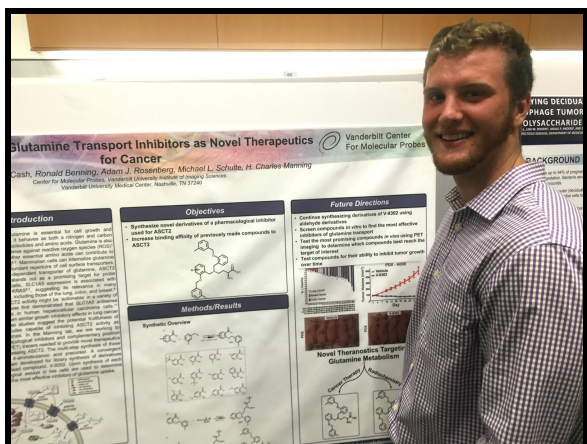


Summer Internship Report 2017

Trey Claus, C'19

Hometown: Memphis, Tennessee



**VSURE: Vanderbilt-Sewanee
Undergraduate Research Experience
Nashville, Tennessee**

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

During the course of the summer, I spent my time working in an organic chemistry lab located on Vanderbilt University Hospital's campus. My main project was synthesizing novel drug derivatives to aid in the inhibition of glutamine uptake in various cancer cell lines. It was my responsibility to focus on these synthesis reactions, read primary literature to educate myself on the topic at hand, and become more comfortable in a field of research that was new to me. Additionally, I had the opportunity to connect with physicians in my areas of interest and observe them in a hospital setting at least one day per week.

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

During my internship, I was able to assist in furthering a project that could change the lives of many. This was very special to me because I felt as if I was a part of something important, and there was no better feeling than seeing that the project I worked so hard on was relevant and could actually make a difference. My professional and technical skills have both improved greatly. I learned to be a better communicator and work as a team in a professional setting. On any given day I was able to speak with my primary investigator about a certain reaction that I was working on, and we would work through any problems or questions that I had together. Additionally, the lab skills that I learned from working in this type of environment are skills that I can use for the rest of my college and future professional career.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

One day when I was walking to the coffee shop on the Hospital's campus, I noticed someone who looked very lost. I took the time to stop and ask them if everything was alright, and I quickly realized that they did not speak English very well. I took this as an opportunity to use my education from Sewanee and attempted to communicate with this person as best as I could. With a little bit of conversation, I learned that they were actually a patient and did not know how to get back to the medical center that they came from. After hearing them out, I walked them over to where they needed to be. This situation showed me how important learning a second language can be in both the medical field and day to day tasks.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

During my eight weeks at Vanderbilt, I worked closely with another undergraduate intern and a graduate student in the lab. At the beginning, it seemed as if we could not be any more different from one another. However, as time went on, we got better at communicating with each other and working together to solve any problems we encountered. We learned ways to divvy up our tasks and work together in the most efficient ways possible. For example, one of us would write out all calculations needed for a specific chemical reaction, while the others would get everything together and weigh materials.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

My internship strongly reinforced my career plans. The opportunity to observe physicians of my choice as they do what I aspire to do was amazing. I was able to learn and be more involved than I ever have before. I cannot wait to get back to Vanderbilt next summer and do it all over again.

In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?

During my internship I encountered people of all backgrounds, from patients to Doctors of Philosophy. No matter who I was communicating with, I made sure to be polite and professional under any circumstance. By communicating and working closely with so many people over the course of two months, I learned different ways of thinking about things from lab techniques to surgical procedures. Everyone I spoke with had different ways of doing things, especially in lab, and it was interesting to gain insight on their perspectives.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

It is still hard for me to believe that I had the opportunity to do research at one of the top schools in the nation. Without you, none of this would be possible and I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your support. This opportunity has not and will not go to waste, as I have been extremely dedicated and worked hard to make connections and get everything that I can out of this internship. If you are interested in learning more about me or my summer project, please feel free to contact me. Thank you!!!