During my time here at Longwood University, there have been many opportunities for me to grow as a person as well as academically. The classes I have been exposed to thus far truly have impacted me in different ways and have challenged me to grow as a biologist. There are many learning goals I feel as if I have made great progress towards, but also some that I think are challenging.

First, the classes I have taken have ultimately helped me progress towards different learning goals. Under “Goal 1: Develop an understanding of the concepts of biological science,” I believe I have made massive progress. Before Longwood, I had already taken Biology 120, so I did not get the opportunity to gather information from that specific class, but I did have the chance to take Biology 250 and 251. These two classes helped me satisfy 1.2 and 1.3 learning goals, which are applying the major principles to molecular biology and also to ecology. The classes each helped me in their own unique way. Biology 251 was the first biology class I took here at Longwood. Prior to the class, I had never been exposed to scientific articles or even knew how to read one. That class helped me learn the basic parts of a scientific paper as well as helped me understand what should be included in each section. We also had to develop our own research projects and present them orally in front of many different professors and students. This challenged me but helped me satisfy goal 3.2, “Students will be able to prepare and present, orally and in writing, to scientists in other disciplines and audiences outside the sciences.” For the writing portion of this learning goal, I was asked to write my first ever lab report which definitely was a struggle; this lab report is included in my e-portfolio under the “BIO 251” tab. Without this class, I have no clue how I would survive all the other classes I have been exposed to here, nor how I would survive any post grad classes. I truly think that this class helped me so much in starting my academic career, but it also prepared me for my future in undergrad as well as post grad.

Also, 250 was a class that helped me satisfy many learning goals. In addition to the 1.2 learning goal, I also was able to satisfy 3.4, “Students will be able to collaborate effectively in a group setting within the discipline” and 2.3, “Students will be able to evaluate and interpret data in scientific literature and other sources.” In this class, we were able to pick a partner who we would work with for the rest of the semester. After so many weeks, we were assigned a group project that we got to help design. This not only allowed me to experience working with someone else, but I was also exposed to making a poster for a scientific project. The lab report for this project is under the “BIO 250” tab in my e-portfolio. I was asked to do tons of research regarding my research project which helped me understand how to search for scientific evidence. Once again, this was something I was not familiar with, so I am glad it is in the curriculum for biology majors.

Next, I feel as if there were some other classes in this program that helped strengthen other learning goals. I had previously taken Chem 111 and 112 before coming to college, so I was never exposed to those classes here, but I did have the privilege of taking Organic Chemistry. I definitely was scared before entering the class because of all of the hate that surrounds it, but I loved the class. It helped me satisfy the learning goals 1.5, which involves applying chemistry into biological contexts, and 2.2, which involves interpreting data in scientific literature. As part of the class, we were asked to do a literature review which exposed me to scientific writing in the chemistry department. This definitely was a challenge, since chemistry writing is very short, but overall this class helped me feel more confident in my ability to interpret said writing. The assignment also had some sections that involved connecting the chemistry to biology.

Although there are many learning goals that I feel I have made progress towards, there are a few that still are a challenge. I do not feel comfortable with the first part of learning goal 1.5 which involves integrating physics concepts into relevant biological contexts. This potentially could be due to the fact that this class is all online, and I don’t feel like I am learning it as easily as I would if we were in person. I understand that it can be applied to some biological contexts, but I don’t feel confident enough to answer a question about it or be able to explain it to someone. In addition, I don’t feel confident in the learning goal 2.2, “Students will be able to analyze data quantitatively and develop testable models of that data.” I am confident in my ability to do the first part of the learning goal, but I am not as confident in my ability to develop a testable model. I think I could make more progress towards this learning goal by being exposed to more research, which I have planned, as well as taking classes that are more geared towards students compiling their own research (not anything crazy, but something similar to what we did in 251).

Overall, I think this program has helped me progress so much academically and has boosted my confidence in becoming a doctor. There really isn’t anything I would change about this program. I feel more able to continue pursuing my dream in the biology department with the help of all of these classes.