

July 10, 2025

**Jeff Benson**  
Lead, Research Excellence Programs  
jeff.benson@inl.gov



# Idaho National Laboratory – Creating a Secure, Resilient, Competitive Energy Future

Battelle Energy Alliance manages INL for the  
U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy



# FY24: 893 People, 217 Institutions



Participants



Institutions

*FY24 figures. Faculty researchers includes faculty researchers and teaming teachers. Visiting researchers includes academic visitors and international researchers.*

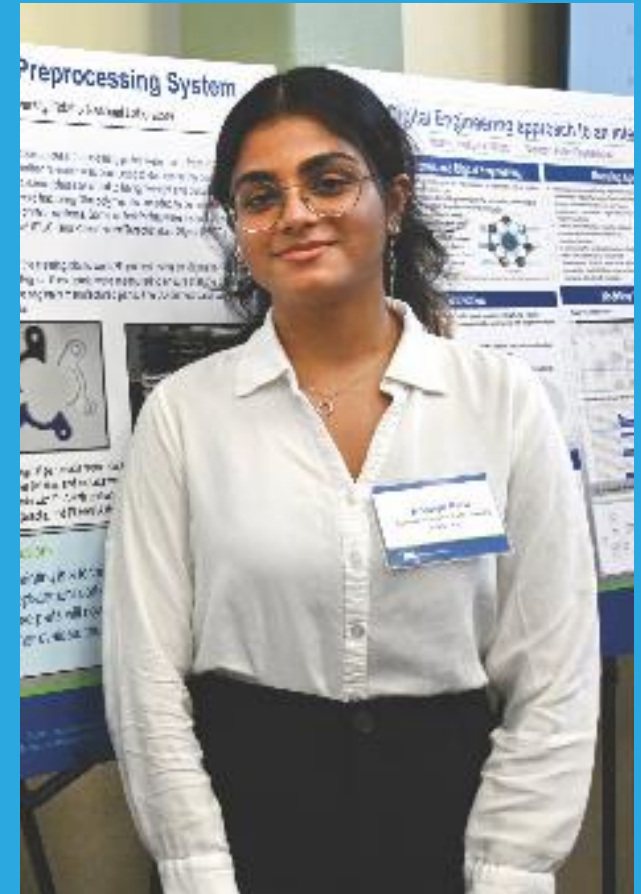
# Intern Program

## Core competencies

- Professionalism
- Communication skills
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Work Ethic
- Technical proficiency
- Initiative and self-direction
- Interpersonal skills
- Global and cultural awareness
- Learning orientation

## Professional development aligned to the core competencies

- Technical and Non-Technical Pathways for professional development leading to the opportunity for certification
- Collaborating Professional Development with Postdocs
- Postdoc Talks





# Intern Program *(Continued)*

## Required Deliverables

All interns will provide an abstract and choose at least one of the following:

- Poster session
- Lightning talk video
- Oral presentation
- Prototype

## Enhancing Intern Safety Culture

Working with EHS&Q and other stakeholders to reinforce and establish safety culture within the intern population

## Elevate mentor/mentee relationship

- Management Memo of Expectations
- Orientation for both mentor and mentee



# Who can apply?

- Full-time students attending an accredited college the semester before and after an internship award
- Students with at least a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA
- Internationals who attend an accredited U.S. college or university and have a current Curricular Practical Training Authorization
- Ability to pass a background check

## Where to Apply:

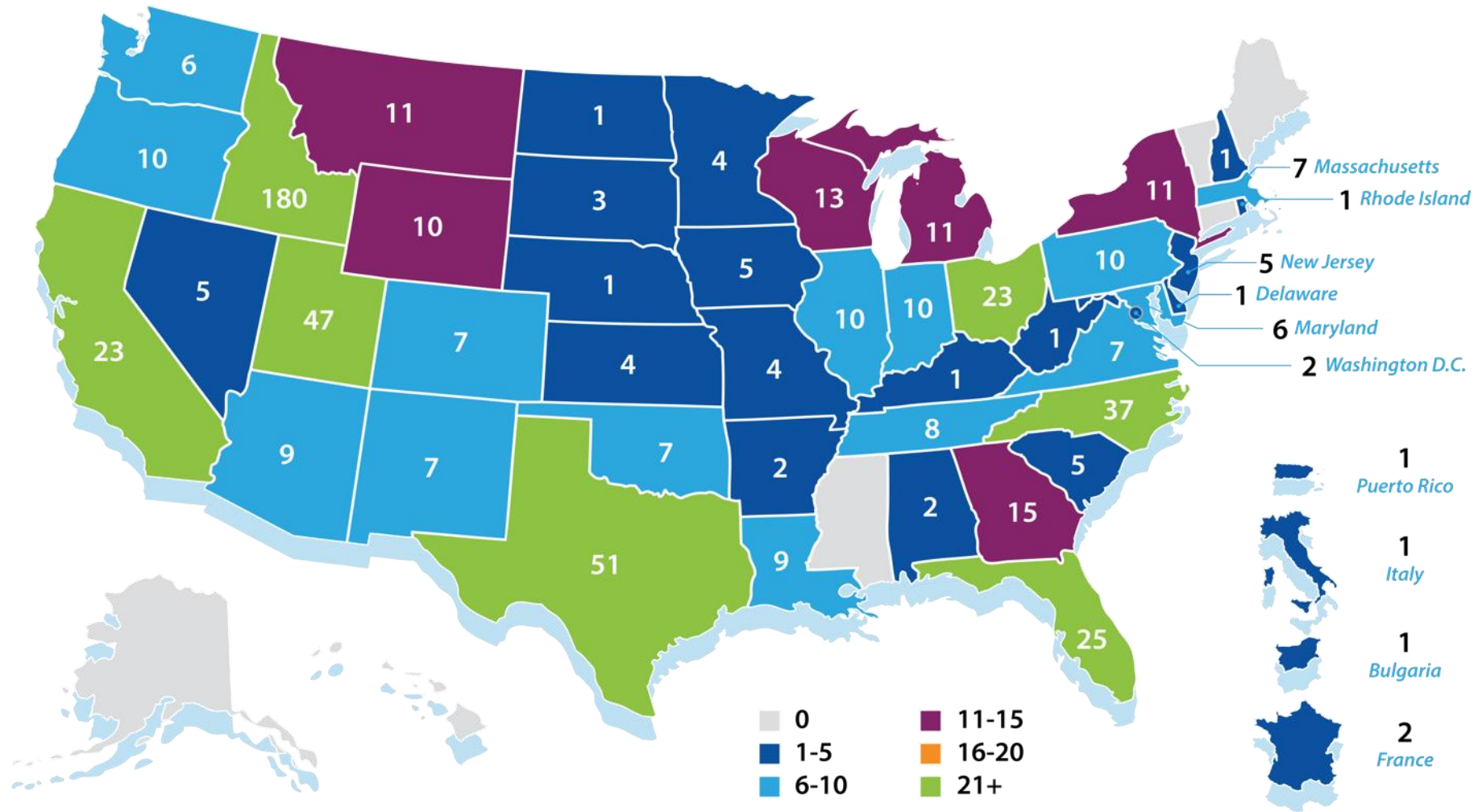
Internship opportunities are specific to each internship and have individual postings. Postings can be found at:

[https://inl.taleo.net/careersection/inl\\_intern/jobsearch.ftl?lang=en&portal=8210010144](https://inl.taleo.net/careersection/inl_intern/jobsearch.ftl?lang=en&portal=8210010144)

## How long do internships last?

- INL's internship terms are designed to match a typical university term, lasting from 10 to 16 weeks
- INL employs interns year-round, but the largest number of intern opportunities are during the summer months

# 625 college interns from 162 institutions

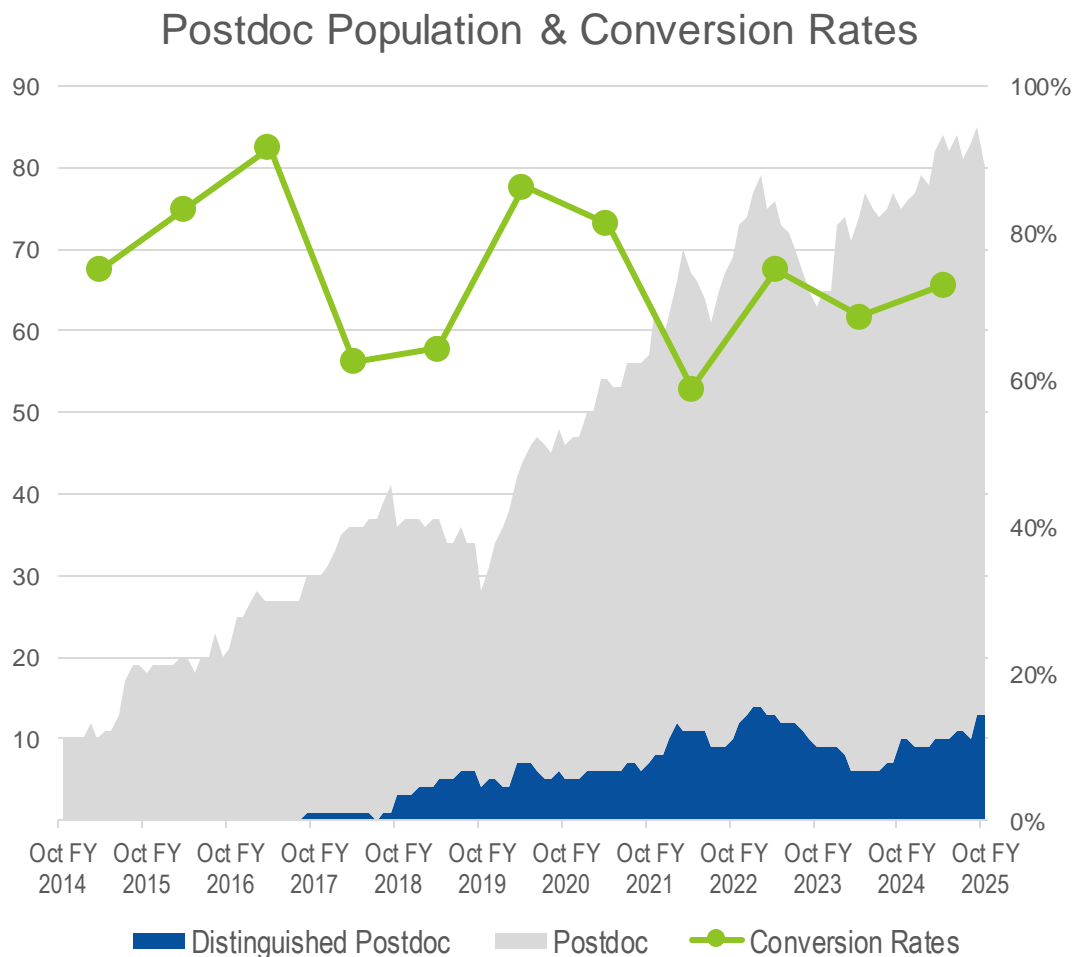


# INL Postdoc Population Trends

**Postdocs** make up about 12% of INL researchers, listed as authors on 19% of FY24 INL PEMP publications

**Postdoc Program Development (PPD)** pilot. 20% time for:

- Writing proposals
- Writing research papers
- Conference presentations

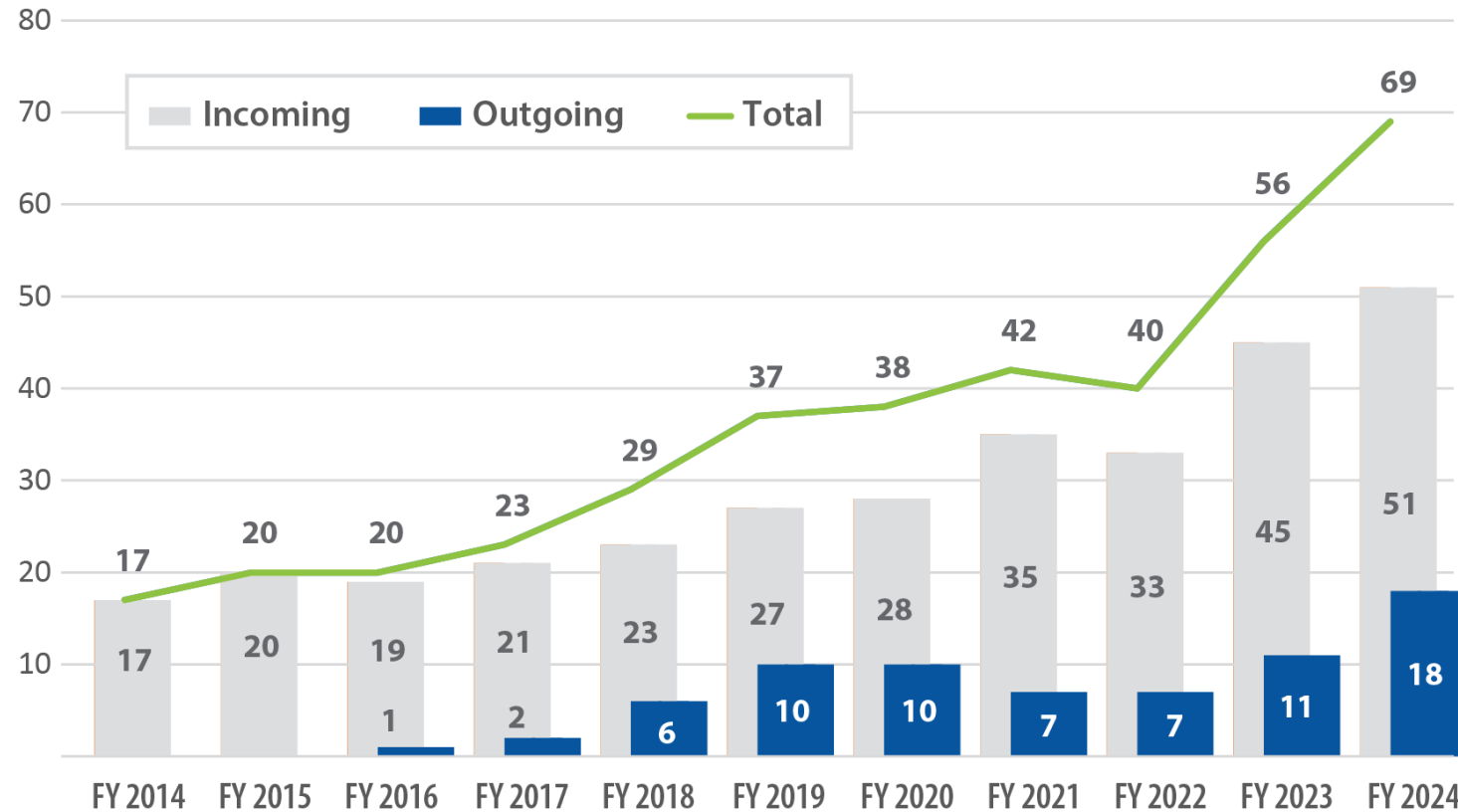






# Joint Appointments - Collaborations

Joint Appointment History



- Bi-Annual Lightning Talks
- Quarterly partnership with leadership for Directorate Overviews
- Capstone Courses and Guest Lectures

# Joint Appointments - Overview

UC Berkeley



COLORADO SCHOOL OF  
**MINES**

**NC STATE**  
UNIVERSITY



**Oregon State**  
University



**Goal** - *To enhance research collaborations between INL and university staff.*

## Changes to program

- Every appointee receives S#, standard trainings
- Centralized location with program information
- All requests and documents collected and sent electronically
- Self-reporting option for notable achievements
- Directorate review of SOW/JOC during preparation
- Appointment length of 3 years, with review at mid-way point

# Collaborative Programs



## Military

- As of May 2024, official DOD SkillBridge Program Industry Partner
  - 9 Service Members in FY24 for SkillBridge; 100% conversion rate
- Moving towards Military Academy MOAs to establish regular programming
  - 5 cadets in FY24 summer programming; 3 USAFA, 2 West Point



## International

- Partner with DOE HQ to facilitate DOS Exchange Visitor Program
  - 14 visitors in FY24, 2 in FY25 to date
  - Visitors are immersed into US culture via lab and community activities



# Idaho National Laboratory

---

*Battelle Energy Alliance manages INL for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy. INL is the nation's center for nuclear energy research and development, and also performs research in each of DOE's strategic goal areas: energy, national security, science and the environment.*



# Research Excellence Programs



**Giselle Sandi**

INL Director of Research Excellence



**Sarah Jennings**

Administrator / Professional Development

Institutional Review Board

Research Integrity Office

## Awards



**Shantay Ames**

Awards Coordinator

## Communications



**Emi Walker**

Communications  
Liaison



**Kate Meehan**

Communications  
Liaison

## Culture



**Sarah Hamilton**

Research Excellence  
Assistant



**Tony Huff**

Senior Research  
Program Coordinator



**Jana Pfeiffer**

Research Lifecycle

## Analytics



**Brian Rucks**

Data Analytics and  
Pure Lead



**Mann Vaity**

Data Analytics

## Student, Postdoc, and Faculty Programs



**Jeff Benson**

Student, Postdoc and  
Faculty Programs



**Amanda Torgerson**

Student Programs



**Jimi Burtenshaw**

Student Programs



**Monica Towner**

Faculty Programs



**Lisa Scott**

Postdoc Programs



**Nathan Woods**

Postdoc Programs



**Afton Coles**

Student Programs

## INL Mentoring



**Adil Refaey**

INL Mentoring

# REP Strategy—It's about the researchers

- Objectives:



Incentivize, resource, support, and develop researchers to publish impactful peer-reviewed journal papers.



Transform the culture of research management at the laboratory.



Cultivate research talent as part of their duty to the nation.