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My first internship experience.... [1]

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My name is Khoa Do. I’m currently a Texas Tech chemical engineering undergrad student. During this summer 2017, I am so lucky to be chosen to participate in the REU program at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez. However, something had happened in the last minute, which resulted in a relocation of me and another four students to the University of Madison at Wisconsin for eight weeks. Then, we will fly to Mayaguez to present our posters in the last two weeks of the program. Personally, I do not consider this as an unfortunate incidence because this is the great opportunity to work with both the professors in these two schools as well as learn new things from both environments.

For this summer, I am working mostly with cells and bacteria. Our hypothesis is: we try to prevent biofilm formation on our coated titanium chips by loading and releasing ? peptides from those polyelectrolyte multilayers (PEMs) titanium. Generally, we will first coat multiple polyelectrolyte layers on our titanium chips. Then, we will load the ? peptides to those layers. We will evaluate, simultaneously, their ability to prevent S. aureus biofilm formation and mammalian cells biocompatibility.

So far, I have messed up quite a few while conducting those experiments due to my carelessness. However, at the same time, I also have learnt tons of good tips of how to not make those mistakes again from my mentors. For anyone who is afraid of making mistakes, it is an okay to have them because that is a part of learning process. No one is perfect and so do you. All you have to do is trying to be better next time and listening carefully to your mentor instructions. As long as you have your passion with your work and believe in yourself, nothing does really matter because you will be successful at the end.

During the past 3 weeks, I have made a lot of new friends in Madison from all over the US. We have discovered a lot of places in Wisconsin. Hopefully, by the time I get to Mayaguez, I will have an opportunity to explore Puerto Rico as well as getting to know more people in this beautiful tropical island.

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