

My name is Hailey Beaty, and I am an incoming senior majoring in Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). Originally from the La Crosse area, my journey into the field of research began before I even started my freshman year, setting the stage for a deeply enriching academic experience.

My introduction to research started in July 2021 through the UR@UWM program, an initiative that allowed me to work in a laboratory under the guidance of Dr. Karyn Frick, a Distinguished Professor at UWM. This program provided an immersive experience where I was able to dive into scientific research as a freshly graduated high school student. One of the most memorable and transformative moments during this time was learning how to perform brain surgery on mice—an extraordinary opportunity that significantly boosted my confidence and enthusiasm for scientific inquiry.

This early exposure was more than just a learning experience; it was a catalyst for my active involvement on campus and in the scientific community. It provided me with a head start, allowing me to build a strong foundation in research methodologies and techniques. Over the years, I have continued to work in Dr. Frick's lab, honing my skills and expanding my knowledge base.

In addition to my work at UWM, I had the opportunity to participate in the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) program, where I worked under Dr. Leone, the director of the cancer center. This experience broadened my understanding of research applications in medical science and further fueled my passion for contributing to significant scientific advancements.

My research journey has also involved presenting at numerous conferences, including MidBrains, the UWM Symposium, and the National Undergraduate Research Conference (NCUR). These platforms have not only allowed me to showcase my work but also to engage with a wider academic community, receive critical feedback, and foster connections with fellow researchers.

The impact of my research experiences on my education and future plans cannot be overstated. Initially, I perceived research as a stepping stone toward a career in medicine. However, as I delved deeper into my projects and experienced the thrill of discovery, I realized that research was much more than that. It became a vital part of my academic identity, teaching me invaluable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to conduct meticulous and meaningful investigations.

My continuous involvement in research has also illuminated the practical applications of my coursework, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world scientific problems. This hands-on experience has been instrumental in shaping my academic pursuits and career aspirations.

As a Senior Excellence in Research Award (SERA) student, I am honored to represent undergraduate research and advocate for student involvement in these transformative

experiences. My journey through research has crystallized my goal of pursuing graduate school and committing to a lifelong journey of learning and discovery.

When I reflect on my college years, it is clear that my time in research was where my true passion for neuroscience and scientific exploration was ignited. These experiences have not only prepared me for the challenges of graduate studies but have also instilled a deep-seated drive to continue contributing to the field of neuroscience. I am excited about the future and the endless possibilities that research holds, knowing that this journey has only just begun.