2026 Summer Internships for Undergraduates

About the Water and Life Interface Institution (WALII, pronounced "Wally"): WALII studies how life interacts with water, from the molecular to the organismal level, across plants, fungi, and animals. WALII is a virtual institute, with scientists located at 11 research facilities across the United States. Working together, WALII team members aim to uncover the rules by which organisms interact with water, exploring four integrated themes: 1) the physical and molecular determinants that allow organisms to survive in the solid state; 2) rehydration responses in desiccation-tolerant and -sensitive systems; 3) the molecular grammar of desiccation tolerance conferred by intrinsically disordered proteins; and 4) the short- and long-term evolutionary history of desiccation tolerance. WALII team members have diverse expertise, ranging from biophysics to plant biology, and experience with several desiccation-tolerant and -sensitive systems.

About WALII 2026 Summer Internships: Summer internships for undergraduate students are available at six of the Water and Life Interface Institution campuses. Each location has a separate application process and offers different experiences. Students interested in WALII projects are encouraged to apply to multiple campuses. No previous research experience is required.

Interns working on WALII projects will form a virtual cohort*. Interns will participate in a mentorship program, online career development activities, and seminars. All internships are paid opportunities, but the stipend amounts and program benefits may vary by geographic region.

Interns hosted by labs at Baylor College of Medicine, Syracuse University, California State University Channel Islands, Michigan State University, and University of Wisconsin-Madison will also be part of an **on-campus cohort of interns unaffiliated with WALII and will have additional opportunities for in-person social activities.*

Internship at WALII Campus: Syracuse University (Sukenik Lab)
WALII Project: How do proteins help protect cells from desiccation?

About the Sukenik Lab: The Sukenik Lab studies the interaction between proteins and their surrounding environment in the test tube and in cells, using a combination of live-cell imaging, spectroscopy, and computational modeling. Undergraduates working in the lab will work in a collaborative environment on projects involving computation and experiments involving the design of desiccation-protective proteins. Learn more at: https://www.sukeniklab.com/

How to apply: Please apply through the Syracuse University REU portal. In your application materials, specify that you are interested in working on the Water and Life Interface Institute project in the Sukenik Lab. In your cover letter, describe why you are interested in the lab, the questions that you want to pursue, and your goals. **NOTE: Interns in this lab will be participating in the SU Chemistry REU program, in addition to the WALII activities.

Application due date: February 17, 2026
Questions? Contact the Syracuse University Chemistry department at chemistry@syr.edu