

Reflection of my Summer at SBP

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It is truly incredible how fast summer passed, and as I scurry from class to class on Tulane's campus, I can't help but think back over my summer at Sanford Burnham Prebys. Interning at a medical discovery institute opened my eyes to what a career in the biological research industry would look like. I gained a deeper understanding of research techniques such as qPCR and cell culture. I improved my interpersonal communication skills by working with various other lab members and communicating problems/successes with them. I was able to really become involved in a project and gain a deep understanding of it. I am quite proud of working independently for most of the summer and being able to problem solve on my own when needed.

I plan to build off the experiences of this summer by continuing research this fall in Dr. Laurie Earls' lab. I feel confident in my skills and believe that my experience this summer prepared me well to transition to a research lab at Tulane.

After finishing my internship, I decided I want to learn more about senescence and epigenetics. Prior to my internship, I was terribly unfamiliar with either of those terms. Throughout the summer, I became mesmerized by the processes of senescent cells and human body's ability to protect itself from harmful mutations or changes. I hope to explore the topic again in either a classroom setting or another research experience.

Advice I would give to a student interested in pursuing an internship in biological research would be to go for it! Don't be afraid to contact professors or investigators who have projects that interest you. More often than not, they will be delighted to hear from an interested student who has taken the time to learn about their research. Taking initiative will reward you greatly!

Over the summer, I realized that the gender gap in science is very real but does not necessarily have to be a barrier to success in the field. While men are more prevalent in scientific research, that does not mean that women researchers are nonexistent. Seek out other women in the workplace or organization and strive to build connections that way. Don't be afraid to speak your mind even when you feel outnumbered or intimidated.

I am so thankful to NCI for aiding me in my internship endeavors. It was an incredible experience and I can't wait to see the places I will go with the lessons learned from this summer in tow.