This past summer and fall semester I had the pleasure of completing a research based internship with an ergonomics lab on campus at Colorado State University. This research lab is part of the Mountains and Plains Education Research Center (MAPERC), a program that encompasses ergonomics, industrial hygiene, occupational health psychology and health physics (to name a few) with the overarching goal to improve worker health and safety. This internship exposed me to different projects and faculty in the MAPERC and prepared me for graduate school with this program starting Spring 2016.

This internship provided me with a diverse range of activities; from writing to conferences to field visits. I started out working with a PhD student on his dissertation about muscle activity levels in dairies. The ergonomics lab sent me to Dallas, Texas where I attended an enormous conference by the American Society of Safety Engineers. There I saw seminars about the ergonomics behind F-35 production and safe playground design. Next I went to Brookings, South Dakota to work with a graduate student study efficiency in dairy parlors.

Throughout this internship I toured various industries with the lab to learn about health and safety in companies and survey potential future projects. I spent a lot of time at Odell Brewing Company looking at their efficiency in certain components of the brewing process. I toured the slaughterhouse at JBS in Greeley (that was very graphic day), I saw how they make the machines that make cans at Stolle Machinery, steel production services at Cargill Steel, and fuel governors at Woodward.

This whole time I was also learning how to use Xsens Technologies. This Dutch company does 3D motion tracking technology used in animation and physiology research. In the fall I went to Seattle University to present about CSU’s application of this motion capture tool at the Xsens First Annual North American Users Conference.

Overall this was an exciting internship that exposed me to many different areas of ergonomics and safety. I can’t wait to do more with these projects and companies in the future as a graduate student in the ergonomics program.