
Medical student comments about the summer research program

Lillian Cole

Why you liked the program?

What I liked the most about the summer research program was that it provided me with a designated period of time where I could pursue my research interests without the pressures of a rigorous medical curriculum. Rather than simply going through the motions and retaining nothing, it allotted me the time to fully engage and enjoy my project.

What you learned?

The summer research program allowed me to practice and better understand the purpose of various laboratory techniques. It taught me how to accurately interpret my results and take the next step based on my analysis. More importantly however, I learned that basic science research is an arduous field that can be rewarding and frustrating. It is an area that requires patience, commitment, and the ability to see potential and find answers, even in a failed experiment. This program heightened my problem solving skills and encouraged me to be inquisitive.

How this might influence your career?

My summer research focused on Type II Diabetes. I am interested in emergency medicine, and many of my patients will visit the ER due to complications of or related to their type II diabetes. Through my project, I gained a better understanding of the pathophysiology of T2DM and the aims behind the research being conducted to improve the disease, both of which will allow me to better treat and educate my patients.

Jena Deitrick

I thoroughly enjoyed the summer research program because it provided both the opportunity as well as great incentives to gain more research experience. I've always been extremely interested in cancer research, so it was very rewarding to be able to spend my summer getting firsthand exposure to all of the trials and tribulations of basic science research. In addition to learning a great deal about how dysfunctional cell signaling pathways contribute to the induction, maintenance, and progression of cancer, I also gained a much greater appreciation for how much time and effort goes into every journal article publication. Everything we do in medicine to treat our patients is based on scientifically proven evidence, so it is important to not only appreciate the value of research in my future practice but also make a conscious effort to keep up with all of the novel research that is constantly improving medicine and the quality of care we provide to our patients.

Victoria Wang

Why I liked the program:

I enjoyed the freedom that the program gave me to choose my research project and to decide how far I wanted to take it. There was also just a right amount of preparation and guidance given by the program that helped me figure out how to start up my project.

What I learned:

Because I chose to do an original research project, I learned everything from submitting an IRB to presenting results at a conference to writing up and submitting research for a journal publication. This entire experience has really strengthened my critical thinking skills and broadened the range of perspectives I use when approaching a problem.

How might this influence your career:

I plan to pursue a career in a pediatric subspecialty and research is an important part of both the fellowship training and the medical practice. Therefore, the experience I have gained through the Summer Research Program will help me pursue this career path and become a better physician.

Kandis Wright

The summer research program is a great way for future clinicians to get involved in biomedical research. In the lab I enjoy getting to physically plan out and conduct experiments, see results every day, and analyze the data. I am forced to think critically about what I am doing, how different mechanisms work, why the results reveal what they do, and also relate how what I am doing is important to improving clinical care. Doing research over the past few years has taught me to appreciate all the medical therapies, scientific knowledge, and procedures we have. It takes a lot of time to discover knowledge and develop treatments. I have learned to be patient, persistent, to not be afraid to learn by trial and error, to plan, and to write. Writing skills are very important in research and in medicine for grant writing and publications. After doing research here at the TTUHSC, I feel more prepared and confident that I can do research in my career. My overall career goal is to be a physician scientist where I can treat patients and conduct biomedical research. So much of our knowledge and therapies needed in the clinic are based off factual research data. To do both would give me the opportunity to research different pathologies, develop methods to improve patient outcomes, and enhance our basic scientific knowledge while also treating the whole patient. Research is not easy regardless of the field, but it is very important for physicians to understand it in order to better educate and treat their patients.