

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

6 Questions with *Anna Dion*

Fourth Year, Biomedical Engineering

Hometown: Coupeville, WA

What made you choose engineering?

I always knew I wanted to work within the medical field but didn't want to have to sacrifice engineering aspects to do so. To me, biomedical engineering represents the ideal combination of applying engineering principles to the human body to optimize and overcome conditions that could not be singularly addressed through medicine. I was also intrigued by the challenge of designing devices that must operate within extremely high-stress environments (such as the body) without failing for many years on end. Choosing my major was an easy decision, and biomedical engineering has endlessly fascinated me.

What is your favorite place in San Luis Obispo County and why?

I love going to Avila Beach at sunset. The beach empties pretty early in the day, which means it's easy to get a spot alone and take a break from classwork and school. Watching the sun go down over the water is always calming and great for de-stressing after hectic weeks. I also love watching the sandpipers run through the surf!

What was your earliest engineering project?

The first project I worked on was building a Rube Goldberg machine for the Science Olympiad in high school. The goal of a Rube Goldberg machine is to essentially make a simple action — like blowing out a candle — as complex and convoluted as possible through various mechanical, electrical and thermal

actions. Although it was frustrating at times, it was incredibly rewarding when a step was integrated correctly and would reliably trigger the next action. This project ignited a love for engineering, and more specifically, the creative and novel thinking required to overcome an obstacle.

What has been your favorite class and why?

My favorite class was BMED 460: Engineering Physiology. Although the class was difficult, it was incredibly rewarding when the individual signaling pathways clicked and became understandable within the context of the entire body. The labs for 460 were also very involved, requiring a lot of work physically and mentally. At the end of the day, it was always fun, and it was cool to see how our classes' data matched against existing studies!

Do you have a scholarship?

I've been very fortunate to receive several from my hometown community, as well as from Cal Poly, including the Green and Gold Outreach Scholarship.

Are you part of any extracurriculars on or off campus?

I do research with Professor Suzanne Phelan and the Center for Health Research and manage the Histology Lab. Off campus, I volunteer with Shower the People as a shower cleaner. It's been a really fulfilling way to meet and interact with more people from the community and is one of my favorite activities!

