**Getting your hands wet: finding a research lab at Yale**

Doing research in a lab is the ultimate way to experience the excitement of discovery, deepen your understanding of the scientific method, use the biophysical and biochemical tools you have been learning about, and appreciate the beauty of life’s molecules in action. All MB&B majors are encouraged to work in a research lab during the semester and/or over the summer. During the semester, you have several options for getting involved in a research project: you can simply volunteer for the number of hours you think is reasonable for you, you can take research for credit (e.g. MB&B 470/471) that anticipates a minimum of 10hrs/week in the lab, or you can organize/respond to an ad for student employment in a lab. Summer research can be supported by a fellowship:

[http://science.yalecollege.yale.edu/yale-science-engineering-research/fellowship-grants)](http://science.yalecollege.yale.edu/yale-science-engineering-research/fellowship-grants%29) Arrange summer research early in the spring term, to give you time to apply!

When you do research in the lab, you’ll be asking a question that has never been answered before. Getting the right or wrong result is not the point of research. Taking MB&B 251L is an opportunity to find out the kinds of research you might enjoy and gain real skills you can use in any research lab. But there are so many fascinating unanswered questions, you may not know which interests you the most before getting started.

In choosing a lab, there are three main considerations:

1. Pick a lab that studies something that really interests you! It could be a broad goal (how do cells move?), a more focused goal (how do proteins bind RNA?), or a technical interest (how does X-ray crystallography or RNA-Seq work?).

2. You will have the chance to get to know the professor (PI) of the lab really well. Although the PI may not supervise your every move, he/she will want to get to know you, discuss your experiments with you and help you set new goals in and out of the lab. Consider working in the lab of a professor who has inspired you in the classroom. Or, meet with a professor you have never heard of and decide if you have a good rapport.

3. The lab is also a social and learning environment. You will have the chance to get to know other undergrads, graduate students, technicians, and postdoctoral fellows. When you talk to the professor, peek into the lab and even chat with some of the lab members if possible. Does the lab environment feel exciting and welcoming to you?

MB&B encourages students to take advantage of all ~350 biomedical research labs at Yale. Keep in mind that most biological research is medically relevant. Although you need not restrict yourself to MB&B, reading the blurbs the ~50 MB&B faculty members have written about their research on our web site is a good place to start.

MB&B faculty from A-to-Z: <http://medicine.yale.edu/mbb/faculty/facultyaz.aspx>

MB&B faculty by research area: <http://medicine.yale.edu/mbb/faculty/research/>

For all 350 labs, see Biological and Biomedical Sciences Faculty: <http://bbs.yale.edu/people/>

Another resource is your MB&B advisor; he or she will be full of tips.

To approach a profess about working in their lab, just write an email. He or she will love to hear from you! Here is the sort of information you can write in your email to introduce yourself and your goals:

a. Say who you are (Yale college undergrad, what year, what major, what science courses you have completed, what you long term career goals are). Tell them if you have taken MB&B 251L!

b. Explain why you are specifically interested in that professor’s research. For example, you are interested in the research topic, you read a paper by the professor, your academic advisor suggested the professor, etc.

c. Explain that you want to do an independent research project. State when you would like to work in the lab (e.g. this semester, next semester, next summer).