

When I first transferred to the University of Maryland I knew that I wanted to get involved with research on campus. Luckily I quickly discovered the Maryland Center for Undergraduate Research's search engine. When I began to look for a research topic I looked at all of the projects sponsored by the Department of AGNR. I found Professor Kweon's project listing and I knew that I wanted to work with her. I had just transferred from Wellesley where I had been doing Psychology research. In high school I spent a year working with USDA doing plant science research. Looking at Dr. Kweon's research I knew I found the perfect combination of psychology and plants because her projects revolved around how plants affect humans. When I scheduled a meeting with her we discussed possible projects that she wanted to start and when she suggested my current project, I jumped on the opportunity. The project we chose began with the question: "Do all students, regardless of racial and socioeconomic status, have equal access to the Green Ribbon Schools?" This environmental justice question sparked my passion for this project and made me excited to get to work.

When it came to looking up sources I started with the papers that Dr. Kweon gave me. Once I was finished with those papers I then went on to use the UMD Libraries website to discover more sources. I mostly used the WorldCat search function to locate papers I already knew that I wanted to read. My main strategy for looking for sources was going through the bibliographies of the papers that Dr. Kweon already gave me to read. When evaluating my sources, I checked to make sure that they were from peer reviewed journals so that I could trust the information provided. In addition to library resources I did use Google Scholar in order to search for certain topics that I had yet to find papers on. Often, I would find a paper I wanted to read but would then have to go through UMD libraries in order to get access to certain papers.

While I did not end up needing the assistance of a librarian I did end up having to find another professor to help answer some questions I could not easily find online. Towards the end of my project, I hit a bump in the road. I was having a difficult time figuring out which statistics I could use because of the limits of my data. I decided I needed to speak to one of the statistics professors, so I used the UMD website to find the teachers that taught upper level statistics. I emailed Professor Smith and set up a meeting with him and he helped me to figure out how to get statistically significant conclusions for my project. He told me I could run a chi-squared test using R because it uses the Monty Carlo procedure to calculate the p-value which allows for greater variation in the data. I spent the summer learning R so that I could complete this analysis. The process of learning R is an area that traditional library services are not as helpful with. While I could have used books in order to learn how to use R, I instead chose to follow video lessons that walked me through the specific process that I needed. The ability to use online videos to solve specific problems was far more useful in my circumstances than attempting to read large statistics manuals in order to learn how to solve a small problem.

I learned a lot during this process, specifically about the process of writing an entire research paper. As the goal of this paper is for it to be published, this was my first time I experienced writing on this level. There are a lot of small skills that I learned that I had never thought about prior to this experience; for example, the formatting of the paper was very specific for the journal that we are submitting to, and I had never thought about that aspect of writing papers professionally. I eventually want to go into academia, so this research process was a very valuable experience to me. I believe that this experience made me a stronger writer and researcher.

Looking back, the only thing I would change would be to better use the resources available to me. When I started this project, I was a fresh transfer student so I was unaware of all of the available resources. The best way that the library could be a better place would be to do a better

job teaching the transfer students about the resources that the library has available to them at orientation.