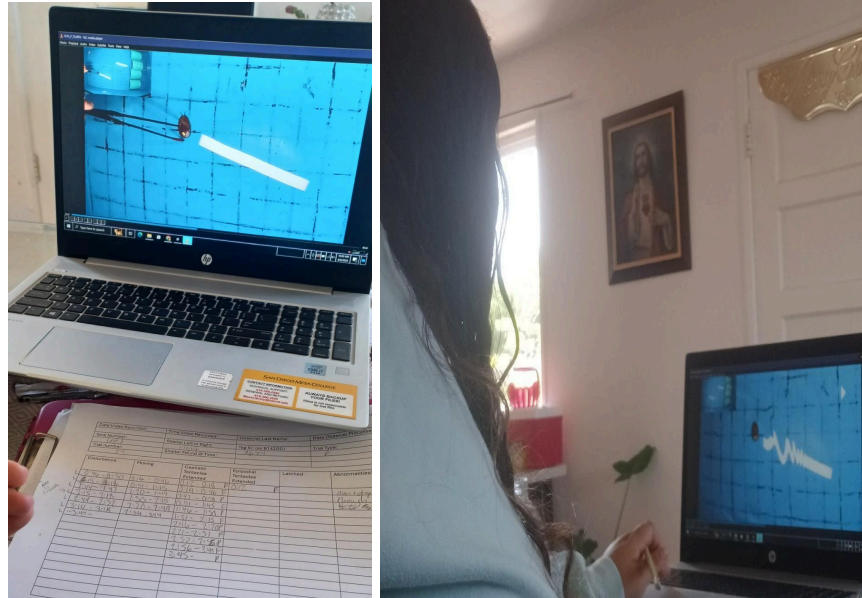# My experience at SDSU's CMIL Internship

By Jocelyn Simonton

I am student from San Diego Mesa college and in this internship, I was part of the selection to work in the Coastal Marine Institute and Laboratory with my mentor Gulce Ozturk in the project of Examining the Behavioral Plasticity of White Abalone (*Haliotis sorenseni*), across Four Treatments. This project was conducted in order to improve the population reintroduction of the endangered abalone by creating an anti-predatory response.

The overhunting of this abalone caused the animal to be placed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species list. Scientists are making an effort to stop the high mortality rate and have a rising population. Marine biologists are growing these abalone in hatcheries and releasing them out in the wild, but there is an issue of the abalone having a high mortality rate even after the release due to lack of anti predatory behavior that has made scientists take on the effort of behavioral conditioning.

In this research project I had the advantage to observe the hatchery abalone receiving conditioning to gain a reactive response to an unfamiliar environment like they would in the wild. I distinguished the differences in behavior on videos and took data in how the abalone responded to the predator stimuli. I took note of how the tentacles were extended on both the body and face of the subject. I proceeded to be attentive to its movement and the factor if it was attached or latched to the ground when it was receiving disturbances. I then was able to input all of my observations and data into an excel sheet to confide with my mentor's coding process.

Here is me observing the Abalone

During this summer I was able to learn adaptability and how to deal with change because I was able to take on and use unfamiliar programs. I had the ability to proceed knowledge quickly on what I could do to adjust my learning to gain a faster capability. I had gained the qualification to use communication in this internship because I was able to work in groups and gain a sense of connection, negotiation and self advocacy. This helped me learn how to be an assisting candidate when working into teamwork and was able to add personal input on projects . Here is the digital data input I had to adapt to:

In one of our workshops, I was able to learn about the possibility of receiving a masters or a PhD and what are the efforts and after effects to receive these kinds of degrees. I learned about the applications, what to identify, who to contact prior to applying to grad school and how to write an application properly. I was also able to verify useful information on where to find funding, and really helpful advice in receiving further education past a bachelor's degree.

All in all, I've learned a lot of skills from this internship and I am grateful to be selected into this program. I was able to learn the value of time management, scheduling, communication, preparation and other life skills which will help me in the future . I will be able to use these skills as I move forward into my career.