Ashley Bong

My name is Ashley Bong and I'm going to be a 4th-year Bioengineer at the University of California, San Diego. In the SURF program, I'm doing research under Dr. Jin on calponin-2, a protein associated with cytoskeleton movement; this type of biochemical research is outside my comfort zone, but it's also really exciting because I want to do many different types of research before I graduate. My long term goal is get a Masters in Neuroengineering and then develop brain-computer interface prosthetics.

Lauren Compton

My name is Lauren Compton. I attend Michigan State University, where I am pursuing a major in neuroscience and a minor in dance. The SURF program in the Department of Physiology at Wayne State University is providing me with the opportunity to work in Dr. Assia Shisheva’s lab to gain experience perform basic laboratory techniques while also learning about molecular physiology specifically concerning membrane trafficking. My long term goal is to have a profession in research pertaining to neurodegenerative disorders. I am also considering going into something more clinical such as occupational therapy.

Ashley Cosenza

Ashley Cosenza is entering her fourth year at the University of Detroit-Mercy this fall as a Biology major with a concentration in Genetics. She is also a Student Dean of the Honors College. This summer she is working with Dr. Jason Mateika on a study in mice to determine the effects of serotonin on breathing instability in sleep, specifically in regard to sleep apnea. Upon graduating, Ashley plans to further her education with a Masters of Genetic Counseling, which she hopes to turn into a career as a prenatal Genetic Counselor. In her free time, Ashley enjoys volunteering as a youth basketball coach.
Thiviya Rajagopalan

My name is Thiviya Rajagopalan and I am a fourth year at Wayne State. I am majoring in Kinesiology and Sports Science. As a physiology SURF student I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge working in Dr. Wessells’ lab. Using the Drosophila genetic model I have learned about healthy aging and cardiac performance. Research that I have been doing with Dr. Wessells has supported that exercise improves muscle and heart performance in invertebrates. This is particularly important to me as a Kinesiology major, since I hope to have a future career dedicated to improving today’s society and health working in cardiac rehabilitation.

Michael Sobolic

My name is Michael Sobolic and I recently graduated from Wayne State University with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences. I applied to the SURF program because I participated in molecular biology research during my undergrad and had an interest in research. I wanted to experience medically-oriented research at the School of Medicine encompassing my passion for physiology. Currently, I work in Dr. Fei Sun’s lab studying cystic fibrosis in a rabbit model. My long-term goal is to become a physician and recently, I have been considering a pediatric surgical subspecialty. Another reason why I wanted to partake in this fellowship is that I am considering doing an MD/PhD or pursuing a PhD later in life.