Dear reader,
Welcome to the summer 2022 summer program newsletter, and congratulations to all of our awesome fellow interns! We made great memories together by spending time bonding in New York City, going on excursions such as a Mets game, and cruising through the Hudson on a waterfront cruise. We worked hard, contributing to projects in computational biology, engineering, chemistry, biology, and microscopy. And we met some of the coolest people on planet Earth.

Our goal with this newsletter is to present different perspectives from this summer and to provide a repository for some of our favorite memories and pictures. We hope you enjoy reading about our experiences as summer interns and seeing pictures of our adventures!

Thank you to all of our awesome mentors, Dr. Ushma Neill, Dr. Michael Overholtzer, Dr. Dan Bachovchin, Dr. Michael Berger, Dr. Dan Heller, and Dr. Jason Lewis for making this experience possible!

Kyle, Casey, and Liz
Newsletter Editors
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GET READY WITH ME

Amanda Murray

Hi there! My name is Amanda Murray, and I have spent the last 10 weeks at MSK working with Dr. Michael R. McDevitt as a part of the Engineering Summer Program (ESP)! When I moved to the city in June from Clemson, South Carolina, my day-to-day life changed a lot as I adapted to such an urban lifestyle, so here is a day in the life of an ESPer! I would try my best to wake up around 7:30 to get ready for the day before heading to the UES on the Q train around 8 or so. I loved grabbing a coffee at Matto on 68th St each day and then being in the lab right at 9 to start with my experiments or cell culture for the day. I also always enjoy admiring the view across the East River from the 19th floor of Zuckerman everyday as I clocked in. Depending on the day of the week, I spent most of my mornings either in lab meetings or trying to finish my lab work for the day.

Come lunch time, I normally grabbed something quick from the MSK cafeteria, but my roommate and I both loved taking the occasional long lunch at Chipotle to chat or vent, or some combination of the two ;) I spent most of my time after lunch doing computer-related lab work and analyses until I finished up for the day. Depending on the time, I loved making a pit stop back at the New Yorker after work and then heading out to grab dinner and explore a new part of the city, although I must admit my default evening was to enjoy a nice walk on the Highline and always end up in the West Village. I finished my days by heading back to our dorms and getting ready for new places, experiments, and adventures the next day :)

Pictures from the dinner cruise

Photo Credits: Amanda Murray

Elena and Amanda on a day trip on Long Island
LEARNING AND QUESTIONS

Isabelle Edmondson

My summer was filled with learning and questions. I learned about new laboratory techniques, molecular mechanisms, and the expectations of graduate school research. My background is primarily in organic synthesis, so learning molecular biology techniques such as cloning, transfections, western blotting, and immunoprecipitations was both exciting and incredibly useful. This summer has reinforced my desire to work at the intersection of multiple fields of science. Chemistry and biology are inseparable, and studying chemical biology allows us to ask a broad variety of questions and explore research ideas using many different techniques. I am grateful that this summer exposed me to different methods of research.

I also realized how essential collaboration is in the lab. Attending weekly lab meetings, participating in scientific discussions with the members of the lab, as well as asking others for help gave me new perspectives on the biological mechanisms that our lab studies, as well as insights into how to improve my techniques. With every research question answered by an experiment, more questions arose from the new findings. This was the aspect of research that I found the most exciting; the learning is endless.

I wanted to share my excitement about research with my friends and family, many of whom do not have a background in science. I learned how to discuss my findings and the work I was doing in lab with people who were not familiar with terminology or lab equipment. I found it incredibly rewarding when I was able to communicate the projects and protocols of what I was working on; a few nights ago, I explained lentiviral infections to my friend and it was gratifying to see them share my excitement and fascination.

I would arrive in lab every day at 9 am and the first thing I would do is look at the note I had written the night before that listed everything I had to do that day. The structure of my day varied based on what experiments I was performing. In the mornings I would typically start the experiment or project that would take the longest for me to do. For example, if I were doing an IP, I would incubate the beads with the cell lysate first thing in the morning and then weigh out other reagents. I would also run gels for any samples I collected the night before, or set up PCRs. I would move any western blots I had in primary antibody to secondary antibody so I could image them as soon as possible. I would also check on the bacteria I plated, or miniprep the bacteria I had picked and grew overnight. In the afternoon, I mostly worked with bacteria; I would pick colonies and transform bacteria so they were ready to work with the next morning. Before I left work I would always write a to-do list for the next day, and then organize and log any samples I had made and store them.

“Science and everyday life cannot and should not be separated.” - Rosalind Franklin

One of my favorite memories from this summer was when we received the sequencing data from the gateway cloning we had been working on. The cloning required a significant amount of troubleshooting and we had been trying to grow colonies for a while. It was so rewarding to receive confirmation that the cloning had worked, and it was even more exciting because it meant we were closer to establishing cell lines to be used in some interesting new experiments.
Citi Field at Sunset

Photo Credits: Isabelle Edmondson, ChBSP

From left to right: Elizabeth Mari, Isabella Edmondson, Casey Chan, Sarah Xi, Jose Luis Llera Munoz (all ChBSP)
EVERYTHING I LEARNED ALONG THE WAY
Casey Chan

“All the World is a Laboratory to the Inquiring Mind.” - Martin M. Fischer

The light in my room at the New Yorker is a bit shy. When you flick the switch on, the light does not turn on right away. It flickers for a few seconds, gradually becoming brighter and more steady. But once it reaches its full potential, it illuminates the whole room in a warm, strong glow. I have realized that you just have to be patient, and when you look up eventually, you’ll notice that the light is working just fine.

I realized that the same is true for myself. This summer, I learned so much, including how to be patient with myself during the learning process. I have lived right outside of New York City for most of my life, and I work in chemistry research at my undergraduate institution. I believed that these experiences would prepare me well for the summer program, not realizing that my scope for viewing the world would be broadened considerably.

This summer, I worked on a chemical biology project in Dr. Yael David’s lab, and was able to use techniques that I had previously only read about in textbooks. Living in the New Yorker also gave me an opportunity to experience life in the city, and I experienced the joy of exploring new areas like Forest Hills, Chinatown, Little Italy, Soho, Chelsea, Flushing, and others.

I am so thankful for the wonderful mentors and individuals who showed me new techniques and concepts and who made learning enjoyable. Sarah and Britney, my lab mentors, taught me techniques such as Western blotting, cell culture, transformations, protein purification, and cloning. Their enthusiastic energy and curiosity for science make me excited to continue pursuing science in the future. Their guidance has also helped me to become more independent in the lab, and to be confident in setting up experiments. One learning opportunity happened when a cloning method that I was using did not produce an intended mutant DNA sequence. After troubleshooting the reaction, Sarah and I decided to use a different method involving the PCR of inserts and vectors and a Gibson Assembly to combine them, which eventually produced our mutant. Through this experience and others, I learned more about science as an iterative process, where experimental approaches are constantly improved and hypotheses are changed.

I also grew this summer because of the people that I met. My wonderful friends Liz, Jose, Hans, Ibby, and Sarah were always encouraging, and it was amazing to meet others who are passionate about science, especially chemistry and biology. We had lots of great food (especially from a Thai restaurant down the street from the hotel) and listened to a lot of Bad Bunny (thank you Jose 😊).

This program has made me into a better researcher, a more well-seasoned explorer, and, hopefully, a brighter light for future interactions. Thank you to the Tri-Institutional Chemical Biology Summer Program, to Dr. Daniel Bachovchin, Dr. Ushma Neill, Brittney Bobowski, Dr. Sarah Faulkner, and Dr. Yael David for making this summer an amazing learning experience!

One of my favorite memories from the summer was when I presented my research during a lab group meeting. The members of my lab asked great questions, and it felt satisfying to visually summarize all of the experiments that I had performed over the summer. I really enjoyed working on immunoblotting, cell culture, and cloning experiments simultaneously, and it was interesting to see how all of these results fit into a larger, conceptual picture. I am very thankful for the encouragement from my lab and for their great advice about applying to graduate school, choosing mentors, and researching helpful fellowships.
YOU’VE HEARD OF “THE MITOCHONDRIA IS THE POWERHOUSE OF THE CELL”, NOW GET READY FOR "A MONAD IS A MONOID IN THE CATEGORY OF ENDOFUNCTORS".

-- WOLFIE2TMX ON YOUTUBE (VIA YUXI LONG)
In the mornings I’ll wake up around 7:45 or 8 depending on how many times I snooze my alarm, and start getting ready for the day. After I’ve showered, gotten dressed, and done my skincare routine, I’ll sit and catch up on social media. While I do this, I like to have a cup of coffee and a breakfast smoothie before heading to Zuckerman and starting my experiments for the day.

For lunch I typically bring in leftovers or pack a sandwich, but if I go out to eat for lunch I have a few favorite spots. I love getting the lunch special at Matsu Sushi- I’ll typically get the two roll special. I also love the Pho from two wheels, and the chicken tenders from the main campus cafeteria. After lunch I’ll head back into the lab to finish up experiments or do some reading.

If I’m not meeting up with friends from school and exploring the city, I like to cook and watch netflix in the evenings. I love trying new things from trader joes, and my current favorite is the trader Joe’s sweet potato gnocchi. After dinner, I’ll watch some TV before going to bed!

Quote:
“Science never solves a problem without creating ten more” - George Bernard Shaw

Favorite Memory:
Going to Brighton beach with my lab group (Kentsis Lab)!
MY SUMMER EXPERIENCE
IN PICTURES

Elizabeth Mari

From the people I met to the chemistry I did, this summer has been nothing short of amazing.
- Elizabeth
Top (left to right): Hans Oh, Isabelle Edmondson, Dr. Michael Berger
Bottom (left to right): Dr. Ushma Neill, Casey Chan, Elizabeth Mari, Jose Llera Munoz

From left to right: Zhiyue Zhang, Afsana Rahman, Amber Pospistile (All CBSP)
My Summer Experience
Amber Pospistle

When I first learned I had been accepted into the CBSP program, I was filled with excitement and paced the floors and forgot to respond to the email for a while. I anxiously called my mom and told her the good news. I was going to be interning at one of the best institutions in the country for my field and was going to be in New York City!

I drove up to New York City with my mom. Once we arrived in the Big Apple, I was filled with fear and kept repeating “Why did I choose to come here?” overwhelmed by the bustling street life that was a departure from the industrial city that my undergraduate institution is in. I continued to be filled with fear for that day as I slowly started learning how to navigate the streets, use the subway system, and visit some sights.

Over the next few days, I slowly started to get oriented to my new surroundings and the city and I moved into the New Yorker. On the first day of the internship, I got to meet my fellow interns - finally others interested in computational biology! I also realized I was much younger than everyone else in the program as a rising sophomore, repeatedly hearing terms such as “back in my freshman year” which was intimidating.

Eventually, I learned that I would be working on a computational immuno-oncology project focusing on a hereditary cancer predisposition syndrome. I learned that the dataset was of international importance and took years to obtain. I also learned that the dataset could hold answers that could help determine what treatments may be effective for specific patients with the syndrome. I was thrilled to work on such a translational project that combined my interest with genomics and immuno-oncology that had such clinical importance.

I also was able to hear a presentation from Arnold Levine (who discovered the p53 protein) and report some preliminary study findings, hear from a doctor who treats patients with the syndrome, and meet a patient with the syndrome during my internship. Throughout the internship, I had the opportunity to listen to multiple lectures that built upon my understanding of cancer biology and computational biology and was also able to attend two immuno-oncology symposiums. The lab meetings I attended also opened my eyes as I saw research from different areas and how clinicians collaborate on research projects.

Outside of the internship, I slowly gained comfort of being in New York City slowly throughout the summer. Initially, I was afraid to go out in the city alone. Eventually, I made whole trips and commutes by myself. Initially, I attended events with other interns offered by EHS to get out in the city. These trips increased my confidence and eventually I left out for weekend trips by myself. Over the course of the internship, I went to Metropolitan Museum of Art (twice), Into the Woods, Hadestown, Book of Mormon, Hadestown, Six, Come from Away, Chelsea Market (three times), Little Island, MoMA, Whitney Museum, High Line (three times), American Museum of Natural History, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Prospect Park, Central Park (three times), Summit One Vanderbilt, Governor’s Island, Roosevelt Island, Staten Island, Battery Park, Brooklyn Bridge Park, Brooklyn Bridge (three times), Park Slope, Macy’s 4th of July Fireworks, LEAF Flower Show, among other places and events.

(continuation on next page)
Over time, I fell in love with both MSK (and the Tri-I as an institution) as well as New York City. I learned to savor my leisurely strolls throughout the city and along my commute and made an effort to fill every moment of the weekend with fun in New York City. Now at the end of the internship, I can't imagine leaving New York City and all of the people I've met at MSK. I hope to come back to NYC and potentially Tri-I again but for now I cherish the memories I've had here. I'm glad I made the decision to come to Tri-I where I worked on a project of my dreams in a city I love surrounded by like-minded interns and students that taught me about career options, undergraduate advice, how to cook without starting a fire (yes, that almost happened!), and most importantly provided a sense of community.

Photo Credits: Amber Pospistle, CBSP

Dinner Cruise! From left to right: Afsana Rahman, Zhiyue Zhang, Amber Pospistle, Yuxi (Jaden) Long (All CBSP)

Photo Credits: Afsana Rahman, CBSP
Oh, the People You'll Meet!

Kyle Pu

Research is cool and all, buuuutt that's only half of the summer experience. Before coming to NYC, there's a lot of thoughts - why the heck did I get in, am I actually going to do something productive, what will my PI think of me, will I make friends, am I ready to live the city life?!?!?

It's scary, but all the doubts fade away as the summer gets going along. I say that because the people we end up being surrounded with are LITERALLY some of the smartest and coolest people we could've ever met.

These are people we spend one hour with talking about med school and PhD's, and the next hour having fun in ways college kids know how to have fun. People that you’ll start being sad about having to leave after summer, a month before summer is actually over. People that you’ll calculate the distance between your home institutions with to see when and where you can meet up with again in the future. People you know you’ll be seeing on author lists of papers you read in the future (if you actually read papers hehehe). And people you wish you could always be with, just one or two floors away in the middle of NYC.

I've loved my time here and wouldn't trade it for anything else. There's so much to learn, especially if you’re not used to the city life. That uptown streets go up North (this is non-obvious, I did not find this out until Week 5, probably because I wasn't using my scientific critical thinking skills), that Manhattan is not equal to NYC, and that by your second week in, you can start getting annoyed at all the tourists for invading your home.

So, in retrospect, these summer programs really are about finding out more about what you want to do career-wise. You dive deep into some stuff you've probably never heard about, you go to talks that make you think you've probably never stepped foot in a place housing so much intelligence, and you become part of a lab working on research that actually matters. But you also meet some of the most brilliant and kind people on the literal face of this Earth. And those are the memories that’ll stick with you long after the summer comes to a close. I wish I could transplant them all from their future lives into mine.

Manhattan from the west edge

Photo Credits: Kyle Pu, CBSP
Midnight after-party at Columbia University. From left to right: Kyle Pu, Julia Zhao, Josh Lau, Sanjana Kotha.

Photo Credits: Kyle Pu, CBSP

Manhattanhenge. From left to right: Kiara Johnson, Sanjana Kotha, Josh Lau, Sydney Woods, Julia Zhao, Aziz Ur Rehman Zafar, Mitchell Witt, Kyle Pu

Photo Credits: Kyle Pu, CBSP
A strong intro to Turkish Cuisine in Lab + SURP lunch

Photo Credits: Batu Özlüsen, SURP

A late night of chromatography

Photo Credits: Hans Oh, CHBSP
An Inexplicable Experience
Aziz Ur Rehman Zafar

I write this as I sit with my friends in a random NYC park, for the last time this summer. It’s bittersweet: bitter because I won’t get to experience this group again, but sweet because I got the chance to be with these people every day, live with them, talk with for long hours on the 15th floor, and got to experience the city for the first time with them. No amount of words or paragraphs can explain the joy and fun I experienced this summer, and all the amazing skills I learnt in my lab environment. One would have to experience it for themselves to understand.

Seaport. From left to right: Joshua Lau (ESP), Mitchell Witt (CBSP), Kyle Pu (CBSP), Aziz Ur Rehman Zafar (CBSP), Sanjana Kotha (CBSP)

Photo Credits: Aziz Ur Rehman Zafar, CBSP

15th floor of The New Yorker. From left to right: Kyle Pu (CBSP), Sanjana Kotha (CBSP), Aziz Ur Rehman Zafar (CBSP), Josh Lau (ESP)

Photo Credits: Aziz Ur Rehman Zafar, CBSP
From left to right: Joshua Lau (ESP), Kyle Pu (CBSP), Sanjana Kotha (CBSP)

Photo Credits: Arielle Karr Tycko, CBSP

From left to right: Rhea Malhotra, Arielle Tycko, Sanjana Kotha, Julia Zhao (All CBSP)

Photo Credits: Arielle Karr Tycko, CBSP
Coffee and Friendship

Arielle Karr Tycko

One of the best discoveries of this summer was Matto. Nothing beats $2.50 coffee and muffins. But what was even better than the cheap and delicious meals at Matto were the people I got to share them with. I first tried Matto with a non-MSK friend and was immediately hooked, quickly scarfing down an iced oat milk mocha and corn muffin while enjoying the sites of Greenwich Village. When I discovered there was a location on 68th, a short one minute walk from Zuckerman, my life was transformed. Before the CBSP Hackathon, my team– California Gurls– went to Matto for breakfast to charge up for the day. I can safely say that my Matto iced latte greatly improved my performance that day and was just one way in which the Hackathon was a terrific experience. For the rest of the summer, I frequently went to Matto for many refreshing drinks and snacks, making long days in the lab just a bit better. Overall, I’ll always remember my time at CBSP fondly and hope to get coffee with my fellow interns at Matto again one day.
Reflection on the Summer
Sydney Woods

It’s hard to pick a favorite memory! The interns probably had hundreds of experiences together, both in and outside of the workplace; from viewing waterfront sunsets to Herbie Hancock’s jazz in Central Park; from dressing each other in horrid thrift shop outfits to sweating profusely as we struggled to pedal a six-person bicycle up a tiny hill on Governor’s Island. Kyle earned a reputation as everyone’s personal photographer, while I think I earned a reputation for devoutly cooking plain beans and kale in The New Yorker. We bonded over fear of the strange vibes on 34th street, and love for Ushma’s motherly overseeing presence. Tears are already being shed as we prepare to depart from New York, but I’m sure we’ll find a way to run into each other again soon!

Poster Session! From left to right: Michael Berger, Chai Bandlamudi, Sydney Woods (CBSP)
Photo Credits: Sydney Woods, CBSP

Hudson River! From left to right: Mitchell Witt, Aziz Ur Rehman Zafar, Sydney Woods, Sanjana Kotha, Lauren (EHS Friend), Kyle Pu (All CBSP)
Photo Credits: Sydney Woods, CBSP
Governor’s Island!
Photo Credits: Sydney Woods, CBSP

Brooklyn Bridge! From left to right: Kyle Pu (CBSP), Aziz Ur Rehman Zafar (CBSP), Joshua Lau (ESP), Sanjana Kotha (CBSP), Sydney Woods (CBSP), Ivory (EHS Friend)
Photo Credits: Sydney Woods, CBSP

Returning From Governor’s Island!
Photo Credits: Sydney Woods, CBSP

Sanjana Kotha (CBSP) photographed by Arielle Tycko (CBSP) at 1 AM getting pizza.
Photo Credits: Arielle Karr Tycko, CBSP
A Poem
Julia Zhao

Time-lapse pictures cannot capture the memories we’ve made on hot summer days.

Nervous waving hi in anticipation who would’ve thought that we’d meet the best pals.

The kitchen, surprisingly, is our beloved spot chefing up tasty food and late-night talks.

Crisp clacks the 8 ball rolls laughter fills the couches in the TV room.

All around the city here we roam from mellow lakes to the top of the world.

Sea breeze sweeps of golden rays our eyes twinkled our glasses raised.

They say with hard work comes no play yet we sing the 10 weeks of joy.

All good times need not come to an end will be in touch my forever friends :)

From left to right: Abby Swartz (MISP), Kaitlyn Pierpont (ESP), Julia Zhao (me) (CBSP), Alex Dalrymple (MISP)

Photo Credits: Julia Zhao, CBSP
The CBSP Gallery
Mitchell Witt

Hackathon: Kyle, Aziz, Yutaro, Jaden, and I at CBSP Hackathon. We, like, solved all the problems. Everyone on my team was ON POINT and they SLAYED.

Burrito: Me presenting my first at-EHS burrito to Kyle and Sydney. This seems to appease them, for the moment.

Capybara: Me and a Capy at the American Natural History Museum. I’m a big Capybara fan.
The CBSP Gallery

Mitchell Witt

**Dinosaur:** Me and Kyle went dinosaur hunting. This is the one we trapped in Henna Hotel.

**Krispy Kreme:** Sanjana, Aziz, Amber, Kyle, and I getting Krispy Kreme at Penn Station. We had to fight to get the last box of glazed donuts.

**MSK Appreciation Week**

Kyle Pu (CBSP), Julia Zhao (CBSP), Sanjana Kotha (CBSP), Aziz Zafar (CBSP)

Photo Credits: Julia Zhao, CBSP
Pondering
Yutaro Tanaka

The gardens atop the Rockefeller River Campus were where I spent a good deal of time (perhaps too much) every day, of every week I spent in CBSP. A walk in the morning, sometimes lunch with lab mates, and a short evening period of time to just sit, listen to the East River, and think. It became a trained habit for me to abruptly stand up and walk out of the lab, out onto the gardens, and wonder around whenever I wanted to stop. Stop reading papers, stop writing code, stop reaching for snacks. This summer was a chance to stop. New York is the place where everyone goes, goes, and goes some more until they make it. Cycling through midtown New York into the peace and serenity of the MSK-Cornell-Rockefeller corner of town, the waves of people going places were never-ending. It’s so incredibly easy to be swept up into this, but stopping afforded me the opportunity to think more deeply about science and the world at large. Basic science has the enthralling ability, I discovered, to throw endless confusing problems - stuff that we just don’t understand yet. Many days were spent watching barges go by, pondering about very specific problems I was facing, and going back into lab when I thought of something to try. To be able to think, without disturbance, about research, was an incredible luxury.
Together
Joshua Lau

My dear, fellow scientist nerd interns
I've cooked with you, cooked for you
Sweated through 34th Street with you,
sweated in Penn station with you
Taken the gondola to Roosevelt with you
Biked home at midnight with you
I've even cut your hair

You've shown me how smart, capable,
and hard working scientists can be
Or how cool some of the work you guys
do is
You've inspired me!
You taught me to do a firemans carry
To play pool
Or to trick planet fitness into a free
membership

We did science together
Gave each other emotional support
We made the most of weekends!
We explored Manhattan, Brooklyn,
Governor's Island, and so much more
We've watched movies, shows, and even
really disappointing stand up comedy
together
We've chatted together, figured out life
together, in our rooms, on the 15th floor,
in lab, after journal clubs, in the 6/f coffee
room (usually for way too long)

Thank you guys for a great summer - I'll
miss you guys!!!
I hope our paths will cross again one day!
I know you guys will kill it, wherever you
end up
Lewis Lab Outing
Photo Credits: Josephine Chen, MISP

Many of the interns at the dinner cruise
Top row: Joshua Lau (ESP), Arielle Tycko (CBSP), Julia Zhao (me) (CBSP), Kyle Pu (CBSP), Aiden Wirrick (MISP), Abdul-Vehab Dozic (MISP), Bailey Levin (MISP)
Bottom row: Kaitlyn Pierpont (ESP), Sanjana Kotha (CBSP), Abby Swartz (MISP), Alex Dalrymple (MISP)
Photo Credits: Julia Zhao, CBSP
SUMMER @ MSK
AUGUST 2022

THANKS FOR A GREAT SUMMER