

My name is Arianna Dial and I am an incoming 4th year Microbiology student at SDSU. This summer I had the privilege to be a part of SDSU's Mentor-Undergraduate Research Program. My mentor Monica Klopp's research focused on observing the heart rate and valve gaping activity of the Mediterranean mussel *M. galloprovincialis* in response to decreased oxygen conditions. These mussels were collected from 3 locations: San Diego Bay, Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, and the Tijuana River Estuary.

In my pod, I had the pleasure of meeting and becoming good friends with fellow undergrad Maritere Rodriguez. Alongside discussing our career aspirations and academic goals, we also shared our personal interests and experiences. This blend of professional and personal conversations made working together even more enriching and enjoyable.



I viewed this internship as an opportunity to gain an introduction and learn more about marine biology outside of a lecture setting. I am so grateful to have gotten hands-on experience in the research environment— handling the mussels, attaching heart and gape sensors, building sensors, and using a YSI probe.



Building the heart and gape sensors was definitely a skill I was excited to learn because it allowed me to engage directly with the technical aspects of Monica's research. During this process, Maritere and I were given the responsibility of prepping the wires and building the terminals of heart and gape sensors. These sensors were then used in our experimental trials. The hands-on experience of constructing and calibrating the sensors gave me a greater appreciation for the precision and care required in scientific experimentation. Being able to see them work properly in the trials was both rewarding and exciting.

In addition to the research aspect of the internship, the zoom workshops hosted by Lily and Alyssa taught me foundational scientific knowledge. These workshops were instrumental in enhancing my understanding of the research process. The nature of science workshops gave me a refresher on how to properly identify and explain theories, laws, phenomenon, and predictions. The elevator pitch workshop challenged me to thoroughly understand the work I've been doing during the summer in order to communicate scientific concepts effectively. It also helped me appreciate the significance of conveying research findings in an accessible manner.



Lastly, I want to say thank you so much to Monica and my pod peer Maritere for making this experience so memorable and fulfilling. Monica's patience and willingness to teach us every step of the way fueled my appreciation for research.