This past year I had the pleasure of interning at Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing & Academic Resource Center or BioMARC. BioMARC is a contract manufacturing organization, owned and operated by CSU. BioMARC produces biopharmaceutical products for non-clinical, clinical, or commercial use under BSL-3 and BSL-2 containment. Within BioMARC I had the opportunity to intern in their Environmental Health/Biosafety (EB) Department.

During my time at BioMARC I learned about current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP), Good Documentation Practices (GDP), Good Laboratory Practices (GLP), ISO 7 and ISO 8 support room gowning, BSL2/BSL3 training and laboratory and biosafety procedures.

For my internship I performed various tasks which included auditing BioMARC’s labs to assess that chemicals were properly stored, labeled, and handled correctly. I made sure that all chemicals had a Safety Data Sheet available. Also, I worked in conjunction with the Purchasing and Receiving Department to formulate a plan to receive biohazardous materials that may need BSL-2 or BSL-3 supervision properly among many other tasks.

Under the supervision of my mentor, Dr. Heaslip, my main responsibility during this opportunity was to plan, develop, and implement a Near Miss Program to investigate near misses that may occur in the BSL-2 or BSL-3 laboratories. The fact that I was in the forefront of developing and implementing a program to improve workplace/laboratory safety was a great experience, that took some time to perfect. The Near Miss Program that was developed is comprised of six steps which included the notification of a near miss and steps to successfully conduct an investigation to determine the best method to mitigate the reoccurrence of the near miss. A priority level of 1-3 was developed to assess the severity and reoccurrence properties to handle the near miss properly.

It was fun to be in the leader of a program/project and be an active entity in the planning, developing, and implementation of it. Not only was I given the opportunity to develop and implement a program but I was also given the opportunity to watch it grow and be an active part of everyday operations at BioMARC.

Interning for BioMARC did not only provide me with unique training and responsibilities but it also helped me improve my leadership skills and be able to educate personnel on workplace safety. As we know for every couple near misses that go unreported, major incidents arise and as these rise the possibility of injury or death arise. Remember report those near misses 😊.