

Testimonial

Leonardo C. Zambrano Tapia

Hi everyone! My name is Leonardo C. Zambrano Tapia and I had the honor of working with Dr. Dainotti in 2020, 2021 and 2022. I was referred to her by one of my mentors Dr. Arratia, when I asked him about the possibility of doing international research. My interest has always been clinical, medical and interventional research. However, Dr. Arratia explained that the experience would allow me to better understand research, work with people from all over the world and allow me to find my interests. I began with a small high school group, we called ourselves the Puerto Rico GRB Research Undergraduate Research Group. We were quickly placed to work; our first tasks were to organize and identify possible references for an already going study. Dr. Dainotti understood our lack of knowledge in astrophysics and was not afraid to guide us all the way. She would regularly check in with us, was always available for answering questions and mentored us through the tasks assigned.

After a period of time training, we were able to get accustomed to the coding languages required for the research. I learned how to utilize python and mathematica in an astrophysical and research setting and have used both coding languages for recent research experiences. I had the opportunity to work with students from all over the world, all of whom were more than happy to help a high schooler through the intensity of the topic. I got accustomed to working with new time zones, people with all forms of skill sets and stories. I eventually had the opportunity and skillset to mentor incoming students as well. I learned and understood completely about GRBs and other astrophysical phenomenon, without a proper astrophysics background. After months of collaboration and work, Dr. Dainotti invited us to work on the

paper itself, which I consider it to be perhaps one of my greatest academic honors to date. I learned all about the publication process and have been able to participate in 2 publications, “Optical luminosity of Gamma-Ray Burst, the most explosive events in the Universe” and ““The Optical Two and Three-Dimensional Fundamental Plane Correlations for More than 180 Gamma-Ray Burst Afterglows with Swift/UVOT, RATIR, and the SUBARU Telescope”, one as an acknowledgement and the other as a coauthor, while also collaborating in other studies.

I am currently a Public Health major on a premed tract at the University of Rochester. And while my focus currently is clinical and interventional research regarding pediatric asthma follow up and the benefits of Child Life services in the PICU, thanks to the program I have a great appreciation for astrophysical phenomenon and am constantly aware of any new publications on the topic. In addition to all the research tools I gain through the program, the most important aspects were learning about the appreciation of science, manners and professionalism in the field, and the absolute joy of being a part of the research community. Every opportunity I have had is all thanks to Dr. Dainotti and this program. I can with full confidence say that I have become an asset in every other study I have been a part of thanks to Dr. Dainotti. Her commitment, enthusiasm, passion and love for science, research, teaching and helping students is one I aspire to and have used as the template of the type of professional I wish to become. I am a consistent admirer of Dr. Dainotti’s work and know fully well the science community is in good hands with a professional of her caliber.

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