

## Appendix A:

### **Application to the 2016 USC - TecNM Veranos de Investigación Predoctoral (VIP)**

The 8-week research internship at the Viterbi School of Engineering at the University of Southern California (USC) will start on June 11<sup>th</sup> and end on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The purpose of the Internship is for you to demonstrate your academic skills and research potential by working on an individual project under the guidance of a USC professor. Because of the limited availability of these exceptional opportunities to do research at a world-class university, your application to this pre-PhD program needs to demonstrate a sincere interest in pursuing a PhD, an outstanding academic record, engineering skill in the proposed areas of research, and familiarity with the research done by that particular professor. Being admitted into, and doing well in, this pre-PhD research internship is invaluable when applying for admission and winning a full scholarship for a world-class engineering PhD program at USC.

If you already know you want to pursue a Masters degree, this pre-PhD program is not for you. For that, you can simply apply to the Masters program of choice at:

<http://www.usc.edu/admission/graduate/programs/engineering.html>

And compete for CONACYT funding as described here here:

<http://www.conacyt.mx/index.php/becas-y-posgrados/becas-en-el-extranjero>

The admission into this pre-PhD program is competitive, but note that you do not need to have a Masters Degree to do so, this is designed for outstanding Licenciatura students who intend to apply to a PhD program directly after their Licenciatura. Note that the timeline for this Pre-PhD program during the **summer of 2016** is targeted to enable you to start your PhD in **August of 2017**.

#### Eligibility:

- Demonstrate a sincere interest in pursuing a PhD
- A Grade Point Average placing you in the top 10% of your class, as evidenced by one of your letters of recommendation
- Demonstrate you can complete your current undergraduate degree by June 2017
- Demonstrate you can to apply for a “Beca de convenio de CONACYT” in April 2017
- Demonstrate you can begin the PhD program in August 2017
- Demonstrate English proficiency by a TOEFL IBT score of 80 or higher
- Passport to travel to the USA.

#### Selection by USC VSOE VIP program:

Students who are nominated by the TecNM as a pre-selected candidate for the VIP program will have two further steps for selection and placement in a laboratory.

#### **Step I:**

**Submit the following 3 separate PDFs by midnight, March 27, 2016**

1) In English: A description of a short research project you would be interested in pursuing in the laboratory of the Viterbi professor who is your *\*first\** choice. That is, I will need you to write an essay with abstract, introduction, methods and expected result (in English, single spaced) where you describe why you are interested in that specific laboratory for a potential PhD program, and demonstrate a clear idea of what research you would do if you did your summer research internship in that laboratory. Be sure to read and cite their appropriate papers in a relevant way. You can use up to 2 pages for this, but the preferred length is 1 page. Please see sample essay.

2) In English: A second essay (you can use up to 2 pages for this, but the preferred length is 1 page) of the same format for the laboratory that would be your *\*second\** choice.

3) Unofficial academic transcript (can be in Spanish)

We need two options from you in case your first choice professor is not able to host you. Keep in mind that I would use these essays to introduce you to that professor so that they have a sound basis to host you in their lab. If things go well during the pre-PhD research internship and you are admitted to the PhD program, you could pursue a PhD with that faculty member (or another USC faculty that with which you are compatible) with a full scholarship. Therefore, these essays are important as they should reflect your academic interests and demonstrate a sincere interest in pursuing a PhD.

Logistics:

- You need to email these two documents to two addresses ([Valero@usc.edu](mailto:Valero@usc.edu) and [angela@usc.edu](mailto:angela@usc.edu)) using "USC-IME 2016 YOURLASTNAME" as the subject heading. Without this subject heading the email filters will not process your application correctly.

- The filenames must have this form:  
(YOURLASTNAME)\_(PROF'S LASTNAME)\_(FIRST)OR(SECOND)OR(TRANSCRIPT)\_CHOICE

If you use your two last names, include a hyphen as in:

Villa\_Valero-Cuevas\_first\_choice.pdf,

Villa\_Smith\_second\_choice.pdf

Villa\_transcript.pdf

### Step II:

After we receive, evaluate, and circulate these essays to those professors, we will invite you for a formal interview in English on **April 4, 2016 via videoconference**. When we notify you of the interview, we will also give you feedback on your essays and request additional information. These will include letters of recommendation from two professors, academic plan to demonstrate the timeline and completion date of your current program, unofficial transcript, and preliminary GRE score if you have it.

### Start of the pre-PhD research internship:

If you are selected after Step II, we will forward you the necessary information to arrange for your USA visa. Your travel, academic, GRE training, and housing costs will be covered in full, and your meals will be partly covered. Your personal expenses will be those those for your passport, visa, and groceries for your breakfast and lunch—plus any personal activities you want to do in Los Angeles such as movies, eating out, etc. In the past these personal expenses (without passport or visa costs) range between \$500-\$1000 USD depending on what you chose to do in Los Angeles.

If you are admitted to this pre-PhD research internship, you will also need to complete these two items before we purchase your plane tickets in April.

- Take a baseline GRE test (free on the internet)
- Attend two Academic Integration Workshops with Horizonte Básico

During the program we will mentor you academically, introduce you to the many current PhD students at USC that were part of earlier pre-PhD programs, and guide you so that you apply to a PhD program in **December of 2016 (for August 2017 start)**, and apply for a USC-CONACyT scholarship in **April 2016**.

We look forward to your application!