

Jemima Estrada

2024 Summer IRES China

Before participating in this program, I was not sure what to expect. It was my first time participating in this type of research at this level. With this opportunity I had by the time we returned to the US, I felt accomplished in my growth. I was able to develop many types of skills through this IRES program through the help my mentors back in China.

The first few weeks in China our mentors showed us how the steps of the experiment went through with different variations each time. Through that time, we would use our free time to ask questions and review research papers to understand how and why the experiment worked; we also conversed and changed our culture with the other graduate students in the lab. After we learned the steps of the experiments, we eventually were able to repeat the experiment alongside the graduate students by ourselves. Our mentor would come occasionally to the lab to help us troubleshoot problems that occurred in the process. I've learned how to work in a group cohesively, how and when to ask relevant questions when I felt lost or confused. This program has cultivated my desire to learn more through these connections I have made due to IRES. Afterwards we began working on our individual projects, at first it was difficult because I had to think about a research problem. It took me a few days to think critically what aspect I wanted to focus on in the experiment. After I looked at articles and my notes, I also consulted my mentor in which he helped me in deciding my focus on this program.

My ability to evaluate scientific papers has vastly improved, before arriving to China I've always has difficulties understanding papers, but because of my ability to be hands on my

understanding of materials had increased. With the resources I had access to I was able to read and evaluate many types of articles and resources both directly relevant and indirectly and connect it to the experiment we worked on. I gained a lot of valuable experiences in this program, and I look forward into further developing my research career om this experience.