

Interview with MMG Alumna Katherine Amidon



Photo by Anne Rayner

What brought you to MMG?

I started at UVM as a Biochemistry major, but I have broad scientific interests and became very interested in microbiology after taking an MMG elective. I heard great feedback about other MMG classes from my friends, so I decided to pursue a second major in microbiology and I am so glad that I did. The MMG community was very welcoming and I found that many MMG classes were directly applicable to my interests and gave me practical experience in laboratory research as well as reading scientific literature.

Were you a microbiology or a molecular genetics major?

Microbiology

What were your favorite aspects of MMG?

Close-knit community, resources for getting involved in research, supportive and available faculty, excellent scientific training and highly relevant and applicable classes

Since graduating, what have you found most useful from your MMG experience?

MMG classes taught me how to effectively read and evaluate scientific literature, and that has been invaluable in both my graduate school classes and in my research in the lab.

Do you have any advice for current or incoming MMG students?

Prioritize classes and lab, and don't worry, you'll make friends as you go because MMG has a great community. It takes a lot of time and effort to learn the material but it is worth it and that effort will continue to pay off years down the road. Also remember and appreciate how cool it is that you get to learn about cutting edge science.

What do you love about science and research?

Life is really incredible, and it's awesome and mind-boggling when I take a step back and realize that I get to learn first-hand how it works!

Can you provide a brief (one or two sentence) summary of your current research focus (and can we share the link to your paper/the article about your research)?

I'm studying a highly-conserved protein domain called SRAP. It forms stable crosslinks to abasic sites in DNA and is important for maintaining genome integrity. I am focusing on the structure and biochemical mechanism of SRAP and its role in DNA repair.

What is the title of the degree that you are pursuing?

PhD in Biochemistry

What's next?

Gearing up for my qualifying exam in a few weeks, then I'm excited to dive into my proposed thesis research. For my dissertation research I'll be studying both the human SRAP protein, HMCES, and its *E. coli* ortholog, YedK. I've found my project to be a nice combination of my interests in microbiology and chemistry.