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1st Year Graduate Student

Lab PI/Mentor: Professor Adam Engler

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Biophysical interrogation of signals that drive GBM invasion

Study of the cooperativity between wild-type and EGFRvIII populations promotes global tumor invasive pathogenicity through cell adhesion-mediated intrinsic and extrinsic mechanisms.

Who has been the biggest influence on your life and why?

My parents had the biggest influence on my life. From an early age, they had been quite instrumental in making me understand the importance of being honest, kind, rational, and scientific while making important decisions. They have been my role models in promoting and practicing equity over equality. Moreover, the necessity of making sacrifices, sometimes quite important ones, to achieve your dreams in the long run is something I learnt from them practicing it regularly and had a significantly positive impact on my life until now.

What did you love to spend time doing as a kid that you don't do any more? How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?

As a kid I had a very good balance between studying and engaging in sports on a regular basis. With growing up I gradually separated from spending a good amount of time in sports due to my academic commitments. I always envision having that balance back again very soon.

I have quite been influenced by the idea of "Simple living and high thinking". I would say I imagine a life achieving simple but transformational goals and I have been doing good in it. Since I keep my expectations low on things that are out of my control, my life has been in alignment to my imaginations.

If you had total freedom from time, money, or other circumstances, how would you spend your time?

I would probably spend my time reading more books and traveling across the world with my parents. Both would provide me with experiences and memories I will cherish forever. Moreover, I would also build many more meaningful relationships during the course of my traveling, which is invaluable to me.

Did you enjoy school as you were growing up? What kind of student were you?

School has been one of the best places I enjoyed going to while growing up. One of the reasons for that being the incredible teachers I got throughout my school life who were not only teaching courses but continuously mentored to become good human beings. The incredible part is that I am still in touch with several teachers even after a decade of leaving school. In terms of academic performance I had always been an excellent student throughout my school days right from kindergarten to high school. It's because I enjoyed learning and was curious about knowing new things. Additionally, I was always proactive in participating in extracurricular activities that taught important soft skills like teamwork and collaboration.

What lessons has your work life taught you?

The greatest lesson I have learned from my work, doing research, is the art of being humble. To quote a specific incident, during the pandemic, I was attending quite a few online seminars on my research and in one of those seminars, one of the top researchers in the field of Tissue Engineering from MIT, Dr. Robert Langer, answered that he didn't know the answer to three consecutive audience questions. The humbleness of accepting the limitations of our understanding in the field of research propels it towards breaking the frontiers. Researchers in the field of Bioengineering have been working so much and yet we know so little about the human body is an incredible testament of the importance of being humble.

If you were to be globally recognized for anything, what would you want it to be and why?

Although this is something that I have never thought of or worked for, if I were to get a chance, I would like to be globally recognized for my scientific endeavors. I strongly believe scientific discoveries play an extremely crucial role in the advancement of human knowledge and health. Getting a chance to contribute to this advancement on a global scale through my research would be the greatest win and recognition for me.

Favorite inspirational quote

"It is not true that people stop pursuing dreams because they grow old, they grow old because they stop pursuing dreams."

~ Gabriel Garcia Márquez

Favorite place and/or thing to do in San Diego?

I had been amazed by the beautiful sunset views from the beaches of San Diego. It looks like a canvas on which God has painted with his brightest colors. More amazingly, the views are quite significantly different on each day and watching the sunsets has been one of my favorite things to do. The second best thing I love doing in San Diego is exploring different cuisines at various restaurants.

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