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Mid Program Reflection

 In the process of completing my biology degree at Longwood University, I’ve accomplished and learned essential biological knowledge. Since I am now halfway through my degree requirements, I have a clear view of what I have developed in my knowledge and what still needs to be accomplished. When reviewing the concepts of biological science that I understand, I think I have gained a lot of knowledge through my intro level biology classes. They were able to teach me key concepts such as the principles of biology, and more specifically, cell and molecular, as well as ecology and evolution. I think that a large part of me having the ability to connect chemistry concepts to biological concepts was because of the amount of chemistry classes we have to take as biology majors. I think chemistry is a large part of all science fields and its very important to incorporate that into our learning as biology majors. I constantly find myself thinking back to concepts in chemistry in my biology classes, which helps me better succeed overall because of my full-circle knowledge.

 When thinking about my ability to collect, organize, and evaluate scientific information through experiential learning, I owe a lot of my knowledge to my biology labs that I take during my courses. The lab period helps me to utilize critical thinking in order to develop plans and conclusions within an experiment. Throughout all of my biology labs, I have been required to come up with experimental design, which has led me to be very confident doing it on my own in a research lab, for example. This is such a crucial skill in biology, so I’m very glad it is incorporated into our curriculum.

 Another major skill that I’m glad I have acquired through my undergraduate classes is the ability to read and comprehend scientific literature. This is something that I was completely unfamiliar with before coming to Longwood and it was something that I struggled with when first starting undergraduate biology classes. I think the repetition of having to read literature in classes as well as do different assignments revolving them has helped me become a better reader. Specifically, the classes I have had to take for LIFE STEM have significantly helped me. We constantly have to read and present on scientific papers, which forces me to get a grasp on understanding them to the fullest. In addition, my BIOL 288 class has helped me become better at reading and analyzing scientific literature, as that is a big part of the class.

 The last major goal for this degree is to be able to communicate science effectively within and across disciplines. I think that this is something I have accomplished greatly through my classes here so far. I’ve been put out of my comfort zone and had to make effective poster or PowerPoint presentation to convey information. While I still think I have some room to grow, I’m very proud of my accomplishments in this area. Another major way we’ve been taught to communicate is through writing, which is where I’ve seen the most improvement in myself. I came to Longwood with little to no knowledge on scientific writing and now I feel like it is one of my most improved areas. I feel a lot more confident about my writing and believe that I am able to efficiently convey information to an audience. I owe this to the lab classes on our biology courses, as they often have us write lab reports or other forms of scientific literature, which has allowed me to gain good practice in that area. I think that this knowledge will help me be well rounded in my future career in the biology field.

 With still half of the program left to complete, there are a few things that I would like to improve on. First off, I would like to expand my knowledge of specific biological concepts, which will come along with me taking higher level classes. In addition, I would like to become a better presenter of scientific information. While I have come a long way with this, I still think I could work on building more confidence and having less flawed presentations. Lastly, I want to learn to become a better leader. This is something I am starting to achieve from working in a research lab, but I definitely think I could improve and gain this skill that I believe is key to have when going into any career. Overall, I am very excited to see where the rest of this program will lead me.