

Former CC students

Duo joins the fight against cancer

A SUMMER OF STUDYING WRIGGLING roundworms might seem tedious for most people, but for Collin College graduate Nicholas Lee, it meant coming one step closer to understanding how cancer works.

Lee and former Collin College student Eunky Hahm both attended Collin College from 2011 through 2013 before attending The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center for an internship and undergraduate study, respectively. Lee focused on experiments using roundworms to understand cancer while Hahm studied molecular genetics.

Their journey to study at the number one-ranked cancer care hospital and medical university in the country required dedication that was honed at Collin College.

Both Lee and Hahm originally hail from South Korea. The transition to attending college on the other side of the world was not without its challenges of adapting to a new culture, Lee said.

"I met so many helpful people at Collin, in addition to the friendships I made," Lee said. "One friend in particular, Andrew Herman, who I met the first semester, helped me quickly settle down into a new environment that was completely different from where I used to live."

Now a junior studying at Texas Tech University, Lee said supportive professors also enabled and encouraged him to reach opportunities by offering extra help outside of class and helped him craft résumés and personal statements to apply for internships.

"I would like to thank every faculty member who helped give me the best education and knowledge to succeed,"

Lee said. "Their instruction and support make me feel proud to have chosen Collin College."

For Eunky Hahm, attending college in the United States meant a chance to explore something new. She originally studied food science in her native South Korea but was interested in studying chemistry and biochemistry when she first came to the U.S.


Participation in the Collin College's Center for the Advanced Studies in Mathematics and Natural Sciences (CASMNS) program guided her decision to change direction academically. CASMNS is a specialized program that allows students to participate in a variety of undergraduate research activities.

Now currently a junior living in Houston and studying at MD Anderson, Hahm said the research skills she developed while at Collin introduced her to the rigors of studying genetics.

"This type of in-depth research helped prepare me to study genetic molecular technology as my major at MD Anderson."

Working alongside students from universities across the U.S.—including Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—while at MD Anderson, has also made an impact on Lee and Hahm, who are both interested in pursuing careers in medicine.

"Interacting with scientists, doctors and students at the world's leading cancer research institution was incredible," said Lee. "I learned from scientists who are so passionate and determined. That kind of serious, but joyful, attitude motivates me and gives me inspiration."

For more information about Collin College, visit collin.edu. 

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