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My mission statement was ‘To live a balanced life on the principles of kindness and integrity. To work for a better future for us all’. I think that this message not only indicates my values but also relates to my learning goals for this term and the learning coaches I identified. To me, the mission statement describes how I want to live my life and what I want it to mean. I value the idea of a balanced life. Achieving balance is important to me. I long for a life where I work and tire but spend an equivalent amount resting and peaceful. I want to be treated with kindness and integrity so I want to embody those qualities in all my interactions with others. I think with the media scroll and the many challenges of life in the present day, a little kindness can go a long way. This also applies to working for a better future for us all. By being a ‘good’ human I can help make a better future. The second half is in my professional work. I enjoy the privilege of having a career trajectory that will enable me to have extensive interaction with the public and through these connections offer them different forms of service and aid. As a scientist, I have the opportunity to contribute to our understanding of medicine and the natural world. As a clinician, I have the opportunity to work with my patients to find better health and limit disease. I believe that these three routes contribute to a notion of a better future.

The goals I identified play into this mission statement. The first and third goals work towards balance and living on ethical principles. The second into my professional work. My first goal of limiting the amount of time I spent working was made to help bring balance to my life. I had found that most of my time was absorbed in work, unbalanced by any account. Although my time may not necessarily be equally split, I find that the quality of life I experience is nearing equity with a work-life balance although more work is clearly required. The third goal was to write reflectively regularly through the semester. I picked this goal in that I thought it would bring me benefit in organizing my thoughts onto paper. Additionally, by organizing these thoughts, I hoped that it would improve my ability for introspection and I could use that perspective to retroactively examine my actions. This would allow me to act in the present and future in a manner more akin to what is outlined in my mission statement. This is obviously a lifelong process as one does not make a single good decision and coast that for their lifetime. The second goal was to work on a review paper. This has the dual function of promoting my own research career with a publication and improving my own knowledge and familiarity with that field but also in condensing the vast scientific knowledge into a format digestible to many researchers with a shorter read. This plays into the second half of my mission statement by making a better future, a small step in this case, by making some scientific literature more digestible and accessible for the researching community at large.

The learning coaches I chose to guide my professional development was the stoic and Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius and the Nobel Laureate Dr. Jennifer Doudna. I chose to pursue coaching through a literary means as I was unable to make contact with my desired learning coach. From Marcus Aurelius’ writings I tried to take home different parts of the stoic philosophy, namely the resilience and rationality they promote. As for Dr. Doudna, reading her work provides inspiration that small discoveries in unrelated fields can lead to breakthroughs. To be passionate about science and diligent in my work. It encourages me to keep working hard and find a path to elevate my research and professional status as high as I can. In the end of this certificate registration, I can look backwards at where I came from and where I am through my journalling and in the time I spent. I learned a lot in this course, both personally and professionally. I took the time to examine my character and habits for areas to improve. I was fortunate to experience different learning opportunities to work on my professional self. This took the form of coaching, workshops on networking, interview practice, and more. Even though November and December represented peaks of work and stress in my graduate program, I found that making time for this certificate helped settle me and promoted some degree of efficiency in this manner. Taken as a whole, this certificate helped me develop professionally and personally and without it, I would be deficient in many an area I was not even aware of. (815 words)