Alumni Highlight: Julia Jennings

Julia Jennings graduated in 2013 from Central with degrees in Chemistry and Molecular and Cell Biology. She is currently a fourth year graduate student in the Chemistry Department at UC Davis working with Dr. Annaliese Franz. Last year Julia published a first author a paper entitled *Lanthanum(III)-Catalyzed Three-Component Reaction of Coumarin-3-carboxylates for the Synthesis of Indolymalonamides and Analysis of Their Photophysical Properties* in *Journal of Organic Chemistry*. Julia is also the recipient of the Borge Fellowship (2013) and the Eugene Cota-Robles Fellowship (2013-2015).

“I still benefit greatly from my time in the McNair program. Because it so strongly encouraged applying for fellowships, I was able to get a fellowship that provided funding for the first two years of my program. This meant that I didn’t have to worry about teaching until after my qualifying exam and also allowed me to join a research group that I was passionate about but that didn’t have funding for a new student that year.”

“I have an undergraduate working with me for the last year or so who is in the McNair program here at UC Davis and it is great to give her extra encouragement and mentorship. She’s interviewing at UCSF and I am super excited for her. I also have worked with other undergraduates (5 so far!), but I am especially proud to work with someone in the program because it feels like giving back.”

“Beyond my research, I am actively involved in outreach. I am the graduate student representative on the chemistry department outreach committee for the second year now. We hold demo and hands on events to get kids excited about science. More recently we are working on adding events targeted at adults. Since completing the science communication fellowship program, I have remained active with the local science museum, engaging all ages in hands on science activities connected to my research, as well as themed events around national chemistry week and nano days.”

Julia during an outreach at an elementary school in Davis, California.

Julia being interviewed at Discovery Museum, Sacramento, California during Chemistry Week.