

Las Positas College For Immediate Release

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Las Positas Student Credits LPC with Assisting in her Success



(Livermore, CA) - Las Positas College (LPC) alum Ashley Kim always knew she wanted to work with animals. Growing up, the UC Davis graduate dreamed of a career in veterinary medicine, but after touring the university campus she realized the hospital setting wasn't for her and redirected her career intentions toward research.

Soon after graduating from high school, Kim said she knew her grades were not competitive enough to attend a university in California and was drawn to LPC's Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) program that guaranteed admission into the UC system. Tuition and LPC's available resources to help cover the cost of textbooks and supplies were also aspects Kim found attractive.

Knowing she wanted to be a biology major, Kim joined the LPC Biology Club and participated in volunteer events to further ignite her passion for the subject. She additionally took advantage of LPC's available programs and resources.

"I really appreciated the small class sizes because it gave me the opportunity to cultivate relationships with my professors," said Kim. "If I ever needed some extra help, I did not hesitate to visit them during office hours to ask questions and check on my progress in class. In lab classes, I learned the most course material through a hands-on approach. For example, in general zoology, every four students were assigned to dissect a whole dogfish shark. Compared to universities, some students may not have the opportunity like dissections."

Kim said LPC's lab classes were particularly instrumental in preparing her for her eventual transfer to UC Davis. Courses like cellular and molecular biology gave her opportunities to perform experiments in cloning and polymerase chain reactions (PCR), and the support she received from her professors and peers assisted in her on-campus success. While at LPC, Kim performed research at the California Academy of Sciences, working with Dr. Terry Gosliner to identify and characterize five new nudibranch species from the Philippines using molecular and morphological data. The research was presented at the NSF Bay Area Symposium of Undergraduate Research Conference 2016, the Harvard National Collegiate Research Conference 2018 and was awarded Special Congressional Recognition from the United States House of Representatives in 2016 and is being submitted as a manuscript.

"I recommend attending LPC for the opportunities to really explore your career options," she said. "I know so many peers who have regretted their decision to attend a university that isn't a good fit or their major was something they were not passionate about. It was one of the best decisions I ever made because I would not have been able to get the same opportunities at a university."

In addition to LPC's Biology Club, Kim served as the first chapter president of the Omicron Lambda Chapter of LPC's Tri-Beta Biological Honor Society. At UC Davis, Kim was the director of speakers for TEDx UC Davis and a UC Davis SEEDS member.

At Davis, Kim conducted an independent research project investigating contradictory photoperiod and temperature conditions on diapause and how it affected the melanism on the wings of the white cabbage butterfly. Her thesis, which is being prepared for a manuscript, was on the value of software coding in ecology. She additionally participated in research at University of California Riverside studying hummingbird foraging behavior with residual defensive or pheromonal insect compounds on nectar resources and the ecological relationships of Formica ants and honeybees, with hummingbirds at an organismal and molecular level. The research, written with Dr. Erin Wilson Rankin, is currently being reviewed by the Journal of Experimental Biology and was presented at the NSF and AAAS Emerging Researchers National Conference 2018 and won first place in the Ecology division.

Since graduating, Kim has worked as a lab tech at the University of California Berkeley in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management (ESPM) studying agricultural pest management and volunteers at Cal's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and Essig Museum of Entomology performing tasks like preparing bird specimens, bird taxidermy and insect pinning. She is also currently conducting research with Harvard Medical School's (HMS) Dr. Emorica Hill on the HMS Women in Academic Medicine (WIAM) study where the pair are investigating career advancements and barriers that women in academic medicine have faced while earning their master's or doctorate degrees.

"Our research aims to identify barriers that interfere with the advancement of higher education for women and create solutions for allocating resources to certain areas," said Kim. "In collaboration with the UC Davis Feminist Institute, we are in the process of writing a manuscript on research surveys conducted from 13 different universities. I plan to continue the WIAM student and contribute solutions to other institutions who might not have resources surrounding female inclusion in science."

Kim, who graduated from LPC in 2016 and UC Davis with a degree in animal biology in 2018, is currently applying to Ph.D. programs in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology with her sights set on Harvard University, Cornell University, Cal, Columbia University and University of Chicago. She ultimately eyes a career as a museum curator at a top institution.

About Las Positas College

Las Positas College currently enrolls 8,000 students and offers curriculum for students seeking transfer to a four-year college or university, career preparation, or basic skills education. The College provides university transfer classes, retraining classes for those in need of employment or career advancement, a first-time educational opportunity for many adults, enrichment classes for those seeking a broader perspective, and career and technical training for those entering the technical and paraprofessional workforce.

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