I interned at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) for the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) department. Choosing UNC for my internship was one of the best decisions of my college career! This internship challenged me to learn by shadowing, performing tasks that required teamwork, and learning things by getting out and doing them all on my own. The main areas of focus were:

- Occupational Safety
- Environmental Compliance
- Laboratory Safety
- Fire Safety
- Waste Management
- Health Services
- Emergency Preparedness and Management

Most of the internship required communicating with people outside of the EHS department. I had the opportunity to interact with the facilities staff at UNC, the Weld County Health Department, the CDPHE, the Greeley Fire Department, the UNC and Greeley police department, and faculty and staff from almost every building around campus. These interactions included trainings (both EHS conducting training and receiving training), inspections, and responding to calls that related to health and/or safety concerns on campus.

The best part of the internship was the field experience that I gained. A large percent of the internship was spent outside of the office and each day was different than the last because of the wide scope of health and safety that the department covers. The highlights of this included participating in active shooter training with the police and fire department, fire extinguisher training with the fire department, laboratory safety inspections, and picking up pig organs from a lab as waste to be disposed of at a local crematorium. In addition to the field work, over the course of this internship I assisted in writing and putting together the quarterly newsletter, the annual Oil and Public Safety report, a mold awareness PowerPoint, and the Universal Waste Management Plan update.

This internship proves that Environmental Health is not just hard core science all day every day as it may feel like in some college courses. For anyone who takes this internship in the future, the best advice I can give is to have an open mind and be willing to assist any task you get offered to do. Being an intern at UNC and working with the wonderful boss and coworkers that I did gave me experience to learn in a setting other than a classroom or looking information up on the internet. It also gave me many great networking opportunities, which is something all EH students should take advantage of when they have a chance because it really is about who you know rather than what you know. My boss at UNC has taught me that even if you don’t know a single thing about a certain topic, as long as you are willing to learn and work hard, you will eventually get it and it will be rewarding.