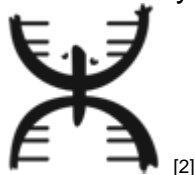


# Jumping into a Summer of New Experiences

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Submitted by [Austin John Dosh](#) [2] on 30 June 2017 - 3:52pm



Running off the dock at the beach of Mayaguez.

I dove headfirst into this summer not knowing what to expect. It is hard to believe that one month ago I was stepping off a plane in Puerto Rico not knowing anyone. Over the past four weeks, I have made friendships and professional research connections that will last a lifetime. I came to Puerto Rico knowing very little about what sorts of adventures this summer would hold. Due to the strike within the UPR system at the time, everyone was feeling their fair share of uncertainty regarding the summer's plans. I am incredibly grateful for all the steps that were taken to accommodate for such circumstances and to provide us all with the best experience possible; it has been incredible.

Over the past weeks, I have had the opportunity to work hands on in very interesting research that has direct implications for the environment and human health, meanwhile learning to work in an environment where my first language is not the vernacular. As I continue pursuing research at the professional level, it is very important for me to learn how to effectively communicate and cooperate with teams consisting of members of different cultural and linguist backgrounds. The effective communication of technical information across language barriers is vital to the efficient

progression of scientific research globally. I am very grateful for the bilingual abilities that many at the UPRM have, but I have also enjoyed the challenge and learning that comes from struggling to communicate in the little Spanish that I do speak.

In addition to being very educational, this summer has been very fun. When not working, we have had the opportunities to travel and enjoy nearby beaches, lay around in hammocks, swim at UPRM's pool complex, and watch movies at the local theatre. Although frowned upon by those that are familiar with the city's beach, we even went swimming at the Mayaguez beach one night around sunset. A few of us purchased used bikes to get around the area quicker. I have really enjoyed living in such a beautiful place with such welcoming and friendly people. Due to the unique circumstances at the beginning of the summer, five of us students are staying together in a house. This living arrangement gave us the opportunity to grow very close very quickly, and I am definitely going to be sad saying goodbye to my housemates, and the many other friends I have made, at the end of the summer. Of course, until then we will continue to experiment with all sorts of recipes in the kitchen and have regular Mario Kart battles. Amazingly and thankfully, one bathroom between the five of us has not been a problem at all.

I look forward to seeing what else this summer has in store for us. Already, I feel like I have experienced and learned so much. I know there are more fun and cultural experiences on the horizon. For now though, I am going to stop typing about them and go experience them. Until next time Ciencia Puerto Rico.

-Austin J. Dosh

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