

From Biology Club to Breast Cancer Research

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For the past 14 months, Madison Oliwa '19 has been researching triple negative breast cancer at the [Breast Tumor Immunology Lab](#) at the [Dana-Farber Cancer Institute](#).

"I was drawn to this lab for its emphasis on translational research and the 'bench-to-bedside' model," Oliwa explains. "The overall mission of our lab is to bridge the clinical breast oncology program with our basic and translational breast cancer immunology laboratory efforts at Dana-Farber under the supervision of the new Director of the

Breast Immuno-Oncology Program, Elizabeth Mittendorf, MD, PhD, and the Director of the Breast Immunology Laboratory, Jennifer Guerriero, PhD.”

And if you ask Oliwa what best prepared her for this position, she’ll immediately tell you it was the faculty and staff at [University of New Hampshire at Manchester](#). “They believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself,” she explains. “they pushed me out of my comfort zone when they knew I needed it.” This was the case from day one, when, after meeting with her advisor, Associate Professor [Patricia Halpin, Ph.D.](#), for the first time freshman year, Halpin walked her right down to a Biology Club meeting, a club that she would go on to be the president of.

In addition to the Biology Club, Oliwa worked with Assistant Professor [Kristen Johnson, Ph.D.](#), conducting pancreatic cell research in her cell culture lab, as well as volunteering for the EXCELL-in-STEM program, a program led by Halpin that brings high school students to UNH Manchester to conduct hands-on science and technology experiments. She also served as a Student Ambassador, representing UNH Manchester to prospective students.

While this may seem like a lot to juggle, Oliwa says that getting involved is something every UNH Manchester student should do. “As daunting as social interaction can be sometimes, it is 100% worth it. Get involved in things you wouldn’t usually. Put yourself out there,” she says. “Get uncomfortable, you will thank me and yourself later for this.”

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