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Curtin geology student shoots for the stars with NASA

MEDIA RELEASE

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A Curtin University geology student will study interstellar dust with NASA after being selected for a three-month internship at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston Texas.

Nicole Nevill, who is currently studying a PhD in Applied Geology, will head to Houston in June to research whether there is a potential link between interstellar organic compounds and the origin of life itself.

Ms Nevill said the internship was an exciting opportunity and she was honoured to be selected to contribute to the upcoming research project with NASA.

"I have always been fascinated with the concept of space and the mysteries and challenges that surround it, so when the internship with NASA came up it seemed like a once in a lifetime opportunity." Ms Nevill said.

"Throughout my internship, I will have the opportunity to study the link between these organic compounds and life on Earth and present my findings to a team of NASA researchers after the three months is up."

"Being able to work alongside NASA researchers is a dream come true and I look forward to using the skills and knowledge I learn from this internship in my future career."

Ms Nevill is currently studying primordial components within primitive meteorites at Curtin, which can determine the early formation of the environment, evolutionary processes and the formation of our solar system.

Ms Nevill's PhD Supervisor, Professor Phil Bland of the WA School of Mines, Curtin University, said it was a fantastic opportunity for Ms Nevill to conduct research into organic compounds in space.

“Not many students get the opportunity to spend three months working directly with top NASA researchers and we wish Nicole all the best during her time in Houston.” Professor Bland said.

Ms Nevill was also awarded the Victorian Space Science Education Centre-NASA Australian Space Prize for top planetary sciences honours in Australia for Geology.

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