

Final Reflection on My Summer Enrichment Experience at the University of Missouri, St. Louis, STARS Program

By Samuel Wang

I have greatly enjoyed the UMSL STARS experience. The lectures at UMSL have been extremely eye opening to what my future could hold. I could help save people from drinking contaminated water, help people see better or even for the first time in their lives, turn off cancer using the “universal sleep genes” I learned about during a circadian rhythm research presentation, or I could create the fastest route for UPS drivers through complex examinations in the field of data analysis. I got the opportunity to learn about new areas in STEM that I never would have considered exploring like optometry or circadian rhythm’s impact on cancer study. I am confident in performing experiments in the lab, describing my research in a true scientific research manuscript, and presenting my findings in front of research peers and professionals working in the field.

The STARS program is quite unique in the fact that as a rising senior, I got to be an undergraduate student at two research institutes/ universities attending lectures, conducting real novel research, and having all the free perks of parking permits, libraries, computer and printing access, REC centers, and other facilities. I never would have imagined how “un-summer campy” this program was and its ability to challenge me as a learner. The director of the program readily admits that completing research, a scientific manuscript, and presentation in a

small six week time frame is a difficult task but she always follows it up by vehemently declaring that however challenging, we are capable.

Thanks to the opportunity the Garwin Family Foundation has given me, I have a much greater understanding of the direction my future will take and a whole lot of new friends with which to undertake that adventure.