

Pathway Student Profile:

Iralyn Eleazar

Solano Community College

Before arriving at Solano Community College, Iralyn Eleazar never envisioned a career as a biotechnician. As a recent high school graduate, she knew she liked the sciences, but had no concrete career plans. "I was never a really serious student, as a kid...I was a really shy individual. I couldn't really talk to anyone."

When she enrolled in Solano College in 2011, she decided to follow the suggestions of friends and family, and began taking nursing pre-requisites. A year later, she took a Principles of Biotechnology course, and discovered her passion for biology. The following semester, she took a course in cellular and molecular biology. Before long, she was hooked.

What she loved most about cellular and molecular biology was the laboratory portion of the class, especially "getting to work with gel electrophoresis chambers, pipetting...I just really, really enjoyed it!"

As her career plans began to solidify, Iralyn found that she was developing both intellectually and personally. She credits her professors for "instill(ing) a confidence within me that I have never had before." When she showed promise in her anatomy class, her professor asked her to be an Honors Dissector for the human anatomy program. The job involved preparing and detailing the human specimens in Solano College's anatomy laboratory. Before long, she was Lead Honors Dissector and an anatomy tutor, roles which exposed her to a variety of students and "really developed my communications skills, which was one of the keys to getting a job at Genentech."

When it came time to think about a career in biotech, Iralyn's professors continued to play an instrumental role in her success. From helping her and other students to structure their resumes for the biotech industry, to conducting practice interviews, faculty members provided crucial practical advice, and equipped their students with the tools for the job market.

After taking part in the college's Summer 2014 IBIS (Industrial Biotechnology Intensive Summer Boot Camp) "Biotech Bootcamp", Iralyn felt ready for the challenges of a new position at Genentech.

"Everything clicked," she said. During introductory training, she "could see the science behind the production of the drug, behind each process, because of what I learned through the biotech program." Today, she is a bioprocess manufacturing technician at Genentech, working on the purifications team. She plans to build on her AS degree by pursuing a bachelor's in Biology at CSU Sacramento and hopes to eventually apply to a Ph. D. program at UC Davis. But for the moment, she loves the job she has now, and "At the same time, I know that I'm involved in the process of making a drug that improves the quality of people's lives, and saves lives, too."



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