

@UlowaNeuro Notes

June 2021

While this week brought the “official” first day of summer as we reached the solstice, summer work in our labs has been in full swing for more than a month. It’s a great time for undergraduates to immerse themselves in research and laboratory work, which is a critical component of scientific development. That’s why the INI sponsors the Summer Scholars program, which supports three undergraduates in INI labs each summer. This highly-competitive award includes stipend of \$5,000 and gives students the opportunity to attend a summer undergraduate seminar series and a variety of informal events.



This year’s Summer Scholars are **Daniel Fu**, in **Rory Fisher’s** lab; **Arshaq Saleem**, in **Michelle Voss’s** lab; and **Kartik Sivakumar**, in **Kumar Narayanan’s** Lab. They each [proposed an independent research project](#) in line with their lab’s work, and are now well underway in their investigations. They will present results at the [Summer Undergraduate Poster](#)

[Symposium](#) in July.

Research provides a tremendous experiential learning opportunity. Science in the classroom can be abstract. But step into the lab and it comes to life in the experiments and in the people all around you. You also learn that science isn’t just about million-dollar gadgets—sometimes it’s about a trip to the hardware store and a homemade contraption. Just ask **Deniz Atasoy**, who builds all of his behavioral equipment.

I started as an undergrad in the lab, and it was those personal connections that brought excitement and launched me into graduate school and a research career. Many of our past Summer Scholars have gone on to graduate school and medical school. Earlier this year, **Megan Hynd** [published a first-author paper](#) based on her 2019 Summer Scholar research in **Jan Wessel’s** lab. She is now a research fellow at the NIH.

I encourage undergraduates to seek out opportunities in our labs and ask our PIs to be open to undergraduate participation in our research. It’s up to us to help ignite that spark in the next generation of scientists.