

I have always aspired to be someone in a community who is known as being successful. I wanted to demonstrate my drive and passion to everyone around me. As time went on, I began to realize the passion that I had for the science world. I was curious about the unknown, things that people didn't know or understand, and I wanted to be the one to discover it all.

Growing up in my household, my dream was considered "unrealistic." Being the first-generation student of a single, immigrant mother who had lost faith in many things, I felt destined to be the same. College was never a goal I thought I could reach, and when I did, my curiosity grew even more. Unfortunately, I began my college education in the same year as the Covid epidemic. My opportunities were limited. I wanted to be a hands-on student but didn't know where to start.

In 2021, I was introduced to a summer research position that led me to learn more about water quality. We were tasked with analyzing water chemistry in different springs that can be found in the Spring Mountains in southern Nevada. At first, it was extremely difficult, but I could not ignore how impactful it was for my education as well as my curiosity. I began to meet people who worked in a field I never imagined could bring me a career. What grabbed my attention most were the different types of bacteria that can live in these waters. I knew that this was the field I was meant to work in. I worked hard to meet people who could bring me a step closer to my goal.

I have plans to complete my bachelor's degree in biology in the spring of 2024 and continue my education from there. I want to attend a graduate program that focuses on the impacts of bacteria and how it may correspond with water quality.

Working as an intern for the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), I plan to further my skills and knowledge about water chemistry and quality in hopes of one day being employed by the SNWA. Being part of this community of like-minded scientists, I would be able to achieve my lifelong goal of being a part of a group of successful people. This would allow me to better understand and, even one day, solve water quality problems and aid the general public. On the way, I may even be able to discover something new, something we have never seen.

While I am fully aware of the work that I have cut out for myself, I am eager to dive headfirst into the most difficult challenges that come my way - whether it be another epidemic or someone who has no faith in my aspirations. No one has ever been able to stop me from pursuing my dreams, and no one will *ever* be able to stop me.