork to be successful.
8. Go to Toast Masters! Even though it is a little pain to walk all the way over there the public speaking practice really does help.
9. Be prepared to work through failures. Although it is stressful to have them happen when everything is on such a short timescale they are bound to happen. As David Mascarenas would say, "Push through."

Sheridan Smith, 2013

1. Be flexible: learn new things and don't get too set on one route for the project to take.
2. Go hang out with the other LADSS students during your free time; it will greatly improve your experience.
3. Stay open to advice, both from your mentors and other students
4. Have fun and learn stuff 😊
5. Try to take a few weekends to go out and explore New Mexico. This is a very unique place with some pretty amazing things to see and do.
6. Make sure you put a lot of effort into your project even if it is in a field you are unfamiliar with; you will be much more satisfied with the result even if it isn't quite what you expected.

Kelly Roland, 2013

1. Make sure that you thoroughly read through any and all background information that you get from your mentor(s). This will help you get up to speed in the first few weeks. Things ramp up really quickly, so you don't want to start off behind.
2. Get out of Los Alamos! There are tons of interesting things to see and do in the surrounding areas.
3. Go to Maria's in Santa Fe, the food is great.
4. Please, do not be afraid to ask for help. Ask your mentors, ask your teammates, ask the other students who aren't working on your project.
5. Throughout the course of your project, DOCUMENT EVERYTHING. You'll need it when you're writing the paper.

Ben Winter, 2013

1. If possible travel to Santa Fe and eat at the Plaza Cafe (Restaurant).

2. Definitely go to the museums in Santa Fe as well as the Bradbury Museum here in Los Alamos.
3. The town is wonderful and there is a lot to do in and around Los Alamos, but try to go to the Friday night concerts at Ashley Pond.
4. The whole experience (education/research/mentoring/coding/tours) was amazing so I recommend getting to know all of the mentors and about their research!

Sarah Dalton, 2011

1. Read up on literature and theory related to your project before you get to LANL. It will really help speed your project along, and impress your mentor!
2. Live in an area with a bunch of other LADSS students.
3. Take in as much in as your brain allows you to. You probably won't have this many experts in the area at your fingertips again in your life. So ask questions when you have them, and often!
4. Make sure someone has a car. There are a lot of good day trips within driving distance.
 - White water rafting/ floating or tubing the Rio Grande near Taos.
 - Shopping in Taos and Santa Fe.
 - Bandelier, Valles Caldera, and Jemez National Parks.
 - Natural Hot Springs.
 - Wineries.
5. There are a lot of good hiking trails in Los Alamos. My favorite was Cave of the Winds.
6. Get to love red and green chilies. They are a New Mexico staple.
7. Eat at:
 - El Parasol, Hilltop Diner, and Chili Works in town.
 - Maria's and Santa Fe Baking Co in Santa Fe.
8. New Mexico has issues serving alcohol to people with a vertical ID, even if you are older than 21. So if you plan on getting a drink with dinner and have a vertical ID, make sure you bring your passport with you to use.

Trevor Avant, 2011

1. Make plans in case of a wildfire evacuation.
2. Try to live with other LADSS students.
3. Go hiking in the Jemez Mountains.
4. Walk around Santa Fe.
5. The Rail Runner goes between Albuquerque and Santa Fe and is \$3 for a student.

Lisa Monahan, 2011

1. Try to live around other students (LADSS or other LANL students).
2. Create a dinner group with other students.

3. Try to travel around the area on weekends - great hiking all over the area.
4. If you wind up in Santa Fe, try the Santa Fe Baking Company.

Rose Long, 2011

1. Choose your project wisely. You will be married to it for 9 weeks.
2. Completely read the background material, twice. Even if you do not understand it.
3. Research the guest lecturers before they come so you have an idea of what they will talk about/if you want to study under them. The school is great for networking. Use it!
4. Review translating between the frequency and time domains. Laplace transform. Z transform. Review one and multiple degree of freedom models. Review analogs between mechanical and electrical systems. Bring your Dynamics textbook and notes.
5. Have a plan in case something happens. This involves sharing phone numbers with everyone (make a telephone list or tree) before the first weekend. Have somewhere to stay in case there is an evacuation. Have Jutta's number (663-5649). Register for the Los Alamos emergency notification system.
6. Go on all the tours and ask people to see their labs if you can. The Laboratory has a lot of really interesting science going on. Don't miss the Sandia tour.
7. You will be tempted to travel during the weekends. I encourage you to climb Wheeler Peak (if you are fit), go to the Spanish Market in Santa Fe, and go to Carlsbad (worth the drive). In Los Alamos, go to the Friday night concerts (especially the Red Elvis's if they come) and explore the trails.
8. If you don't have a car, bring a bike.
9. The library (town) is of very high quality here. Books on anything you need.
10. Go to the free food and volleyball at the corner of Canyon and Central every Monday (across from the aquatic center). The food is great.

Noel Spurgeon, 2011

1. Do some group bonding. Even if it's just going out to lunch or something, knowing about your group members and making the effort to get along will make your life a lot easier.
2. Split up work. If you feel like you're doing too much, say so.
3. Communicate. Tell each other if something's not going well, or not working out. It prevents a lot of fights later.
4. Have a good naming convention for your data files. Something that seems like it would be helpful at the time can get confusing if you're trying to find a specific data run out of 50 different files.
5. Don't get discouraged. Sometimes, things happen (like the mountains catching on fire) that blow your plans out of the water. It's okay. You'll be fine.
6. Listen to the comments you get on your presentation! Actually, listen to all of the mentor's comments in general.

7. Hang out with your fellow LADSS students on the weekends. Plan trips. They're cool people, and you should get to know them, even if you don't live near them.
8. Go explore Los Alamos. There's a lot to do here: the concerts, farmer's market, hiking, whitewater rafting, and more. If you're bored, you're not looking hard enough.
9. Bring your notes. Bring your notes. BRING YOUR NOTES. They'll save you a lot of time trying to decipher Wikipedia articles.
10. Join a dinner group. You don't want to eat the same thing every day for a week.
11. Santa Fe is a groovy place. You should visit at least once. Try to go there when there's some kind of fair or festival going on, because it's even better. Also, the Blue Corn Café and India Palace are delicious.
12. Try a breakfast burrito and at least one thing covered in green chili.
13. Sometimes you just need to have a five-minute dance party. Don't question it.
14. Have fun and keep a sense of humor while you're working. When you get frustrated, it can make things a lot better.
15. Don't be afraid to be yourself. We're all weird.
16. Have periodic group meetings to check up on everyone's progress. Having an actual agenda is pretty helpful.

Jenni Rinker, 2011

1. There are free concerts Friday nights at the parks. They're fun, you should go.
2. You need to go to the post office to register yourself to get mail. It's free and worth it.
3. The buses around Los Alamos are free and run M-F. They're a great way to get to work.
4. The library has lots of books and movies, and you can register for free.
5. One person's Smith's card can service up to 3 people because they give you extras.
6. There are Ultimate Frisbee Monday and Wednesday evenings at upper Pueblo field at 6 pm.
7. Free movies in the park Wednesday nights.
8. Student BBQ at Urban Park Monday nights.
9. Get your mini-project done first and fast. Don't spend more than three days on the whole thing, and make them the earliest three days possible.
10. Planning is good. You will run out of time.
11. GET HOUSING EARLY. Or you may end up overpaying to live 45 minutes away without running water.

Ezra Jampole, 2011

1. Have a roommate. It makes free time (there will be a lot of it) much more exciting.
2. Do things on the weekends. Between rafting, hiking, rock hunting, cliff jumping, and sky diving, there are a lot of things you just can't do elsewhere.
3. Bring your notes from school. They will save you a lot time on Google and Wikipedia.

4. If you play an instrument, bring it. They are an endless source of entertainment.
5. If you have a car, bring it. Else you will be helpless.
6. Play basketball Sundays at 3 at the high school. The locals can be pretty competitive.
7. Get a YMCA membership. It is dirt-cheap.
8. Eat the chicken fingers and potato wedges from the grocery store. They are cheap but delicious.
9. Create a dinner group in which everyone cooks for the others once a week. It is a great way to socialize while eating well and cheap.
10. Go places other than Los Alamos. Santa Fe is okay, Albuquerque at least resembles a real city, and Denver is far but will make you feel less homesick if you come from a place like Boston or New York. If you only stay in Los Alamos, you will be bored out of your mind.

Ryan Menefee, 2011

1. Find housing early. If you wait too long, you might end up living in Jemez. The Caldera is pretty, but it's a ways away from the Laboratory.
2. Get a Smith's card. It's the only grocery store in town.
3. Stay on top of your project, because you never know when a wildfire might sneak up on you. A week or two of lost time hurts.
4. Be sure to pay attention during the lectures. They will usually have something applicable to your project.

Michael Martin, 2010

1. Housing may be a problem, search online and find a house, preferably.
2. Definitely turn paperwork in on time to prevent registration and work complications.
3. Talk to the mentors about graduate school.
4. Enjoy the outdoor activities happening in Los Alamos; there is a ton to do here. Bring camping and climbing equipment if possible.
5. Works on the project diligently, 9 weeks go by very fast. If your project requires people outside of LADSS, be sure to constantly be in contact.
6. Try to learn as much as possible from the lectures, there is a lot of material, but it is presented by some of the best.
7. Be respectful and thank the mentors for their time.

Abraham Light-Marquez, 2010

1. Start your project early and work diligently; 9 weeks go by in a flash.
2. Hang out with the other students; it will make your time spent more enjoyable.
3. If you're a golfer, try to get out and play Black Mesa; it's a bit expensive but it is worth it.
4. There are lots of outdoor activities (soccer, ultimate Frisbee, tennis, volleyball), and the people are very friendly. Get involved.

5. Make housing arrangements early or you're going to regret it.
6. Go to an Isotopes baseball game; the stadium is awesome.
7. Try to visit Carlsbad Caverns, it's a long trip but it's one of the most amazing natural phenomena in the world.
8. Talk to Gyuhae as much as possible he'll make you laugh every time.

Ramon Silva, 2010

1. Find a place to live early!!!!!!
2. Bring a road/mountain bike. All the cool people do it!
3. Enjoy the outdoors! Bring gear to rock climb, hike, camp, and backpack with.
4. Having a car makes things easier, but isn't required in my opinion.
5. Carry an umbrella all the time! Trust me on this...

Lucas Chavez, 2010

1. Get a place to live as quickly as possible.
2. There are lots of outdoor opportunities. Make sure to bring all your equipment.
3. There is no Wal-Mart, so plan accordingly. The closest one is in Espanola (20-minute drive).
4. Urban Park has a good volleyball court.
5. A Facebook group will help when planning our activities.
6. Try to get things done as soon as possible, because the last day of work will sneak up on you.
7. Go to all the planned activities.
8. Explore the trails of Los Alamos - they are amazing.
9. For those who rock climb, the only indoor wall is at the YMCA.
10. There are great outdoor climbing places in Los Conchas and White Rock.

Daniel Easton, 2010

1. Get to work early on your project, and, if you are held up, consider a change of direction.
2. Go rock climbing outdoors, or start at the YMCA and then go outdoors.
3. Try to bring a car. But if you can't, you'll always be able to get a lift from someone else.
4. Go camping, hiking, take trips, leave town on the weekend. Vegas 4th of July!
5. Play football (soccer) on Tuesdays or Thursdays. Watch out for the old guys – they are better than you.
6. Sort out accommodation early; don't wait around. It's a bit of a mad dash.

Elizabeth Cross, 2010

1. The dress code at the Laboratory is very casual, shorts and a t-shirt every day are fine, so don't bother bringing any suits. Instead you should pack moisturizer, it is really dry up in Los Alamos and your skin will suffer.

2. Sort your housing out as early as you can, there are a lot of students here in the summer and it's small town.
3. Be patient in the first week, there is a lot of not too fun training to get through, but it is necessary.
4. Bring your MP3 player; you will need it, as you'll most likely be in the office a lot.
5. The library has a bookshop that sells old books for 50 cents, or occasionally gives them away for free.
6. Come a few days early if you can and sort your Internet out. Comcast is only open during work hours.
7. If you're going to do the night hike don't drink too much before hand, it's hard to suppress the giggles.

Alex Schlichting, 2010

1. Reserve your housing ASAP, things will disappear fast.
2. Don't live in Iris street apartments if you want a clean/good kitchen and bathroom.
3. Take the higher rent over a place that wont pro-rate and will charge you for all of the month of August.
4. Make sure you turn in all necessary documents to ensure you're on the right pay scale ASAP; going to grad school makes a difference, too.
5. Get a Smith's Card - it's free.
6. Take the Atomic Shuttle to work and back, it's always on time.
7. Be proactive in doing your work and thinking of things to do that your mentor doesn't tell you to do, a few setbacks can leave you with nothing in the end.
8. If all the people in the program, who don't live together, eat lunch together and do stuff together outside of work, work hours will be more fun.
9. If you are not an outdoor person, at least give it a try, otherwise, you will miss out on group activities and will find yourself sitting around watching TV while everyone else is camping or doing something fun.

Clinton Carlson, 2010

1. The biggest piece of advice that I can offer is that an overwhelming feeling is okay. I thought that I had plenty of knowledge in structural dynamics when I arrived in Los Alamos, but I quickly realized that one class was not enough. If you are worried that you are way behind everybody at the school, stop worrying. Ask questions and talk to the mentors and guest speakers and you will learn a lot.
2. Make sure that you do activities with the other students no matter what it is. That way you make friends and get to tell all your jealous friends back home about what you did. For example, mud volleyball.

3. Look for housing very early. There aren't too many places to live in Los Alamos and those places fill up quickly when all the students start coming here for the summer. You could rely on a lot of luck, but I wouldn't recommend it.
4. Take any athletic activities easy for the first two weeks. You will notice the change in elevation. Once you are accustomed to the elevation, take advantage of all the outdoor activities that are here in Los Alamos. Make sure to drink a lot of water, too. And use sunscreen no matter what.
5. Go to Ruby K's. That is a really good breakfast restaurant.
6. Don't pay attention to the sheet that has acceptable forms of identification. Bring your driver's license and passport or official copy of your birth certificate. You can get by with your driver's license and social security card the first day, but you need your passport or birth certificate to get your badge. They don't have any sympathy for you.
7. Have a camera.

Daisy Zheng, 2010

1. Bring casual clothes for work! Even if you want to dress up, keep in mind that in some of the labs only jeans and tennis shoes pass the safety rules.
2. Get a Smith's card. I'm serious. It's like the center of town.
3. Bring sports equipment if you're outdoorsy. There will definitely be a large amount of students here who are interested in anything you want to do.
4. Ask as many questions as you can to your mentors, they're the best resources here.
5. Have fun! This summer school has some of the coolest, intelligent people you'll ever meet.

Colin Haynes, 2010

1. Make an effort to hang out with the other interns. There's plenty to do in the Los Alamos area and it's always more fun with good company.
2. Bring your favorite sporting equipment—it will come in handy.
3. For those of you who golf, play Black Mesa golf course. It is worth every penny.
4. Make housing arrangements early.
5. Take pride in and ownership of your project. You will have a more satisfying and successful summer school experience if you do.
6. Portable music players (or at least headphones) are strongly recommended.

Alexandra Sobin, 2010

1. If you like coffees... get a coffee card at Hot Rocks Java Cafe right away. You will find yourself going there more than you think.
2. Bring all of your camping equipment with you from home. It's worth the haul so you have everything for weekend trips without having to borrow from others.

3. Try rock-climbing at least once outside with the Rock-Climbing Club at LANL. Even if you don't like it, at least you can say you've tried it and it's a great place to socialize and make new friends.
4. Walk around the Farmer's Market in Los Alamos (Thursdays) + Santa Fe (Saturdays) and the Flea Market (Saturdays) between the two towns. People watching and just bumming around shopping is great there.
5. Take advantage of the hiking around Los Alamos. There are a lot of good hikes just minutes away.
6. The YMCA is a great place to work out and also rock-climb indoors. It's pretty cheap for young adults. Take advantage of the fun classes, they are a blast!
7. If you can, try to gather people up for weekend adventures camping, hot springs, hiking, rock-climbing, etc.
8. And last but not least, always get a jump-start on your project and ask LOTS of questions to your mentor (that's what they are there for!!).

Dustin Harvey, 2010

1. Take care of housing as soon as you know you are coming. There are a lot of students in Los Alamos over the summer, which is great, but housing fills up.
2. Spend time with your peers outside of work. They're pretty cool.
3. Lastly, take advantage of all the outdoor activities in northern New Mexico. It's all here: climbing, hiking, sports, cycling, backpacking, etc.
4. If you have the chance to spend a summer in Los Alamos and work at LANL, don't miss it!

Scott Ouellette, 2010

1. It is beneficial to be outgoing and try to make friends with your fellow students. LANL brings in hundreds of students each summer for internship/research opportunities, and most of these students are willing to hang out, go hiking/camping, play sports, etc.
2. The altitude can be a difficult transition at first. Drink lots of water and try to do some cardiovascular exercise on a regular basis. Before you know it, you'll feel great and be in amazing shape when you return home.
3. A brief review of how and why the lab (LANL) came to be, and some of the notable figures (J.R. Oppenheimer, R.P. Feynman, H.A. Bethe, Gen. L. Groves, etc.) who made significant contributions to its success is a good start towards understanding the unique environment in which you will be working.
4. Cooperate with your team! Very rarely will one student know how to do every task involved in the research project. Try to divide the work evenly, but work together on important tasks (e.g. presentations or the conference paper). Consult your teammates first if you have any questions, your mentor is here for guidance, not solutions. A weekly 'To-do' list is very useful for staying on-track with project objectives.

5. Don't wait for your mentor to hold your hand throughout the project. There is not enough time in the program to wait for step-by-step instructions. Also, don't be afraid to suggest new ideas or try new things. That's why we are here, to experiment and learn.
6. On every project-related email you should always 'cc' these people: Dr. Farrar, your mentor, and your teammates.
7. Be appreciative of how hard the mentors and administrative staff work to make your life easier.

Stephen Neidigk, 2010

1. Find a place to live as early as possible. Places fill up fast.
2. Take advantage of the taxi service that any LANL employee can use.
3. Expect delays in your project, so start as early as you can. We had unforeseen issues in our project that took more time to research and implement than the project itself.

Unfortunately, no surveys are available for 2009!

Walter Kruse, 2008

1. If you get accepted, get all your hiring paperwork done right away. Read through the acceptance letter CAREFULLY and make sure you take care of everything early. If you don't get your paperwork in on time, you'll be delayed in getting your badge, getting training, and starting your project. That said, the HR people at LANL are pretty friendly, so don't be afraid to call in if you have questions about the paperwork or where you need to send stuff.
2. To my knowledge, there is not a single residential building in all of Los Alamos with air conditioning. Bottom line, leave the sweaters at home, and get yourself a fan.
3. Try to move in a few days before the summer school starts. It's nice to have some time to get settled in and get to know everybody before you get into all the work.
4. Los Alamos gets a good bit of rain in the summer. Bring a raincoat or an umbrella.
5. If you're coming from a place at sea level, you'll probably feel pretty tired as you adjust to the altitude. You'll be fine in about two weeks. If you feel sick all the time or start passing out, see a doctor.
6. Public transit to and from the Laboratory is pretty reliable. If you don't bring a car or a bike, get a brochure for the bus system.
7. If you want to go out to eat or buy something, go early. This town is officially closed after 8:00 PM (except for the bars, the grocery store, and the gas stations).
8. It's really hard to work on a project all day long when you're tired. Get some sleep. (You probably won't, but trust me, it helps).
9. If you see a tour you want to go on, SIGN UP AS SOON AS YOU SEE THE ANNOUNCEMENT! They fill up in about a billionth of a second.

10. Hang out with people. Go to the cookouts/socials the mentors put on. Go to the LANL Student Association events. Sing karaoke at the Canyon. HAVE SOME FUN.
11. Call Pete Avitable 'Grandpa Pete' if you want him to go to the bar with you. If he puts on a cookout, BE THERE. We had a great time with Pete.
12. Don't aggravate Gyuhae Park, or else he'll kill you (or at least threaten to). But seriously, he's a great guy. Even if he's not your mentor, you can ask him about or for anything. He helped just about all the teams with something or another at our summer school.
13. All the mentors will help you with your project if you need it. Everybody's really approachable, and they all want to see you succeed. It helps to remember what mentors have which specialties.
14. Stay focused on your project, get things done early, ask for help as much as you like, and keep your lab notebook up to date. You're going to have a hard enough time getting your project done as it is without forgetting what your test setup looked like or misplacing all your test data.

Ryan Hodge, 2008

1. Figure out housing early and make sure it is clear how much you are paying and for what months you are responsible for paying.
2. If your apartment comes with cable TV, it's easiest to get Internet by visiting the local Comcast office on Diamond Dr. and they will give you a kit that has the modem and everything you need (mine was \$38/month). It might be cheaper to do online but may be quite a hassle, because the landlord is in charge of the account. Look up the office in the yellow pages because it's not on Comcast's website.
3. Bring your car if you like the independence to run around whenever you want.
4. There are cops everywhere, so don't speed in town.
5. The car wash is on Knecht St. off of Trinity next to McDonald's.
6. The dress at work is casual so you can wear shorts all summer but you need close-toed shoes for the lab.
7. Get webcams if you have a girlfriend/boyfriend.
8. Bring a fan or buy one because the apartments do not come with A/C (though it's really not too bad).

Molly Nelis, 2008

1. Chili Works has the best Breakfast Burritos, and learn how to make your own, too.
2. Visit the Jemez Mountains; there are hot springs, jumping cliffs, wilderness camping, and great climbing all in a couple of miles.
3. If you want to climb in White Rock, go early (7am) and wear tons of sunscreen, or go late (4pm) and climb in the shade.

4. There are online climbing guides for all of the local crags, so print them out at work so you know what you are getting yourself into.
5. If you are a roadie, the town is pretty bike friendly. It is tough to find rides that are not hilly, but it isn't tough to ride 15-20 miles and still stay in town.
6. If you volunteer at the beginning of the summer to belay once a week, you get a free membership at the YMCA. It is the best deal for getting to use the climbing wall and all the other aspects of the Y.

Trevor Collins, 2008

1. Take the tram up the mountain if in Albuquerque.
2. Climb a 14000'+ peak in Southern Colorado and have a dark beer at the top.
3. See the Lisa Kristine photo gallery in Santa Fe.
4. Check out Los Conchas for sport climbing and cliff jumping nearby.
5. Know that all the mentors are top notch. A few of the speakers are tremendous.
6. Join the YMCA for the gym because the Laboratory gym is not adequate.
7. Buy a 10-pack at the aquatic center and swim a few workouts to get your lungs in shape.

Andrew Reich, 2008

1. Try to set a realistic, focused goal early in the project. It will make it much easier if you have some direction to begin with.
2. Climb Wheeler and Blanca Peaks, and have a Roswell Alien Amber on the top.
3. Hit up the VFW. The beer is better, colder, and cheaper than the Canyon, and the TVs and pool tables are nicer.
4. Make Chuck host a BBQ. In fact, make him host 2 BBQs, he owes us.
5. Sing YMCA at the Canyon on Thursday nights, and choreograph it. Look for the Legend (you'll know him) and watch out for Admiral Angstrom.
6. Try to live near everyone else. It makes the nights a lot more fun.
7. Have a good time and relax; this place can be awesome if you let it.

Chris Warren, 2008

1. Drive out from wherever you are. Having a car to get around is priceless. There are so many amazing things outside Los Alamos that you need a car to get to. Also, the experience of the road trip is worth it, especially if they're going to reimburse you for your travel expenses. Assuming your car doesn't break down, you can end up making a few bucks in the process.
2. Definitely try to live all together in the same building and try to coordinate some cookouts. The mentors do a decent job getting you all together, but it usually takes a few weeks.
3. Make sure that when you go down to Santa Fe that you walk along Canyon Road. The galleries there are amazing. An artist said that SF has the 4th largest original art market,

only after New York City, Chicago, and Paris. Just be warned: the work is ridiculously expensive for a college student's income.

4. The pool tables at the Canyon are free on Wednesday nights. They have a poker tournament there every week that night, too.
5. Karaoke on Thursday nights at the Canyon is epic.
6. Climb a 14er. There is a bunch in southern Colorado within 3-4 hours of Los Alamos. Blanca was a fun climb, and if you camp at Lake Como (@ 11.7k feet), you can hit up Ellingwood, too. Make sure that you summit before noon, because precipitation usually sets in after that. We didn't camp at Como, so we did over 6,000 feet vertical (that's just up) and 15 miles round trip in a day (the base is @ 8k feet). The view was amazing, as were the mountain meadows and lakes. For more info, check out <http://www.14ers.com>.

Luke Amer, 2008

1. Do not be afraid if you have a limited background in structural dynamics. All the lectures are conducted at a level comprehensible to anyone with very little mechanical engineering background.
2. Do not spend too much time working on the mini-project. The temptation can be there to try getting it perfect; but is much more important to do well on the main project.
3. Start as early as you can on the main project; with morning and afternoon lectures it can seem like you have almost no time within a given day. The earlier you start working, the more complete your project will be in the end.
4. Spanish Market in Santa Fe is the last weekend in July. It is definitely one of the most culturally diverse and unique events you will ever attend.
5. All the mentors are completely approachable and informative; if ever in doubt with something, just ask.
6. If you are into running, swimming, or cycling, talk to Chuck. He will definitely inform you about what Los Alamos has to offer in each area.

Megan O'Brien, 2007

You really don't have much time here (it goes by quickly), and this place is filled with different things to see and do. Try to get out and do something new every weekend, especially with the other students. Cabezon Peak is an amazing hike/climb, and cliff diving is certainly worth a try, at least once! Also, don't be afraid to talk to people or ask questions: your mentors, fellow students, and other Laboratory employees can give you unique insight about graduate school or career options. It's definitely a great opportunity to expand your knowledge and abilities, as well as make connections for the future.

Erik Moro, 2007

The LADSS program is a fantastic way to explore exciting opportunities in cutting edge engineering career pathways. Make sure to talk to your mentor, your guest lecturers, and anyone you run into at the Laboratory if you are looking for help with your project, a fresh perspective, or advice on grad school and life decisions. These people, aside from being really intelligent, are your friends and they are here to help you whenever they can. Try to hit the ground running with your project, because the summer will go by all too quickly and you are going to want to have some sort of end result which you can reflect on with feelings of pride and contentedness as opposed to terror and remorse!

Northern New Mexico is a unique part of the country, and especially if you are not from the area you should use your free time, especially your weekends, to do as much exploring as you can. Make some friends in your program right away and use these excursions as an opportunity to get to know them better. You'll be surprised how much your fellow students have in common with you. Bring some good hiking or camping gear if you have it (especially good hiking shoes/sandals) and if you can afford to bring a car, do so. It is really useful having a car down here, and it makes exploring that much easier to do (not mentioning how much it helps with packing).

All in all, do your best to balance a challenging job with all the adventure Los Alamos has to offer and you will have a blast!

Stephen Schnelle, 2007

1. Go to Bandelier Monument and see the Native American ruins. The Tsankawi section of Bandelier is cool, but the Falls Trail wasn't that spectacular if you have seen waterfalls before.
2. The Church in Chimayo is awesome!
3. Play volleyball at Urban Park. Although the sand's a little rocky, the court is nice.
4. If you are looking for the Natural Arch trail, it is a sharp climb and not an obvious trail. If you start climbing a mountain with a lot of not-so-steep switchbacks, you're probably on the ski hill trails instead.
5. The Laundromat near the apartments is very expensive.

Bill Cash, 2007

1. Get out hiking there's a lot of great things to see around Los Alamos.
2. Make friends and hang out with the other students as much as possible.
3. There isn't as much time to work on the project as you may think. Start working on it early.
4. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
5. Camping at White Sands is amazing.

6. Avoid Roswell and its UFO museum.
7. Book a real caving trip at Carlsbad. Make sure you do it a month or more in advance.
8. Go wine tasting at the vineyard in Ponderosa and swim at the Soda Dam on the way back.
9. Climb Baldy or Wheeler.
10. Watch an Isotopes game and ride the aerial tramway in Albuquerque.

David Burt, 2007

1. The Badging Office needs you to bring a proof of citizenship (original Birth Certificate or Passport).
2. Start doing and planning activities with the other summer school students from day one. On weekends, go on hikes and climbs, and visit the nearby cities. Ask the people at the Laboratory, especially former students if any are around, about places of interest.
3. Bring hiking gear if you have some. If you don't, consider buying some (a camelback is one of the best investments you can make). New Mexico is a great place for enjoying the outdoors.
4. Get to know the mentors and the guest speakers, they have great knowledge to share and are also great contacts for the future.

George Khoury, 2007

1. The eight weeks go by really fast, try to enjoy it and experience the area in your spare time.
2. If you're over 21 and still have a vertical ID (like I did) strongly consider bringing a passport or getting a new license. I wasn't able to get into many bars due to this annoying law.
3. Get to know your teammates early on, contact them once you find out whom you're working with. You will be working with them for the next few weeks, and a good group dynamic will help a lot. The project may not go as planned, but it will work itself out, as long as you stay focused. Don't be afraid to ask the mentors for help or advice. Everybody dresses very casually to work. You won't need to bring anything very dressy, most of the groups dressed up for the final presentation, though.
4. You will get to know all the other students in the program (and probably some students outside the program as well). As everybody will tell you, plan activities such as parties, dinners, cookouts, sporting events (soccer and sand volleyball were pretty big our year), and hiking trips.
5. Bring hiking boots (and hiking socks as well), plan to go on a couple of trips, I really enjoyed going to Mt Baldy and Mt Wheeler. Both are daylong trips (and could include camping as well), but reaching the summit is great. Try to visit Carlsbad and go caving, keep in mind that you'll need to reserve way in advance.
6. Albuquerque is a bit of a drive away, but there are a couple of things to see. We checked out the Sandia Peak Tram (which would have also made a good hiking trail) and watched an Isotopes baseball game, all of which was a lot of fun.

7. There are a bunch of restaurants in town. Some good ones include China Moon Buffet, The Pyramid Café, and Bob's Bodacious Barbecue.

Daniel Whisler, 2007

Do not be afraid to stop and ask questions if you have any concerns or require clarification on the material. All the mentors are very nice and willing to help you prepare for a successful summer and hopefully, graduate school as well. The lectures are often a little longer than the typical hour classroom lectures, so pace yourself and do not fall asleep in class. I would also recommend trying all the summer activities arranged by the student association and arranging your own travels with fellow students, as it can make the stay much more enjoyable. A Smith's card will save you quite a bit of cash while you are staying at the apartments.

Sebastian Guerrero, 2007

1. Setbacks and problems are an inevitable part of research.
2. Utilize your mentors' knowledge and experience.
3. Keep good records of everything and develop a filing method to store files on the computer.
4. Distribute work equitably and get all team members involved in all decisions and project stages.
5. Partake in activities outside of work with other students.
6. Get to know the area. There are a lot of cool things to do around.
7. Get a YMCA subscription if you like to exercise.
8. Go to Ponderosa winery.
9. There are lots of hiking trails.