

NCERC Welcomes Two New Visiting Research Fellows

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE – The National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center (NCERC) at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville welcomes two new Visiting Research Fellows: Colin Buck and Philip Kukielski.

Funded by the Illinois Corn Marketing Board, NCERC's nine-month fellowship program provides training and hands-on experience to prepare the next generation of engineers and scientists for work in mid- to high-skill jobs in the bioeconomy.

"NCERC is pleased to announce the hiring of Colin Buck and Philip Kukielski as NCERC's newest Visiting Research Fellows," said NCERC Executive Director John Caupert. "NCERC benefits greatly from mentoring recent college graduates who have specialized areas of study in biology, chemistry and engineering. We extend a special thank you to the Illinois Corn Marketing Board for providing the funding necessary to conduct the fellowship program."

Buck earned a bachelor's in chemical Engineering in May 2022 from Missouri S&T University in Rolla, Mo. and will be working hands-on in NCERC's larger laboratories, specifically the Fermentation Suite and Pilot Plant. Buck will work directly with NCERC's operations team to support client projects through engineering and project management. Buck previously worked at NCERC as a summer intern in 2021.

"My internship at NCERC was one of the greatest learning experiences of my life, so coming back was an easy decision," said Buck. "NCERC is in a unique position to provide a wide range of experiences and opportunities that young engineers like myself wouldn't normally have access to. I am excited about the direction that NCERC is headed and I can't wait to be a part of it."

SIUE alumnus Kukielski completed a bachelor's in environmental toxicology in May 2022. During his time as an undergraduate student, he was a laboratory intern and worked closely with NCERC's research team to support contractual research and sponsored projects taking place in NCERC's Fermentation and Analytical Laboratories. As a fellow, he will expand upon this role as a full-time member of NCERC's staff.

"During my time as an intern, I learned to appreciate NCERC's unique business model and dynamic team of researchers," said Kukielski. "I look forward to jump starting my career as a scientific researcher through the Visiting Research Program at NCERC and utilizing this opportunity to work on exciting projects that will make a positive impact on the environment."

Visiting Research Fellows serve under the guidance of two supervisors who will provide them with the technical expertise needed to thrive in their research environments, as well as leadership skills that will ramp up the trajectory of their careers. This joint supervisory model ensures the connection of theory to practice, and builds upon the Fellow's academic degree through applied, hands-on learning in an industrial setting. Upon completion of the fellowship program, graduates will be qualified to work in the biofuels, pharmaceuticals, bioprocessing, brewing and refining industries.

To learn more about NCERC's fellowship program, visit EthanolResearch.com.

The [NCERC at SIUE](#) is a nationally recognized research center dedicated to the development and commercialization of biotechnologies. Their unique research laboratories house bench- to demonstration-scale bioreactors and pretreatment and downstream processing equipment, making it the perfect partner to companies in the biotechnology industry. Through their contractual research services, NCERC has played an instrumental role in commercializing more than eighty products that are now used in the commercial marketplace. In addition to its research and development services, NCERC leverages its experienced staff and unique facility to provide a variety of workforce training and education initiatives to train the next generation of bioeconomy professionals. For more information, contact Jackie Hayes at jhayes@ethanolresearch.com, or visit www.EthanolResearch.com.