

Summer Research Symposium Reflection

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Project title “Anticipatory testosterone response to competition in female collegiate endurance athletes”

I came into this project with the mindset that I was totally prepared. I suppose I was as prepared as possible, however, there were quite a few stressful learning experiences along the way. For example, during the data collection portion of my project, I was required to work with human subjects. As a subject population, humans are extremely interesting and applicable to new ideas in the field of exercise science. However, human subjects are also frustrating. Rats, fruit flies, yeast, and bacteria do not hold jobs, go out of town, or over-sleep. The most valuable skill that I learned this summer was how to schedule and maintain professionalism with subjects who are just a little bit unpredictable.

Aside from that lesson, I also learned countless skills involving sterile technique, human blood collection and analysis, and literature research. Perhaps above all the aforementioned skills and lessons, the focal lesson of my research, albeit unexpected, was the realization that I am a knowledgeable person. It seems trivial, but the up until the point of the research symposium, I did not consider myself a pseudo-expert in the field of exercise physiology. However, as I looked around at other researcher’s posters, I caught myself thinking, “these presenters really know what they’re talking about.” In addition, when professors from other fields asked me questions, I could answer them with ease. It was at that moment that I truly began to see that I too know what I’m talking about, and that perhaps, I could be considered a pseudo-expert.

As trivial as this realization may seem, I think it is of the utmost importance that emerging professionals, such as myself, learn at some point that they are adult enough and educated enough to explain research to people of different disciplines. As for me, I do not think I will ever truly feel as if I am an expert in a field, but through this experience I have gained a modest slice of ego that sits in the back of my mind and urges me on.

The UEC Grant was used to purchase blood sample supplies (i.e. tubes, needles, gloves, etc.) as well as to purchase the assay kit required to analyze my hormone data in human serum.