

Razor's Edge Research Scholars Program: Reflective Portfolio
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Abstract

This portfolio is both an archive and an example of my work, experiences, and research during my time here at Nova Southeastern University. Within is a series of goals, reflections, artifacts and works that I have created or directly influenced. It is my hope that I look back on this portfolio in order to reference and learn from my initial experiences during my undergraduate years and my time spent in the Razor's Edge Research Program.

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Statement of Goals

Fall 2016 Goals

1. Receive all A's
1. Become SCUBA Certified
1. Discover my research passion

Winter 2017 Goals

1. Receive all A's
1. Work for Scientific Diver
1. Explore passion for coral research

Highlighted Experiences

Fall 2016 Experiences

Experience 1:

My first experience was during a field trip for my Marine Biology with Lab class. We got up early on a Saturday morning to head down to Key Largo and go snorkeling in the mangroves. I was initially disappointed because I had hoped to get out on the reef rather than just the mangroves, but it turned out much better than I had thought. I had not expected much from the mangroves in terms of interesting organisms; similarly to my research, I had not expected my views to change much once I got there. My initial research interest was corals, and I had assumed that the only place to go to see corals was on a reef. I found tons of corals and other organisms in the mangroves. This helped open my mind to the research possibilities in my future and not to discount one just based on the preconceptions I have.

Experience 2:

My second experience was the presentation and initially the development of our University-Based Research Project. My group consists of Morgan, Cailey, and me. Our project is based on whether or not a person's level of interest influences how well they do on tests in that subject matter, as well as if prior knowledge assists in learning more advanced concepts. It would help educators to build a more interesting curriculum if a strong correlation is found. When we started, I was a little nervous because it seemed like a huge amount of work. While it wasn't a pushover, it was easier than I expected to find what information we needed. It served to give me more experience working with research in a collaborative setting.

Experience 3:

The third experience that I had this semester was a series of events, all pertaining towards my class schedule and requirements throughout the next four years. I am in Razor's Edge (obviously), the Honors College, and am planning to study abroad, as well as taking the Galapagos course my junior year. Balancing all of these can be a challenge. I have spoken several times with my professors, with Dr. Packer-Muti, and with my advisor. The amount of careful planning (and budgeting) that this balancing act takes is immense, but one of my professors helped me to realize one critical thing: you can't do everything. There are going to be moments in life when you have responsibilities that cause you to miss things. That's okay. That's life. That's one of the things that I had to learn about myself and my research in order to be more successful.

Artifact Collection

Fall 2016 Artifacts

1. *Elysia Crispata* Paper
2. IRB Form
3. Academic Planner

Reflection

Fall 2016 Reflection

Throughout this semester, I think I've had to do more homework than any other year. I've had to study the hardest I ever have for tests, quizzes and final exams. I've worked more hours than I ever have during the school year. I went kayaking. I've gone out more with friends. I went snorkeling. I've been hiking. I went SCUBA diving. I've been biking. I've gone swimming. I went to the beach at night. This first semester, I've done more than I ever have. It's pretty crazy to think about. When the semester began, I have to admit I wasn't thinking about much other than how I wanted my grades to turn out. As the semester progressed, I did more and more. It's not that I ignored my homework, far from it. I just had never realized as a student how much I was actually able to balance on my plate. It was kind of crazy to me. It really makes you feel accomplished.