Student Voices on their Research Experiences
RAM Research Experiences

Patricia Rouzeau
Aviation Administration

What: Off-/On-campus research experience on air traffic control
Research Mentor: Dr. Meron Lindenfeld (FSC)
Location: Farmingdale State College and JFK Airport, New York, NY
Project Focus: Aviation student perceptions of knowledge, skill and self-efficacy and ATC communication before and after simulation

The Experience: “I worked closely with Dr. Lindenfeld analyzing and coding data, observed air traffic controllers direct live traffic, observed ground and local control operations at JFK, and practiced communicating and vectoring simulated air traffic in a radar environment. I was able to present this research at the SUNY Applied learning conference in Niagara Falls. I was also featured in ‘The Umbrella: The SUNY Applied Learning Newsletter’ as the student spotlight.”

The Benefit: “I had the hands-on experience I hoped to have as part of the RAM program. I applied and took the Air Traffic Control exam back in August. I made many connections at JFK which led to me becoming an intern in the terminals and recently I was offered a full-time position as operations supervisor at JFK. And I have not even graduated yet! This would not have been possible without this experience.”

Words of Wisdom: “This is your time to flourish and do the impossible. While doing your research experience—have fun with it! Don’t think of it as a regular research course, think of it as an opportunity of a life time that no other school offers. The RAM program gives you the keys, you just have to pick a door to open.”

Erick Elias
Applied Mathematics

What: Internship with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
Location: IRS, Washington, DC
Project Focus: Predict the amount of enforced revenue that will be collected in the next fiscal year

The Experience: “I was put on a team with four other data scientists. The goal of my project was to use different forecasting models to predict how much enforced revenue the IRS will be receiving in the near future. I used SQL to pull in data from the IRS databases and used R to set up the data, visualize relationships between different variables using graphs, and analyzing trends. We also used econometric models to predict the state of the economy as it has a strong relationship with tax revenue. My work was left with my former co-workers and will be used to settle taxing decisions.”

The Benefit: “The first few weeks were the most stressful as I was essentially crafting a capstone project in a field I have never touched before while utilizing software I was inexperienced with. With enough perseverance, I was able to complete a project that has greatly affected the Federal Government all while receiving training for essential skills on the job. Solving problems that have never been tackled before always brought me a feeling of accomplishment which was essential to continue building my motivation. Living away in Washington D.C. for three months not only taught me professional skills but also granted me the potential to strive further in my career and realize that it’s best to live life to the fullest.”

Words of Wisdom: “I would never have thought I would be an intern working a major project that would benefit the IRS. Competing for an extremely selective position and succeeding made me realize that anything is possible. It's best to start early and start searching for opportunities as early as possible. As Rabindranath Tagore once said, ‘you can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water.’”
Tonuza Ahmed

Bioscience

What: Off-campus research experience on spinal cord injury through the Leadership Alliance
Research Mentors: Dr. Stanislava Jergova & Dr. Jacqueline Sagen
Location: University of Miami, Miami, FL

Project Focus: Using vector in order to treat spinal cord injury induced pain

The Experience: “I assisted in the lab with other student interns. We would take care of the animals, help with procedures such as perfusion, make solutions needed for the experiment, make arrangements for the surgery, read research articles, and organize our results to present.”

The Benefit: “Through this internship I have gotten a first-hand research experience. I have seen how the acquired knowledge can be used in real life. Also, I have met some great people, made new friends, and explored the city of Miami. I also gained experience presenting my research as a poster at the Leadership Alliance Conference in Hartford, CT and as an oral presentation at the SUNY Applied Learning Conference in Tarrytown, NY. Overall, it was a very good research experience.”

Words of Wisdom: “Don’t be afraid to take opportunities.”

Jessica Rubio

Professional Communications

What: On-campus research experience in journalism
Research Mentor: Dr. Noel Brathwaite (FSC)
Location: Farmingdale State College & York College, PA

Project Focus: How an online publication creates a community identity

The Experience: “I worked alongside Dr. Brathwaite in my research study on how an online publication can be used to foster a community identity. My responsibilities were to collect data and revive the student newspaper on campus. Overall, we successfully revived the student newspaper by creating an online publication. Over 22 members were recruited and we made the student newspaper into a club called The Dale News so all students on campus can join. Before I graduated, we published over 15 articles on The Dale News. I presented my research at the Naylor Workshop at York College and at the Farmingdale State College’s Student Research Day. While our research study has ended, the student newspaper continues.”

The Benefit: “This experience has benefited me tremendously. I've made so many friends, networked with others, and traveled. I was accepted with a scholarship to the Media Studies master's program at The New School in NYC. I decided to take a year off from graduate school to work and gain experience. I am currently working at Canon USA Inc. Headquarters as an administrative assistant for general affairs. Two years ago I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. Once I transferred to Farmingdale State College and was selected to be a part of the RAM program, I finally felt I had a purpose. The RAM program has given me so many opportunities that I never thought I would get during my college career. Within only two years, I've accomplished so much which gives me the confidence to continue further in my future career.”

Words of Wisdom: “Don't let fear discourage you! The RAM family was with me every step of the way where I finally began to ignore fear. After I completed my first ever research study I felt like I could accomplish anything. This program truly gave me the confidence I needed and I know you all will experience the same as well!”
Kamryn Hernandez
Nursing

What: Off-campus research experience in anthropology
Research Mentor: Dr. Matthew Brown (FSC)
Location: Antigua and Barbuda

Project Focus: Archaeological and anthropological occupation of Indian Creek

The Experience: “I traveled to Antigua under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Brown to conduct conservation work, engage in excavations, and learn invaluable skills that are transferable to my school and work field. Together, along with other students from around the world, we discovered 2 pre-birth infants from the 620-670 CE period. Because of this experience I was able to present not only in Antigua in front of faculty but at the SUNY Applied Learning Conference in Niagara Falls.”

The Benefit: “This research experience transformed me as a student and as an individual. Almost two years later, I am still grateful for the amazing experience the RAM program gave me. This experience gave me new found confidence, instilled a love for research and crystallized my decision to further my education with a Doctorate in Nursing. Although my research was not in my career field, it provided me with the skills, work ethic and confidence that I need to pursue a career in the medical field. I made amazing friends and gained a new found love of travel and appreciating the cultures of other countries.”

Words of Wisdom: “I encourage other RAM scholars and FSC students to not limit yourself! You will be surprised at what you are capable of doing when you are given the chance to. Do not be afraid to expose yourself to new things and step out of your comfort zone. Sometimes the greatest experiences of your life are waiting for you; you just have to overcome those feelings of fear!”

Heamily Singh
Applied Psychology

What: On-campus research experience on social media personality perception
Research Mentor: Dr. Sayeed Islam (FSC)
Location: Farmingdale State College

Project Focus: Perceptions of personality through Instagram profiles

The Experience: “I am working with Dr. Islam on a research idea I proposed in my RAM 201 course. I was responsible for reading many related research articles, planning out how I want to conduct my research, what profiles I want to focus on, creating a survey using Qualtrics, and getting IRB approval to conduct my research. Currently, I am in the process of collecting data. I have already had the opportunity to present my research proposal at the SUNY Applied Learning Conference in Tarrytown, NY. I have future presentations planned to disseminate my research.”

The Benefit: “I have learned to appreciate research, understand that research is not scary, and that research is another format for learning. Research is something that takes a lot time and commitment. I know that my involvement in conducting my own research with the guidance of Dr. Islam will most definitely help me get into graduate school because not many students have the opportunity to say ‘Yes, I conducted my own research while acquiring my undergraduate degree.”

Words of Wisdom: “Research seems scary and long. However, if you break up the research into manageable chunks with a time frame you can work with, then you can do it. A big plus side is when you find a topic that interests you, research will become intriguing because you will constantly discover new things along the entire journey.”
**Anthony Jao**  
*Global Business Management*

**What:** On-campus research experience on regional personality  
**Research Mentor:** Dr. Jing Betty Feng (FSC) & Dr. Andy Chiou (FSC)  
**Location:** Farmingdale State College & Portland, OR  

**Project Focus:** An analysis on regional personality profiles and differences in societal change  

**The Experience:** “I have been involved in many of Dr. Feng & Dr. Chiou’s projects as well as my own independent research topic. Initially, I worked on a team of 3 to coordinate coding for interviews. Afterwards, I developed my own understanding of their major research projects through weekly assignments of articles to build interest. I presented my topic at Farmingdale State College’s Student Research Day. Over the summer, I worked closely with the two professors as a research assistant. I recently submitted and was accepted to present my topic to the SPSP conference in Portland, OR in spring 2019.”

**The Benefit:** “I have learned how to differentiate data in order to extract the most vital information from interviews and articles. Research has helped me develop my own view on various topics and allowed me to learn more about topics that interest me on an academic level. Not only have I learned academically, research opened up the opportunity for me to expand my social walls and learn more about the real world after college.”

**Words of Wisdom:** "Don't be afraid of the workload; it's tough but extremely rewarding. You will learn things you never expected to learn and meet some greatly talented individuals. Sometimes you may doubt yourself and your capabilities but anyone can achieve greatness as long as you don't give up on it.”

---

**Seiji Clark**  
*Mechanical Engineering Technology*

**What:** On-campus research experience in robotics  
**Research Mentor:** Dr. Gonca Altuger-Genc (FSC)  
**Location:** Farmingdale State College  

**Project Focus:** Event process simulation for a Lego color sorter robot  

**The Experience:** “I conducted my research independently with the help of my mentor, Dr. Altuger-Genc. I boosted my technical skills by personally assembling a robot and creating the code for the robot to be mobile. I had the opportunity to present my research at the SUNY Applied Learning Conference. I will continue this project by identifying different scenarios to run the simulations and analyze and compare data.”

**The Benefit:** “Individual research gave me insight into a potential career path and taught me the basics of modeling and simulation. This experience exposed me to a new career direction and ultimately my dream of working in the engineering technology field. I also gained transferable skills such as public speaking and defending my work, which are important techniques I will need later in life.”

**Words of Wisdom:** “Through my experience of research, I can tell you it’s not as boring as you think it might be and it pushes you out of your comfort zone. Go out and do something or join something that is completely out of your comfort zone! Take those chances!”
David Ramirez

Computer Programming & Information Systems

What: Internship in web development
Location: Nature’s Bounty Co., Ronkonkoma, NY

Project Focus: Full-stack development of business branded website and a business analytics project

The Experience: “For the website, I worked alongside a mentor and was responsible for the design, coding, mobile implementation, search engine optimization and overall efficiency of the website. The website is now live at spoonfuls.solgar.com. For the business analytics project, I worked with 6 other interns to analyze a critical business problem and propose a solution to it while also testing our solution to the entirety of the domestic consumer base. We also gave a presentation to the C-level executives (CEO, CIO, etc.) on the work we did and how implementing our plan could benefit the company.”

The Benefit: “This experience bolstered my ‘soft skills’ such as teamwork and communication and honed my technical knowledge in web development (both front-end and back-end). It also allowed me the opportunity to work with powerful business analytics tools and programming technologies I may not have had the chance to work with otherwise. This internship made me develop a deeper passion for web development and programming while also working with a knowledgeable and caring team.”

Words of Wisdom: “To those seeking to complete their RAM research experience, I would recommend looking beyond your major into similar fields since you never know what could trigger a response in you that makes clearer or even changes your career goals. For internships specifically, give your all when you work and learn as much as you can since your time there goes by so quick and you can learn valuable skills if you open up to those around you, even if the topic has nothing to do with your current projects (employers and your colleagues will take note of your initiative to learn). I recommend that when you are given work, be your own worst critic. Go over every little detail that can be done better or made faster. Your work matters here! Show your manager or boss that you are meticulous and put your best foot forward, and don’t be afraid to ask, ‘How can I do this better?’”

This last point I want to say without putting pressure on you: Remember that whether you are doing research or an internship, you represent not only yourself but also the RAM Program and Farmingdale State College. Keeping that in mind, look for ways to grow yourself and hold yourself accountable for whatever you do. While you shouldn’t lose sleep over your work, you should be thinking of ways to truly showcase what you can do. Go the extra mile in your work or for someone else. In whatever you do, show what it means to be a RAM scholar.”

Darren Dawson

Electrical Engineering Technology

What: On-campus research experience in physics
Research Mentor: Dr. Jack Simonson (FSC)
Location: Farmingdale State College

Project Focus: Crystal growth using the flux method

The Experience: “I worked under the guidance of another student who gave me tasks to complete in order to ensure the proper production of the crystals we intended to grow. Primarily, I measured elements to ensure a correct sample size.”

The Benefit: “It opened my eyes to how involved and fun research in material science can be.”

Words of Wisdom: “Take all the opportunities you can to get involved, not just for the resume or job, but because exposing yourself will really help you to understand and justify what it is you want to do.”
Rosa Nortesano  
*Science, Technology, and Society*

**What:** Off-campus applied learning experience in sonography  
**Location:** Office of Dr. Michael Polcino, North Babylon, NY  
**Project Focus:** Shadowing obstetric and gynecological sonograms  

**The Experience:** “I shadowed a sonographer and witnessed a variety of sonograms starting with obstetric and gynecological sonograms. I was able to experience all the aspects of being a sonogram technician, such as being able to recognize what is on the sonogram machine and how to identify the various organs and structures. I was able to work very closely with patients and the doctor especially when it came to him doing procedures such as an endometrial biopsy.”

**The Benefit:** “I was able to see what it was like to be a sonographer. This was a great experience considering the fact that this is a career path that I may take. It allowed me to talk to and build a relationship with the sonographer who could potentially help me find a job in the future. This experience allows me to be different from everyone who applied to the program because now I have first-hand experience in the field.”

**Words of Wisdom:** “The internship may be long but it will all be worth it in the end! This opportunity can open many doors for you. It can allow you to see what field you’re interested in and give you an option to do it first hand and see if you actually love it enough to keep pursuing it. This is very important especially if you’re a very indecisive student such as myself. Know it is all worth it and will be a benefit to you!”

---

Manuela Villada  
*Science, Technology, and Society*

**What:** Off-campus research experience on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease  
**Location:** Northwell Health, Manhasset, NY  
**Project Focus:** Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease  

**The Experience:** “I worked on a research study on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) at Northwell Health. I learned that it takes a lot to form a research study. It was very nice to see that while people were being studied, they were being helped with their condition in order to hopefully be able to help society with a new form of treatment.”

**The Benefit:** “My love for science grew and my desire to help people strengthened. It also helped me change my career path in the medical field. I previously wanted to be a nurse but I learned that there is so much more to be done. I would love to coordinate projects and be on the back end.”

**Words of Wisdom:** “To every RAM student, I would recommend taking the opportunity to do an internship in their career field. Gaining experience and making connections will always benefit you in the future. From the internship you will be able to conclude if you are really cut out for the industry or job. You will be living out everything that was learned during RAM classes about research and you will see how everything you learn is put into place and used. Being hands on and working on a project and contributing to society is very satisfying.”
Katerin Melgar  
*Dental Hygiene*  

**What:** Off-campus applied learning experience in dental hygiene through the Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP)  
**Location:** University of Florida, Gainesville, FL  
**Project Focus:** Shadowing dental hygiene faculty and students  

**The Experience:** “During the six weeks we learned about different health professions. Each week, we focused on a new research topic. Some PhD students would come in and talk about their current studies. Some faculty also came and presented their research. During the six weeks we each got a group and within that group we worked on a case study in which we had to present on the last day. The case study was based on community health. Once or twice a week we each went to our interest locations. For example, I would go to the school of dentistry. They would let us shadow dental students and also interact with them while they were on their breaks. During the weekends, we had writing assignments or group work to do. We also had fun activities to do outside of campus. We went to St. Augustine to see a play and go to a park for a BBQ. During these events, our mentors from the school of dentistry would come and interact with us.”  

**The Benefit:** “SHPEP was a great experience. I learned so much about different health professions. I learned so much about dentistry and realized that I really want to pursue that career. I also made great friends from all over the country. We all went in as strangers and we left as friends. It was great seeing how many people have the same passion as me. This experience really helped me make up my mind of what I want to do after Farmingdale. I also learned a lot about myself being away from home.”  

**Words of Wisdom:** “Choose a topic that you are passionate about. If you’re passionate about something, then the assignment won’t be a burden, it will be informative, and you will enjoy working on it.”

---

Joshua Roozrokh  
*Computer Programming & Information Systems*  

**What:** On-campus research experience on deep web technology  
**Research Mentors:** Dr. Jun Yuan (FSC)  
**Location:** Farmingdale State College  
**Project Focus:** Development of a deep web crawler  

**The Experience:** “Designed a Deep Web crawler to aid the search of websites that can be found on the deep web. We designed the web crawler using the Python Programming language. I worked with one other student from Farmingdale. Our crawler was successful in finding ‘low-hanging’ websites on the deep web. Our team presented our research at Farmingdale State College’s Student Research Day.”  

**The Benefit:** “I learned how to break complex problems into simple components. This is key when taking on research projects in which you have little background knowledge.”  

**Words of Wisdom:** “Do not be afraid to fail. Failing is a part of research. The only way to learn about certain phenomena is through failure, and learning from your mistakes.”
Marissa Shiwalak
*Bioscience*

**What:** Off-campus research experience on sepsis  
**Research Mentor:** Dr. Patricio Huerta  
**Location:** Feinstein Institute for Medical Research, Manhasset, NY  
**Project Focus:** Analyzed sepsis mice and how their cognitive functions are impaired due to sepsis  

**The Experience:** "I worked with a graduate student, Josh Strohl, in Dr. Huerta's lab. He taught me how to handle and conduct experiments on mice. I watched over surgeries and I also learned how to build 3-D drives which were then implanted into the mouse's brain. Using these implants, we tracked the mice in an experiment. I conducted behavioral experiments which allowed me to analyze how sepsis affects these animals."

**The Benefit:** "One benefit of this experience is that I now have a network of amazing people. I worked with a graduate student and built a connection to him and Dr. Huerta. This can help me in the long-term because I know if I ever need a recommendation, they will certainly be glad to provide one for me. I originally wanted to just go to medical school, but now that I have had this experience, it has opened my mind to pursuing a MD/PhD program."

**Words of Wisdom:** "Don't be afraid to reach out to the RAM counselors. Not only did they sit down and help me build my resume, they also wrote recommendations for me when I was applying to my internship. Also, don't wait until your senior year to decide you want to begin an internship. The more experience you have, the better."

Emily Rodier
*Bioscience*

**What:** Off-campus research experience in veterinary medicine  
**Location:** Long Island Veterinary Specialists, Plainview, NY  
**Project Focus:** Clinical trial research assistant  

**The Experience:** "Under the guidance of the surgeons at Long Island veterinary specialists, I assisted in the data upkeep of a clinical trial on tracheal stenting in small breed dogs. I kept an organized chart of all the scope dates, medication types, control group information, and variables pertaining to the clinical trial. I presented the chart to the doctor who then presented our information to a statistician to review our work. I kept everything organized to help ease the doctors' case load and allow them to focus on the medicine. Although I am finished with my hours, I am continuing work on the clinical trial to see the end."

**The Benefit:** "I learned the ins and outs of constructing a clinical trial as an aspect for applications for veterinary boards. I also learned how difficult it is to actually maintain a trial and how a lot more goes into it than just medicine. This taught me how to maintain and collect literature and present it in a credible way in a research setting and how to cite it properly. I learned how to deal with clients and owners in a way I never thought possible and most importantly I learned how much I love this field."

**Words of Wisdom:** "Find something that not only interest you but something that you'll have to do in the future. Doing it the first time and seeing it from an inside perspective under the guidance of an expert is a really great way to learn and prepare. You'll realize you had a lot of questions you never even knew to think of and you'll have a bunch of experts right there to guide you on the best path."
Jaelin Johnson  
*Business Management*

**What:** On-campus research experience in blended interaction design  
**Research Mentor:** Dr. Brian O'Keefe (FSC)  
**Location:** Farmingdale State College, New York, NY, & Patchogue, NY  
**Project Focus:** To enhance user experiences using mixed reality

**The Experience:** "I worked on a team of students from Farmingdale State College and Edinburgh-Napier University in Scotland to develop mixed reality prototypes. I was responsible for giving input and developing ideas. We visited NYC's High Line park and developed a virtual tour of the park. We also created several mixed reality proposals that would occupy the landscape. With another student, I designed a mixed reality game app that would help people visiting the High Line be more environmentally conscious about the Hudson River. We presented our work at Muñeca Arthouse in Patchogue, NY. This work will continue in Scotland in Summer 2019."

**The Benefit:** "I was paid for this experience while I made new connections and gained valuable knowledge. I was able to meet new people. I also learned about new and emerging technologies and practice my public speaking skills."

**Words of Wisdom:** "RAM research is a great way to expand your mind. It allows you to meet new people that have similar goals as you. The RAM Program constantly opens new doors."

Hannah Ventaloro  
*Criminal Justice: Law Enforcement Technology*

**What:** On-campus research experience on police-community relations  
**Research Mentor:** Dr. Clare Forstie (FSC)  
**Location:** Farmingdale State College  
**Project Focus:** Police brutality in the LGBTQ+ Community

**The Experience:** "Dr. Clare Forstie and I did intensive research on the impact of police brutality on the LGBTQ+ community. We saw how the rate of violence went up when police would deal with people in the LGBTQ+ community. I wrote a 15-page literature review using multiple sources. Dr. Clare Forstie helped edit this review. We plan on using the information collected to publish a 2-3 page policy brief about how trans* folks are specifically targeted and marginalized in a police setting."

**The Benefit:** "I had so much fun with Dr. Forstie talking about what we need to fix in this world and how the knowledge we gather is truly an intense power. The knowledge you gather working with a professor isn't something that you do every day and I've made a really close friend that I will remember when I think back on my days at Farmingdale. Although it was a lot of hard work, I am so proud of my work with Dr. Forstie."

**Words of Wisdom:** "Doing this class can either be painful or you can make it fun. Do something you love and it won't be tedious. Yes, it is hard work, but you can do it. I recommend managing your time and credits carefully. I took 19 credits while conducting this research and it was very stressful. I had the potential to make my report stronger, but because I had so much coursework, it wasn't as strong as I had hoped it would be."
Owen Tam

*Electrical Engineering Technology*

**What:** Off-campus internship in energy efficiency  
**Research Mentor:** Tom McGovern  
**Location:** CUNY Building Performance Lab, District 2030, & Geatain, New York, NY  
**Project Focus:** How to help buildings save money and use efficient energy

**The Experience:** "I was an intern for Geatain and the NY 2030 district. My responsibilities were to enter information on Energystar that they provided for me to see how much energy was being saved. I determined how to use Energystar more effectively and how to research information about smart buildings and electricity. I also had the opportunity to go to apartments, take photos, and take notes requires for the projects. I am still researching more information about these topics at the moment."

**The Benefit:** "This experience benefited me because I made many new connections. Making connections has given me a better chance at getting a job in the future and in my field of study. This internship also allowed me to explore how my major is going to be in the future. Overall, this experience helped me transform into a more responsible, hardworking scholar."

**Words of Wisdom:** "Don't back out on these opportunities. These are one of the benefits that you should be thankful for in this program. Do your tasks and be responsible. Try to make as many friends and connections as you can in the RAM program."

---

Tahj Amonds

*Applied Psychology*

**What:** Off/On-Campus research experience on academic success factors  
**Research Mentor:** Dr. Aaron Howell (FSC)  
**Location:** Farmingdale State College & Long Island Progressive Coalition (LIPC), Massapequa, NY  
**Project Focus:** Does location have an effect on a student's academic success?

**The Experience:** "We created a data base from archival data that Dr. Howell and I retrieved from LIPC. I helped organize and analyze the data. I am also working with Blanca Villanueva at LIPC to examine many variables like race, ethnicity, class, and quality of high school. Dr. Howell and I are presenting at the Eastern Sociological Association Conference in Boston, MA and the SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference at Farmingdale. We are also working on publishing a paper."

**The Benefit:** "It has taught me about the wonderful world of research and explore my options as a future social worker. I was able to meet a lot of great people who all care about the same issues as me. This experience has made me want to keep conducting research after my time here at Farmingdale. I learned many things about the factors that make a high school good or bad. I now know how to design a research project."

**Words of Wisdom:** "I believe that when you begin your mentorship program it should be treated as a special experience. This is your chance to grow and prosper with someone who could be another important mentor to you. When you work with your mentor it should be taken seriously. I know that I am being monotonous, but I cannot better express how great it is. I can't thank the RAM program and my mentors enough for helping to groom me into the student/researcher/peer leader that I am today."
Liya Simon

*Bioscience*

**What:** Off/On-Campus research experience in molecular biology

**Research Mentor:** Dr. Kerry Lutz (FSC) & Dr. Pal Maliga (Rutgers)

**Location:** Farmingdale State College & Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ

**Project Focus:** Development of a selection system to identify chloroplast regulatory genes

---

**The Experience:** “I was privileged enough to work on a molecular project under the direct supervision of a PhD candidate Lisa LaManna and my mentor Dr. Pal Maliga at Rutgers University during the summer of 2018. The goal of the project was to regenerate Brassica napus (rapeseed model plant) from tissue culture using the best protocol to perform chloroplast transformation. It was a time-consuming project and even though we only had a limited amount of time, our teamwork approach gave us the desired results. Initially, I researched 5 effective tissue regeneration protocols from the literature and applied them to identify the best medium for Brassica napus to regenerate. The differences between each of the protocols were just the vitamins that we used and the duration of the explants on the plate. My tasks included making B5 basal media, adding the vitamins and hormones, pouring plates, keeping track of the leaf transferring dates and transferring them by cutting it into smaller pieces each time. We almost had over 500 plates for all the trials that we performed. According to the results, we found out that Akasaka mod 1 was the best medium because comparably, we were able to obtain a good number of shoots as well as it did not expand into a billion number of plates like the other protocols. Thus, our lab successfully figured out the cheapest and most convenient protocol for Brassica napus to regenerate and I got the honor to do a mini symposium (power point presentation) and another symposium (poster presentation) at Rutgers University in front of a large audience.”

**The Benefit:** “Even though I was excited to do the research with Dr. Pal Maliga and Lisa, whom I’ve known for almost a year, the thought of living far away from my family and hometown was overwhelming. But I knew it had to happen, and now if someone were to ask me a moment I could relive in my life, that would be the summer of 2018. Rutgers and the whole research crew including my lab members and friends from different parts of the world had a huge and positive impact on me. I was able to get out of my comfort zone which changed my whole perspective on life and taught me to be independent. I am grateful to them for their guidance and support they have given me throughout this project. This experience has helped me develop professional skills and expand my lab techniques and realize what I need to continue to grow as a student.”

**Words of Wisdom:** “Living far away from friends and family is hard. However, my first advice to the students who are preparing to do research is to never let that fear be the deciding factor when you are thinking of interning. After you experience it, you will catch yourself entirely loving it. There are a lot of things you can learn from interning out of state/abroad and it can also help you strengthen your resume, which is what you should be aiming for. You will have the opportunity to meet a lot of people that can teach you everything you need to know about a career path and will prepare you for the real world. It’s by taking these chances that you get the most out of your life and career. So rather than letting the prospect scare you like it used to be for me, start embracing it and always remember, you need experience to get experience.”

---

Farmingdale State College
2350 Broadhollow Road
Farmingdale, New York 11735
631-420-2000 • farmingdale.edu

SUNY The State University of New York
Jacquelyn Haft  
*Bioscience*  

**What:** Off-Campus research experience in orthopedics  
**Location:** Long Island Orthopedic Solutions, Huntington Station, NY  

**Project Focus:** The efficacy of gel shot treatments on arthritic patients  

**The Experience:** “I designed a survey in order to measure the subjective pain levels of each patient to be completed at each treatment. I led the research and went room to room with PA Susan Condreras talking with patients on how they feel the gel shots have been working for them. We looked at and compared 3 brands of shots and 2 series lengths. Overall, we determined the treatment effective. We were able to identify the best brand and series based on the subjective pain level percent improvement from patients. One of the brands became very interested in my project, and we are looking into continuing it further in order to help their brand and publish the results.”  

**The Benefit:** “This experience has been an extremely important step for me in my career and schooling plans. I hope to continue with this brand and get my research published. I have gained new skills and a better understanding of the field I want to get into, and it has solidified what I want to do in the future—become a physician assistant. I also gained a new job. After I completed my research, I was offered a position as the medical assistant to PA Susan Condreras. I love the staff there and I cannot wait to continue to help.”  

**Words of Wisdom:** “I recommend this experience to everyone. It will allow you to further explore the field you are interested in and it will really show you what it’s like.”  

---  

Sofia Cuenca  
*Computer Programming and Information Systems*  

**What:** Off-Campus research experience in cybersecurity  
**Location:** Bowie State University, Bowie, MD  

**Project Focus:** Cyber Threat Intelligence Discovery from the Darknet  

**The Experience:** “I was accepted to this NSF-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program to conduct research with a team of two other students. One teammate was from the University of Maryland and the other was from Bowie State University. Together, we read scholarly articles that we shared with each other to learn more about the topic which involved gathering information to protect systems from cyber-attacks and threats. I cleaned data and used SQL, MS Excel, and IBM Watson analytics to open, convert, and explore datasets and examine filters. With machine learning tools, I identified the author and location of forum posts on the dark net. We also presented in a symposium about our topic.”  

**The Benefit:** “From this experience, I have learned more about what happens in the deep web and what is happening on the internet that the public cannot see. I made friends in another part of the country with whom I am still in touch. I also learned what it is like to dorm at a college since I do not have that experience here.”  

**Words of Wisdom:** “I would encourage everyone to at least apply for a REU program because you will learn a lot and you get paid to go to another location. Be confident and just apply to everything even if you do not think you qualify.”
Deanna Esposito
Business Management

What: On-Campus Internship in Online International Learning
Research Mentor: Andrea Thomas (FSC)
Location: Farmingdale State College
Project Focus: How Collaborative Online International Learning Benefits Business Students

The Experience: “I conducted research on SUNY Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). I analyzed peer-reviewed journal articles on the program’s effectiveness. I am continuing this research and I will participate in the SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference in April 2019.”

The Benefit: “This experience offered a brand new academic experience unlike any other. It reinforced the importance of deadlines and time management for me. The experience gave me hands-on experience with extensive analysis and critical thinking.”

Words of Wisdom: “It’s very different from other academic courses and the workload is almost entirely on you. This experience offers students an opportunity to see how much responsibility they will have with their future career. This experience is geared to benefit you, so take advantage while you can!”

Skye Bergen
Criminal Justice: Law Enforcement Technology

What: On-Campus Research on Stop & Frisk
Research Mentor: Dr. LaNina Cooke (FSC)
Location: Farmingdale State College
Project Focus: Stop & Frisk/Mental Health & Substance Abuse in Long Island Jails

The Experience: “In the Spring 2018 semester, Dr. Cooke and I worked on a project where we researched stop and frisk in New York City. Our primary focus was on juveniles and the reason why they were stopped. Currently, I am working with a few other students on a research project on the mental health and substance abuse problems that inmates in jail go through and what type of programs would be beneficial to them.”

The Benefit: “The research projects have helped me to fall in love with research. This experience has helped me to solidify my plans for the future. I will continue on to graduate school and will possibly go into a career centered around research.”

Words of Wisdom: “Yes, it is a lot of work and does get stressful, but you will fall in love with your project. You are learning and figuring something out that you will be proud of and want to share it with as many people as you can.”
John Ognibene
*Business Management*

**What:** On-Campus research experience on consumer behavior

**Research Mentor:** Dr. Ebru Ulusoy (FSC)

**Location:** Farmingdale State College

**Project Focus:** The Effects of Italian Restaurant Designs on Consumer Experience and Pricing

**The Experience:** “During my research experience, I worked alongside Dr. Ebru Ulusoy to get a better understanding on the effects that Italian Restaurant designs have on consumer behavior. First, I was responsible for gathering information at local dine-in and take-out Italian Restaurants with observations. Then, I used the resources of the Farmingdale Library database to find more information about the psychological effects a restaurant's design can have on customer’s mood and appetite.”

**The Benefit:** “Working alongside a highly educated and knowledgeable mentor helped me through this research. This research experience helped me see a different side of the restaurant business that I never knew was even a thing. Restaurant design has more of an effect on success than people may think. This experience has helped me become a better researcher and a better critical writer.”

**Words of Wisdom:** “I would highly recommend this experience for any new members. It may seem challenging at the beginning, but the experience makes you more knowledgeable in the end. Take on the opportunity and learn new things.”

---

Chi Mei Ng Joa
*Bioscience*

**What:** Off/On-Campus internship in pharmaceutical skin-care products

**Research Mentor:** Dr. Lin Guo

**Location:** BF Innovation, Broad Hollow Bioscience Park

**Project Focus:** The production of pharmaceutical skin-care products

**The Experience:** “The main purpose of BF Innovation is to formulate skin-care products. I was part of the analytical team, which tested the composition and quality of the products. Some of my responsibilities varied from organizing paperwork in the office area to assisting and conducting side testing for different projects. During my time working in the lab, I formed products that will help cure people of skin-related ailments. I will continue to learn and work at BF Innovation as I continue with my studies at FSC.”

**The Benefit:** “I learned about the many regulations and procedures a pharmaceutical lab must follow in order for a product to be made. I am thankful for being accepted as the first intern in the company. I was treated as the little sister by the very caring team I worked with. I worked closely with Dr. Lin Guo who was not only nice but wise and she always gave me knowledge and guidance. I also learned a lot while working with fellow scientists in the lab. This internship gave me a prospective career that I may follow in the future since I still am unsure of the path I want to take after college.”

**Words of Wisdom:** “Getting experience before going out into the world is very important. While being an intern, I learned how to work with other people as a team. I gained countless of skills and knowledge that can’t be learned in school, but need to be experienced in order to be learned.”
Jennifer De Los Santos
*Applied Psychology*

**What:** On-Campus research experience on divorce  
**Research Mentor:** Dr. Marla Johnston (FSC)  
**Location:** Farmingdale State College

**Project Focus:** How divorce affects young children and adolescents over time  
**The Experience:** “I learned about the effects of divorce through investigating past research articles. I helped prepare the Institutional Review Board forms for the study that we plan to conduct. I accomplished a great deal independently and I know much more about the topic now than when I first began in August. I will continue this project with Dr. Marla Johnston after its IRB approval by conducting interviews with young children.”

**The Benefit:** “I gained more knowledge about the topic and discovered new coping methods for young children of divorced parents. With this knowledge, I will be able to apply it in the future as a clinical psychologist with my patients who are struggling. This experience showed me that I can be a source of help to guide patients and educate families with young children who are dealing with conflicted emotions about the new changes in their life.”

**Words of Wisdom:** “Research may seem a lot to take on at first and is often said to be "hard" but if you are conducting research on a topic that interests you, then the whole thing is more rewarding than hard. Yes, it is about commitment, hard work, and time management but mostly it is about stepping out of your comfort zone. Never be afraid to take on a new challenge for yourself and failure doesn't mean you should give up; it just gives you more motivation to push yourself harder to succeed.”

Julia Levato
*Business Management*

**What:** On-Campus research experience on brand loyalty  
**Research Mentor:** Dr. Heather Kirkwood (FSC)  
**Location:** Farmingdale State College

**Project Focus:** Research on brand loyalty, authenticity, and attachment  
**The Experience:** “Our team researched scholarly articles relating to brand loyalty, authenticity, and attachment. We developed scales for survey research and completed Institutional Review Board forms so we may eventually collect data. We are writing a paper to submit to the SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference and we hope this research will be published.”

**The Benefit:** “I benefitted a lot from this project. I have learned a great deal about why we buy the things we do and why we subconsciously make the purchasing decisions we do. I also learned a few lessons in time management and prioritizing my research responsibilities.”

**Words of Wisdom:** “I took on a lot this semester, more than I thought I could handle. I had a few things prioritized higher than this mentorship and I struggled at first. My advice is to speak with your mentor as well as your RAM Advisor early on to figure out how to manage your time and keep on track with the project. The guidance is there for you and it is what helped me finish this research experience strong.”
Nichole Amador

*Criminal Justice: Law Enforcement Technology*

**What:** On-Campus research experience on the Yaphank Jail  
**Research Mentor:** Dr. LaNina Cooke (FSC)  
**Location:** Farmingdale State College  

**Project Focus:** Examining the Population at Yaphank Jail Facility  

**The Experience:** “Four other students and I worked with Dr. Cooke on researching the population of Yaphank Jail Facility. We have proposed three questions to the Sheriff that we would like to further look into. We have gathered basic information about the facility and put our thoughts into what we would like to look for while researching. By the end of this research, we will be completing a presentation to be presented at an on-campus (or state) conference.”  

**The Benefit:** “Dr. Cooke she has put my mind to the test. She makes me think outside of the box and definitely has made an impact on my life. Working with professors and research is not something people would think is “cool” or “fun” but working with her was just that! Her knowledge is superior and I’m very glad I got to have this experience.”  

**Words of Wisdom:** “Take advantage of the opportunity. It has been one of the greatest things to happen to me at Farmingdale. Being a part of the RAM program will expand your mind and open doors for you. It has helped me grow as an individual. You build great connections with your counselors and make friendships with people you would never expect! I’m glad I stuck with it.”