LEAP Graduates: Where Are They Now?

Learn about what our former students are doing after completing LEAP and graduating from WSU.

Bassam Kashgari (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)

“Joining LEAP was the start of a new journey in my life, where I had to leave home and family and move to a country with a different culture and rules. At first, it was difficult. I had to become more independent and do everything by myself. I was busy and felt overwhelmed all the time. I worked so hard to finish everything at the same time, which left me stressed out. I then realized there is a difference between being busy and being productive. I started managing my time and priorities, which made my life easier and much more productive.”

Bassam says that he likes the excellent job LEAP does in preparing students for academic classes. In addition to teaching the proper academic reading and writing skills, it also introduces the academic environment to students so they are familiar with the American teaching system. Students have the opportunity to learn skills that are not provided in the academic classes. “These skills and techniques helped me a lot and saved me a huge amount of time. Therefore, I strongly believe that the LEAP classes are not less important than the academic classes at all.”

After receiving his M.S. degree in Microbiology & Immunology, Bassam was accepted for Optional Practical Training (OPT), a program allowing recent international graduates to work in the U.S. for a while to gain experience in their field. Bassam spent some time in California in order to get experience in the field of immunotherapy. He is currently volunteering at an immunotoxicology research laboratory at WSU, leading projects and training students. He is also preparing for PhD admission in immunology, with research focus on immunotoxicology or immunotherapy, which is treating cancer using the patient’s immune system. “I have a strong belief and hope that cancer won’t be as scary as it is today (a safe cure will be found soon).” When asked about his future dream job, he says, “The great thing about the scientific field is that you can teach and lead your own laboratory to do scientific research. I love what I’m doing right now, and I love teaching. So, teaching in a university, where I can have my own laboratory to do research is my dream job.”

When Bassam is not in the lab, he enjoys doing all kinds of sports, “even the ones I’m not so familiar with, just to develop my physical skills.” He also participates in LEAP orientation week by visiting classes sharing his experience and giving advice to new students.

Bassam’s Words of Wisdom

“There is a difference between being busy and being productive, and between working hard and working smart.”

Degree:
Master’s of Science in Microbiology and Immunology, Wright State’s College of Math and Science, Spring 2015

Time in LEAP:
Attended LEAP from Spring 2011-Spring 2012