


Knowing How to Capture Opportunities

{mentor shares
knowledge
beyond
research}

by Zach Marteney



First-year Scholar in Biology/Pre-Med, Areli Monarrez, won a Terry C. Johnson Cancer Scholarship this year. With help and encouragement from her DSP mentor, Dr. Annelise Nguyen, Monarrez applied for the scholarship back in October.

Monarrez is no stranger to winning awards and recognition. She transferred to K-State this year through the Kansas Bridges to the Future Program. The program offers a scholarship which allows students to transfer to K-State to study in biomedical fields. Monarrez was also accepted into the EXploring sCIence and TEchnology, or EXCITE! Program, a program designed to mentor young women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Her mentor provides direction for Monarrez.

Dr. Nguyen is now in her second year as an assistant professor in Diagnostic Medicine Pathobiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine. She comments, "I know what opportunities there are for us and how to capture those opportunities... There are not a lot of people aware of how to do that. I point out to Areli that, because we are at this stage, there are a lot of opportunities we don't know about, and if we can capture them, that would be great."

Dr. Nguyen is a graduate of the Texas A&M program ExCEL, a program that helps underrepresented students find a mentor. Dr. Nguyen is excited to have a Scholar in her care. "I know what it's like to be on the other side, and now, as a mentor, I'm glad to be a part of it, in terms of giving back to the system."

Monarrez is also gaining from the experience. "I think being in the lab and having the experience of working as an undergraduate student, especially with Dr. Nguyen, has also helped me. She really does know what it's like to be on the other side: being an undergraduate,

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she can answer my questions, and she really knows what is behind everything. I think that has also helped both of us."

Dr. Nguyen realizes

the importance of DSP to its students. "It's very competitive right now. You have to take the options available, and if you don't know about them, it's not that you're not smart enough - it's just that you don't

know. Everything's very objective now - it's all about numbers. That's why I tell Areli that you not only have to work hard, but have to work smart as well."

Monarrez is thankful for Dr. Nguyen's advice. "I feel very fortunate to work in Dr. Nguyen's lab. I know that she is very involved in my project, and that if I ever have any questions, she is more than willing to help in anything. It's nice to know that she went through it and to have her advice, and to know that if it worked for her, then it will definitely work for all of us. Like she says, "Grab every opportunity as it comes."

A last piece of advice from Dr. Nguyen: "Be competitive and build a résumé. This is the only time you can achieve as much as you can, and in the future, people are not going to know who you are just by numbers and a piece of paper."

"If it worked for her, then it will definitely work for all of us."

Mantis

by Elise Gaines

*Liberated from prison
from the restraining
Wind, the fluid of
I almost pass her
in the windings of
Mantis.*

*Her tiny head tilted
she whispered,
"Shhh."*

*Appreciate it.
These moments
so swiftly.*

*Careful
that you do not stop
So I linger, taking
silencing the wheel
And I hear it. I hear
Mesmerized, I lift
Just in time to see
traipsing, in his eyes*