

When I interviewed my assignment partner (Alia Hidayat), I found out that she is interested in going into a major in biology/botany. Back in the summer of 2009 there was a study abroad program in Costa Rica (http://depts.washington.edu/uwhonors/international/costa_rica/) that involved heading out into the tropical rainforest to study the environment, the local flora and fauna types, etc...It seems like a great way to get a lot of very hands on experience and knowledge about plant and animal life, including instruction in wildlife identification, hikes and excursions, lectures on medicinal and other uses for rainforest plants, and tours of the nearby agricultural and conservation projects. Although this specific program has ended, I imagine that programs like this will happen again in the coming years.

I also found a few additional available experiential learning opportunities such as the opportunities for research into biology and botany here at UW (discipline search at <http://webapps.ued.washington.edu/opportunities/Opportunities.aspx>), as well as off campus opportunities to study at various labs and schools around the country (<http://www.washington.edu/research/urp/students/find/beyond.html>).

There are also other research opportunities available working alongside the biology department professors and researchers. More information can be found on the Department of Biology Undergraduate research website (<http://www.biology.washington.edu/research/undergraduateu>)