

An Bui is an undergraduate student in the Faculty of Science who is researching inflammation in stroke. Her image titled *Neutrophils block brain capillaries in the penumbra region of the ischemic mouse model with a 60-min transient middle cerebral artery occlusion* is featured on the front cover of this issue.

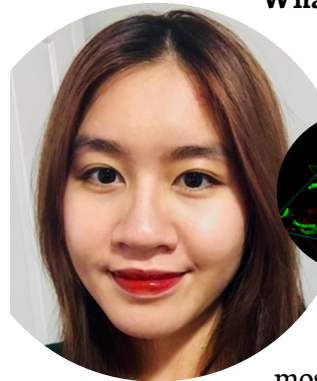
“ I’m in the final year of my Neuroscience degree. I was born and raised in Hanoi, Vietnam, where I had a lot of amazing memories and found my love for health science. I came to Toronto in 2017 to finish my high school and eventually here for university. I work as a freelance illustrator and enjoy a variety of arts and crafts in my free time. I paint in different mediums and am trying to improve my sewing and sculpting skills. These are extremely therapeutic activities and a great way to discover some creative sides of mine that I’ve never known of. I’m also working on learning a new language!

How did you get your start in research? Can you share any advice about that first step?

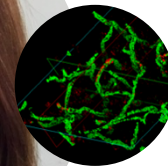
Having learned that research was one of the university’s strongest suits, I was already interested in getting involved in it when I started my first year. After my first semester, I had a grasp of what my study schedule would be and started browsing research labs within the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. Knowing that I wanted to be in a lab that focused on health research, I read about the faculty members’ research topics and emailed them to ask to join their labs. I think after about 10 interviews, I finally got accepted for a summer student research position! My advice would be: know what interests you, read about the lab’s work thoroughly, and actively look for opportunities in advance instead of waiting for them to come to you.

What was the first thing that made you want to be involved in your current field of research?

I found the guest lectures on stroke in NEURO 210 to be remarkable and inspiring. I was really impressed with the studies that have been done in the field and the content was genuinely fascinating to me.



What do you love the most about your research or lab experience now?



It’s difficult to identify a singular thing. The whole experience has been very enriching and eye-opening, but what I love the most would be how I always got help

and assistance in the lab, which allowed me to learn so much along the way. My colleagues and mentors are amazing people who have a great deal of expertise in their respective fields. They are the reason why I have grown and overcome all the challenges in my project. I cannot thank them enough and I’m very fortunate to be able to work alongside them.

What do you consider your role to be as a scientist in the public eye?

I still see myself more as a science student rather than a scientist. With what happened in the pandemic, we could now understand better and appreciate the important role of scientists in our community, as well as their responsibilities. Scientists inform the public of the most recent knowledge in their field, and in

many ways, protect the public with their body of knowledge. With so much more to learn, I could not yet measure myself to such a powerful and influential figure.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Like many students who are graduating soon, I think we all see many different paths opening in front of us. We never know where the future will take us but for me, I hope that

is somewhere in the field of healthcare and medicine. I tend not to picture the end results as much as the journey, and I imagine that it would be a very fulfilling one, both academically and personally.

What was your favorite undergraduate experience (academic related or not!)?

Research is definitely my favorite undergraduate experience. When I wasn't studying, I spent most of my time in the lab. Research brought me the opportunities to learn different skills, to meet new friends, and to build my professional network. Other than research, my favorite undergraduate experience has to be volunteering with the Gateway as an illustrator. I never thought that after starting a science degree, I could still stay in touch with my creative side!

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Student researchers get a lot of advice; what is a piece of advice that you've received as a student that has stuck with you?

Experiments fail a lot but stay calm, find the problems, keep going, and you will not make the same mistakes again. Ask a lot of questions and never be afraid to seek help. Even if things ended up not working out perfectly the way you wanted them to, you would still learn a great deal along the way and you might get many pleasant surprises.