

Daniel Czarnowski

Master of Science in Biology

Why did you apply for graduate school?

I applied to graduate school in the Department of Biological Sciences because I am deeply passionate about using science to help revolutionize patient treatment options and improve patient outcomes. When I was 7 years old, my little sister, Mary was born 24 weeks into my mother's pregnancy. Sitting in the waiting rooms, or at the foot of my sister's bed during her 81-day stay in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Henry Ford Hospital, I felt helpless. My sister was completely dependent on the medical staff, who were at the mercy of the technology available to them. It is my dream, through innovative cancer and stem cell research, to alleviate that feeling of helplessness for as many families as possible.

Why did you decide to go to OU?

I decided to go to Oakland University because I want the best possible education. My mentors, Dr. Luis Villa-Diaz and Dr. Gerard Madlambayan have been able to provide me with incredible learning experiences that I'm confident I couldn't find anywhere else. Being able to work in labs making significant contributions to the fields of both stem cell and cancer biology is the opportunity of a lifetime and played a very large role in my decision to come to Oakland. Additionally, the people I get to work with are much more than just colleagues. In my time at Oakland, I've met so many wonderful people, and made so many lifelong friends. Between the outstanding research and the friendly atmosphere, Oakland University really is my ideal school to complete my graduate studies.

What is your favorite part of being an OU Graduate student?

My favorite part of being an OU Graduate Student is the people I work with. The other graduate students make studying at Oakland University such a fun experience. Working crazy hours in the lab is actually a lot of fun when you're surrounded by the right people.

Do you have any advice for those applying to your program?

Don't be afraid to collaborate with students from other labs. It's easy to feel lost when you first start in a lab, so the best way to get acclimated is to learn from someone with some experience. The Department of Biological Sciences is full of intelligent mentors and graduate students who are always willing to teach you exactly what you need to know to be successful. As someone who came from researching penguins at the Detroit Zoo, I had absolutely no lab experience. However, being able to work on a collaborative project with a Ph.D. student when I began my graduate studies taught me everything I need to know to run my own independent projects.

Do you have any advice for those applying for a graduate assistantship?

Make sure you talk to university faculty members that run the labs you're interested in teaching. If you're interested in teaching a genetics lab, you may want to talk to the head of the genetics labs before you get placed elsewhere. There may not be a teaching spot available for the lab you want to be in, but it never hurts to ask.

Do you have any advice for those who have been awarded a teaching assistantship?

Study your subject well. Students will ask a lot of questions, and it's our job to be able to provide accurate answers to those questions. It takes time and effort, but it does get a lot easier with time.