

Master's internship in the Bertozzi Research Group at Stanford University

March—August 2016

Last February I travelled to the USA to perform my final internship at Stanford University. Via the supervisor of my previous internship I got into contact with one of the professors there, who kindly invited me to join her lab for six months. Professor Carolyn R. Bertozzi has formed an interdisciplinary research group, with people from chemistry and biology backgrounds working closely together, focusing on glycobiology related to cell surface interactions in human health and disease. As this research field fitted perfectly with my own interests and my master's program in Molecular Life Sciences, I was very much excited to go to Stanford.

My enthusiasm only grew when I saw the beautiful campus of Stanford University and the brand-new lab of the Bertozzi group. As the group just moved from Berkeley to Stanford before I joined, all the office spaces, benches and fume hoods were completely new and still looked as if they were never even used. Besides all these shiny new workspaces and state-of-the-art equipment—the benefit of joining a rich lab—the people working there were the best! Everyone performed their research with so much passion that it was almost impossible to not like working there. As such, it was a great atmosphere for me to attempt to engineer a bio-orthogonal glycosyltransferase and sugar-donor pair via a bump hole strategy. This was part of a big integrative project that was already in the group for several years and allowed me to learn a lot of new techniques and strategies for doing research.

When all the hard work was done, I spent most weekends enjoying the atmosphere outside of the lab, which was equally pleasant as the one inside. One of the advantages of joining a lab in California is the great weather that comes with it! Although I had some rain in my first weeks there, I only saw sunny skies for the rest of my stay. Trying to benefit from the great weather as much as possible, I went out and explored some of the tech companies of Silicon Valley and the great nature that California has to offer.

This internship abroad was an experience I would not have missed for anything in the world. I learned so many new things, both academically and personally, and I greatly enjoyed doing research in such an inspiring environment. Without the financial support that the Nora Baart Foundation granted me, I would not have had this amazing opportunity, and therefore I would like to thank this foundation wholeheartedly.

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