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I am a sophomore majoring in chemistry, and this summer I was extremely fortunate to spend ten weeks as an intern at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) in the department of pharmaceutical sciences. UAMS is known as the leading health institution in Arkansas; according to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the department of pharmaceutical sciences at UAMS was ranked fifth nationwide at the beginning of this year. As a chemistry major, the idea that I had in mind when I applied for this internship was to develop research skills and figure out if pharmaceutical sciences could be a prospect for my longtime career as a chemist.

The goal of the project that I worked on was to generate the dissolution data of capsules of a medical supplement made from a plant called goldenseal. This data was going to be used as benchmark data in the determination of the consistency in content and the effectiveness of goldenseal capsules manufactured by BOPHARM LLC. As an intern with very little lab experience, I spent the first two weeks learning different technical skills such as operating the high performance Liquid Chromatography machine and making sense of the data produced. I worked closely with my mentors, providing assistance when needed, but for the most part I was observing how the project was carried out. When I finished my two weeks training in the lab, I started gaining some independence and I started working on projects by myself. The first couple of days were somewhat discouraging because I would spend time in the lab working and not get the results that I was expecting. After some ups and downs, I started getting the hang of things and as time went on I could see my lab performance improve. My responsibilities as an intern

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were to run the dissolution experiment, collect, analyze, and summarize the data and report weekly to the department.

Prior to this internship I wasn't sure of what I would want to do with my chemistry major. For that reason one of the goals I set for myself for the summer was to figure out which career path would be a fit for me. One of the things that I liked about being in a big institution such as UAMS was that I had a chance to network and ask questions with professionals from different areas. I also was able to gain quite a bit of knowledge about different programs by participating in different seminars and information sessions.

At the end of my internship, I had an opportunity to participate in the Arkansas research symposium in Little Rock, Arkansas, during which I presented the results of my research on a poster. This was a very valuable experience because I had the chance to meet other students who had been doing similar projects to mine. Along with that, I benefited from learning about different projects and networking with different mentors and graduate school professors.

This ten-week long internship taught me about working in a lab and following through with an experiment independently. I learned how to use some of the best analytical instruments in the field like the high performance liquid chromatography instruments and the mass spectrometer. The last two weeks of my internship were spent mostly summarizing and organizing the data, and I had an opportunity to learn the basics of writing scientific manuscripts by writing a ten-page manuscript of my project with the guidance of my mentor. One of the low points about my internship was that at some point there was not a whole lot to do and sometimes

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the instruments that were being used would break down in the midst of the experiment, causing all activities to be repeated.

As a rising sophomore, I had a headstart on internships and my summer experience will help me when I apply to different internship programs or graduate school in the future. This internship also affected my career goals because by talking to different people I learned about different fields that had never crossed my mind before.