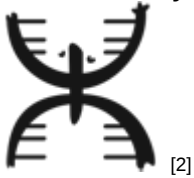


The Beginning of an Amazing Experience ^[1]

Submitted by [Chloe Hill](#) ^[2] on 26 June 2017 - 5:23pm



It's hard to believe I've been in Puerto Rico for nearly a month. Time has just been absolutely flying by. Even in this short time I've learned an incredible amount, and I'm sure I'll

only learn more in my remaining time here. Living here has introduced me to so many new friends and mentors both in the context of research and in everyday life. In the field of scientific research, often people of many different backgrounds will work together and now I have more experience working with people not from my home university. Also, being here I've been able to see things I would never see back home in Wisconsin. I had only seen the ocean once before coming here, and I've been blown away by the natural beauty on the island. I'm incredibly grateful to have had this opportunity, both to explore a new place and learn more about the workings of a lab.

Before I came here, I didn't have very much experience with working in a biology lab. I have learned a lot about sterilization techniques and some of the difficulty of working with living organisms. I've never worked with yeast before, so I've been learning about how it's grown and handled. In my lab, we are testing the toxicity of Zinc Oxide nanoparticles on yeast in both normal and microgravity conditions. This is interesting to me because back in Whitewater I also work with nanoparticles but for very different applications. I have a lot of interest in nanomaterials, so it's been a valuable experience to learn other ways they can be used. I also had the opportunity to help figure out a procedure for digitally counting the yeast. It was exciting to be able to participate in the development of new lab techniques, and this will be a very beneficial skill going forward since it is my goal to go to graduate school and ultimately enter academia. Performing summer research is helping me to prepare for graduate school and make me a stronger candidate. Overall, I think that this experience will take me out of my comfort zone and teach me important skills as a researcher.

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