

Suzie Byun

## SNUCMAA Progress Report

Thanks to the generous award of the SNUCMAA scholarship, I have been able to more easily pay for my tuition and course expenses, including textbooks and study materials. In addition, instead of spending my time working to earn my spending money, I have been able to put more of my time and energy towards some volunteer activities that I strongly believe in and really enjoy doing.

This past January, I was able to spend the entire month working full-time at a laboratory within the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. This was an unpaid intern position that I was able to commit to much more easily because of the funding of this scholarship. At this position, I worked on various projects relating to the study of surgical corrections to hearing loss that were done at the hospital. One of these projects involved tracking the growth of tumors on the vestibular nerve, which are often not removed for many years, through MRIs, and correlating tumor volume to overall outcome. I also participated in a similar project involving auditory brainstem implants, which are typically given to pediatric patients who have sensorineural hearing loss but are not candidates for cochlear implants. We analyzed brainstem volume, which we thought to be correlated very strongly to the effectiveness of the implants in improving hearing. This experience was a great opportunity to work alongside both clinical and medical science researchers, and I was able to glean a lot of insight into how clinical research is conducted and how some physicians are able to balance their work in clinic and in the lab, as my PI did.

I have also been able to spend more time volunteering on the student-run ambulance that operates on the MIT campus. We are not paid for our work, but the institute funds the operational expenses of the service. I typically spend 20 to 30 hours a week working on call for the ambulance, and having the flexibility to take these shifts has come from the fact that I did not have to work a fixed-hour job during the semester. Although we are not paid, I find myself working so much because I believe in the value of helping others. Whenever I am on shift, I am able to help those who are very much in need at that moment, and I find so much satisfaction in being the someone who can offer the medical service that someone needs. Working as an EMT has not only given me some amazing experiences and opportunities that would have been otherwise unimaginable, but it has also helped me grow so much as a person - it has helped me be more confident in myself and in my skills, and it has helped me grow as both a mentor and a caregiver to others.

Without the funding from the SNUCMAA scholarship, it would have been much harder for me to participate in these activities to the extent that I did, and I would not have had all of these invaluable experiences from this past semester. In the future, I plan to continue my work as an EMT on my campus, and in the future, I hope to pursue a career in or supplementing the medical field, so that I am able to contribute to the bettering of human health and happiness.

