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Anand Saripalli ('16) will use a year of NIH funding to inspire his passion in biomedical research at MSU

When Anand Saripalli was a little boy, he watched his grandfather struggle with the limitations of his prosthetic arm. It inspired the Ann Arbor native to explore his interests in medicine and mechanics as a student at Michigan State University.

In the MSU College of Engineering, he found ways to blend those interests into a degree in chemical engineering, with a concentration in biomedical engineering. Saripalli graduated from MSU on May 8, completing his undergraduate studies in just three years while actively participating in biomedical research.

He was recently named a 2016 Scholar in the MSU Research Education Program to Increase Diversity in Health Researchers (REPID). He will use a fellowship from the National Institutes of Health to fund a year of study and continue his work in biomedical research – all with the goal of being accepted into a medical school.

“Engineering is one of the biggest feeders into medical schools,” Sarapalli said. “If you take engineering concepts and work on something unique, like medical equipment, it can be a key to a great future in medicine,” he explained.

As an MSU senior in the College of Engineering, Saripalli was mentored by Mark Worden, interim chair of MSU’s new Department of Biomedical Engineering, and Tim Whitehead, assistant professor of chemical engineering and materials science. The faculty members taught him the basics of biomedical research and guided him in MSU’s biomedical research lab.

Saripalli is currently transitioning into lab research work this summer with Julia Busik, associate professor of physiology at MSU.

“I first worked in a bio-mechanics lab and now I am with Dr. Busik in a lab working on diabetic retinopathy. The disease
is still a leading cause of blindness in adults, which is neither preventable nor curable.

“I love the people here,” he continued. “I have learned a lot, especially when I mess up. It rounds out my interests and helps me better understand my pursuit of technical science.”

REPID at MSU
Research Education Program to Increase Diversity in Health Researchers (REPID) is a short-term research education program for MSU students. It is supported by the National Institutes of Health. REPID includes an introductory course in biomedical research basic training, followed by a summer hands-on research experience to inspire a passion for health-related research. Scholars receive financial support that includes a stipend and fringe benefits during their hands-on research training experience. Some tuition and room and board costs are available. For more on REPID, a program of the MSU College of Human Medicine, visit www.repid.msu.edu

As a freshman at MSU in August 2013, he joined other entering freshmen in the College of Engineering’s CoRe (Cornerstone and Residential) Experience. He immediately began to tutor in the CoRe program and ended up serving as CoRe’s supervisor of tutoring during his three years as an undergraduate.

His memberships include Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honors Society, Omega Chi Epsilon Chemical Engineering Honors Society, and the MSU chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

He earned the rank of Eagle Scout in 2012.
When not busy with his CoRe duties, he volunteered at East Lansing’s Ronald McDonald House and at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing in the post-operation and emergency rooms. As a post-op volunteer, he made sure nurses got supplies like ice bags and bandage kits. In the emergency room, he helped fill food and bedding requests.

“I have found that my volunteer work helps me navigate in the hospital, doing whatever task is needed day-by-day. It has been an amazing experience.”

Related Website: REPID at MSU
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