“No Limits” for SCF Biotechnology Student Saida Jennell

When State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota began its new Associate in Science in Biotechnology degree, SCF student Saida Jennell discovered the perfect opportunity to combine her interest in health care with her passion for medical technological innovation.

“Working in a lab behind the scenes has enabled Jennell to do what she loves most — to develop innovative research that improves the quality of life for people now and in the future. "As a researcher, there are no limits. No one knows everything about science. There’s so much that is undiscovered," she said.

A native of Russia, Jennell came to the United States in 2006 with a degree in physics. Her desire was to work in a lab setting, and she is pleased to have discovered a new career in biotechnology.

She attributes her success to qualified and caring professors who mentored her and helped her develop the right skills for her job. Since Jennell began working at Cambryn Biologics, she has continued completing her coursework and plans to graduate in Fall 2013.

"SCF professors are brilliant. They have great experience, they are very approachable and they always find time to give you extra help if you need it. You just have to be willing to give the time," she said.

SCF’s biotechnology students learn laboratory skills and are trained in advanced molecular biology techniques used in both research and industrial environments.

Dr. Matt Thomas, SCF assistant professor, natural sciences, was instrumental in connecting Jennell with Cambryn Biologics for a summer internship that led to her full-time job. As her professor, Thomas has witnessed first-hand Jennell’s excitement about her new job and its relevance to her classwork.

"A couple of years ago, it was unimaginable for students at this level to experience and work with materials that traditionally have been used by advanced bachelor’s degree or graduate students," Thomas said. "Here at SCF, we help students develop advanced skills and confidence that make them marketable and employable in the biotechnology field," he said.

Marc Paquin, chief operating officer for Cambryn Biologics, is equally pleased with the quality of training that Jennell received from Thomas and other SCF professors. "I’m a firm believer in specific academic training provided by SCF’s biotechnology program, and I look forward to the future graduates that SCF will continue to produce," Paquin said.

Since the program began in Fall 2011, several other students have been placed in internships at local biotechnology companies. The program will graduate its first class in May 2013.

Biotechnology is used to detect and cure diseases, analyze DNA, generate fuel sources for efficient energy production, improve productivity and disease resistance in food crops, analyze environmental contaminants and conduct pharmaceutical and clinical testing.

Potential workplace environments for graduates include laboratories specializing in food safety, environmental quality control, the production of new medicines, forensics, alternative fuels, bio-manufacturing, biomedical device and manufacturing development, and industry, academic and government research.


About SCF’s A.S. in Biotechnology Program

© The program currently has 83 students enrolled.
© Courses include Biotechnology Methods, Introduction to Biotech, Plant and Animal Cell Culture and Introduction to Bioinformatics. Students also complete a capstone internship.
© The program provides another career choice for students interested in science, nursing or other health care fields.

To view a video featuring SCF’s A.S. in Biotechnology Degree Program, visit scf.edu/biotechnology. For more information about the program, contact Jane Pfeilsticker, department chair and professor, natural sciences, at 941-752-5271 or email pfeilsj@scf.edu. ©

Source: Information provided by Jessica Klipa, public information coordinator at SCF.

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