2026 CMIL MURP

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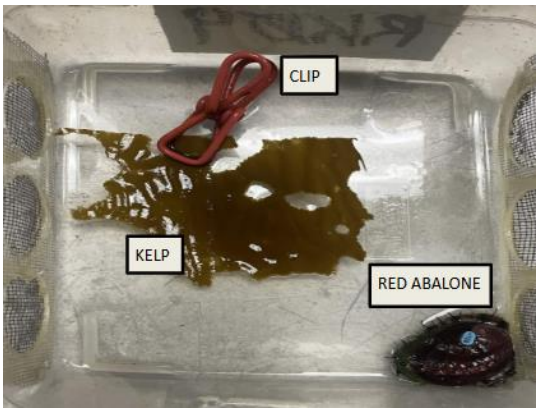
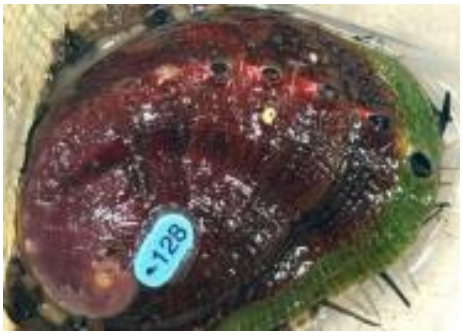
This summer, I was blessed with the opportunity to participate in Marine and Coastal research alongside Valentina Montes with her graduate research project on Abalones and their diet. We focused on the red juvenile abalones and how the invasive algae species affect them.



As the research progresses, we notice a trend in the growth of the different abalone treatments and the entire process of witnessing evolution was extremely educational and life changing for me. I developed wet laboratory skills, especially when it comes to working together with marine creatures and applying these skills to weight and feed them. I enjoyed working with the team to weight the abalones before and after feedings and we notice a significant growth of the abalones that had the Mixed treatment, compared to abalones with the sargassum only and kelp only treatment. I thought this was extremely important for abalone research studies because it is important to fully understand a species' dietary and eating habits to learn about them. In conclusion, we discovered that the diets of abalones affect their tissue growth but do not affect their shell growth.



The most challenging part about this internship was learning how to use the R coding software and working on making graphs and entering data with it. This is a hard task for me as I have never done or seen coding before. I believe this gave me a good inspiration to keep learning and working things I am new at, so I can develop new essential skills I can apply professionally. Moreover, this internship has helped me gain many personal skills such as time management and having a work-life balance. The hard part of this was the fact that I was also taking a STEM class for the summer and as it progressed, it became more challenging and faster paced, more than I could handle. I am very grateful for my team to support me through this tough time and

was able to help me balance my schoolwork and internship duties. By the end of this summer, I had a chance to reflect on my process, and I noticed a positive change and development of many essential skills that would help me be a better student and intern.

Overall, I am extremely happy and glad I got to be part of this amazing team full of talented students and I am very open to working on more research projects such as this in the future. This experience was very eye-opening to an undergraduate student who has never conducted research, especially in the biology field. I am happy I got to network and get involved with many students, and I believe this opportunity will help me open many more doors in the future, and dive deeper into research in the biology field.