

Hello everyone,

Once again, we had the wonderful opportunity to have another of the biological chemistry students in the lab. It is always refreshing to interact with young students that are genuinely curious about science and eager to delve into the details of a specific project in the lab.

Identifying good projects for students with a limited amount of time in the lab can be a challenge. Therefore, it was impressive to see how much Leonie accomplished in such a short time. In fact, it was her results that encouraged us to continue to explore a hypothesis that originated from an unexpected *in silico* prediction. Hardly the evidence that gives you confidence that a set of experiments is worth pursuing. It was serendipity that Leonie arrived just as we were starting a new project in the lab that needed many tools to be created. In the meantime, she was chosen to explore if the proteolytically cleaved octapeptide from the F_0F_1 -ATP synthase subunit alpha could act as an N-terminal mitochondrial targeting sequence. I won't go into the details of her work here because she has worked hard to create a nice presentation of her results.

Leonie was introduced to a wide array of molecular biology techniques and she mastered each of them without too many hiccups. In fact, she was so efficient, that she was able to perform additional experiments that helped verify her results and open the door to new experiments that might be helpful in answering the bigger questions surrounding her project. She was so devoted to her project that she even volunteered to stay an extra few weeks during her summer break to finish some experiments. I was also very appreciative that even though she was focused on a very narrow aspect of a larger project, she always quickly absorbed new information that provided the context for her specific experiments. She also has a very curious mind and is very sharp at reading the scientific literature and quickly identifying the relevant facts. Her writing skills are also very advanced for such a young scientist.

It was a great pleasure to work Leonie and we were disappointed that she has decided to pursue her career down other interesting avenues. However, we wish her the best of luck and leave the door open for future possibilities.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Bren', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.