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Chemistry major on fast track to pharmacy school

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Chemistry major on fast track to pharmacy school

Seeing she graduated in December, a semester early, and is already applying to pharmacy schools, Mindy Chen '15 believes her experience at Dominican has put her on a faster track.

“Being at Dominican with small classes and close proximity to professors, I’m really grateful,” says Mindy, a chemistry major from Lowell High School in San Francisco. “At other schools, it would have been absolutely impossible for me to ask for a letter of recommendation or receive any opportunities. They wouldn’t know me. I would have just been a number. Here I have my picking.”

Mindy compiled an impressive resume at Dominican. Her achievements included being a [Lillian L.Y. Wang Yin Endowed Scholar](#) the past 2 ½ years, serving as president of the Psi-Beta Chapter of the Gamma Sigma Epsilon Chemistry Honor Society, interning as a technician assistant at Golden Gate Pharmacy, and working as a lab technician assistant at Dominican. As a research assistant at Dominican for the past two summers, Mindy collected data and worked closely with laboratory manager Dr. Christopher Endicott, Chemistry and Biochemistry program director Dr. Maggie Louie, and endowed Chemistry professor and chair of the [Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics](#) Dr. Randall Hall in the [School of Health and Natural Sciences](#).

“I’ve never known adults, other than my parents, this well,” says Mindy, who recently served as the student representative on the search committee for the department’s student services coordinator. “That’s one thing I’ve come to really appreciate about Dominican – the very close-knit working relationships and networking I can do with my professors.”

Mindy also is appreciative of upperclassmen who welcomed and guided her as a freshman to Dominican. During her first spring semester, Mindy began hands-on research for various projects. At one point during her sophomore year, Mindy was introduced into research projects that lasted a year and a half. She embraced the challenge, and enjoyed the variety of techniques required along with the flexibility and independence of arranging her schedule to address the demand.

“Because I had hands-on experience, I felt comfortable being in a lab by myself running experiments without needing a professor to supervise every minute,” Mindy says. “It definitely accelerated me, because it pushed my lab skills to a different level.”

Mindy’s favorite project was last summer when she collaborated six hours a day weekly with professor Dr. Hall, assistant professor Dr. Mary Sevigny, and a graduate student who had to bow out of the project.

“I was picking up the project where he left off, so in a sense, I was doing graduate level research. That’s an accomplishment,” Mindy says. “The best part was coming up with the end model the grad student had wanted to simulate for Dr. Sevigny, within three to four weeks.”

Mindy’s goal now is to become a compounding pharmacist, giving her the responsibility to create and prepare specific medication for a patient’s individual needs, as prescribed by a physician. This will allow Mindy to spend more time in a lab where she thrives on the precision, persistence, and organization it requires.

“Being able to work in a lab is so fulfilling for me,” Mindy says. “When push comes to shove, I shove pretty well.”

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