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#### Testimonial of Summer Internship Program

As a pre-med student reflecting on my past summer I have come to appreciate how my 9 week participation in the Reproductive Research Summer Internship Program was an invaluable experience. When I took part in the program I had just completed my freshman year of college. I had no research experience and very limited knowledge of reproduction and fertility. I was worried about where I would fit in and what I would be able to accomplish as an intern. Fortunately, from day one, I was treated with such kindness and patience and it was refreshing as a young intimidated student to find that I had a great deal of support. The mentors had genuine concern and interest in each of us and often met with us personally to discuss our projects, concerns and to clarify questions and act as a resource; I felt like, if I ever needed it, I would have their undivided attention. It was clear that they wanted us to succeed. I was very impressed by the interactions that I had with the staff.

The lectures that we attended were beneficial and informative aspects of the program. They were designed specifically with the students in mind and were given on a level that was very understandable and interesting. It was a means to expose us to the various arrays of professions and current issues and topics that deal with fertility. Through these lectures we learned not just the basics of reproduction and infertility, but we also could see where the projects that we were working on as individuals fit into the larger picture of the field; how topics were interconnected. It was also a fantastic opportunity to personally engage with prestigious doctors from the Clinic, to ask questions about their experiences as doctors and gain new perspective.

We were given a great deal of freedom in how much work we wanted to do. The program coordinators understood that every student was on a different level and it was up to us to decide how much we could handle. I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to work on three projects for publication two of which dealt with *Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome* and the other which dealt with *Antioxidants in Female Reproductive Pathologies*. I have a great respect for my mentor, Dr. Sajal Gupta, without her I would have been lost. She gave me all of the material I needed to familiarize myself with the background on both issues and helped guide me in writing my first scientific articles. The program additionally equipped me with the skills and knowledge to communicate effectively. We participated in workshops developing our public speaking skills and were given a tutorial on how to put together a professional PowerPoint presentation, with a great deal of feedback. We were able to then apply these insights by presenting our personal projects on two separate occasions.

I also had the opportunity to participate in a few surgical observations. I really enjoyed the experience; the doctors were very receptive to my presence and explained to me what they were

doing. It gave me valuable insight into the standard precautions taken during procedures. An anesthesiologist explained what she did for patients before, during and after procedures so that I had a well rounded understanding of what it took to perform a surgery. My most memorable experience was, after surgery, Dr. Sabanegh sat down with a fellow intern and myself and taught us to suture.

This program was very worthwhile. I grew as an individual and I feel like I have an advantage over many other pre-medical students thanks to what I learned over my summer. I learned a great deal about self-management because we did not have someone looking over our shoulder every moment, setting deadlines, we were responsible for getting our work done. I have a more general awareness of current medical issues and I have a greater understanding of what it takes to conduct research. After having spent time in the lab and working closely with the staff, it is very apparent how the Cleveland Clinic has earned the prestigious reputation that it carries.



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