



Poised for the Profession

Alyssa Kelley heads into the real world of nutritional research

Wednesday, May 18, 2016



Alyssa Kelley has a piece of advice for incoming freshmen: Get involved early.

That's what she did, and it has paid dividends.

The Plaistow, New Hampshire, native will graduate on May 21 with a degree in nutrition, a full-time job and a resume chock full of experience in nutritional biochemistry — all of which will make her a coveted candidate for graduate school programs when the time comes.

Kelley says it all started at the end of her freshman year at UNH, when her academic advisor recommended a research experience. She applied for a [REAP](#) grant and spent 10 weeks in the lab of



ALYSSA KELLEY

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professor Gale Carey working on nutritional biochemistry research.

“I loved it,” Kelley says. “It ended up being the biggest advantage, because it helped me with classes, especially lab courses.”

She says the experience also helped her determine what she wants to focus on for a career and allowed her to try it on for size. “Having that experience early on helped me get more internships in a field that I knew I liked because I got to experience it early.”

During one of those internships, Kelley helped develop products for Little Big Farm Foods in Portsmouth, a private-label baking mix company. When the internship ended, she stayed on as a part-time employee and has worked there for the past two years.

The summer after her junior year, Kelley started an internship at the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine in Natick, Massachusetts, where she conducted research alongside UNH alumni James McClung '98 and Stephen Hennigar '08 '10G, who are looking for a biomarker for zinc.

“Right now there’s not a really good way to tell whether people are deficient in zinc,” Kelley says. On May 31, she’ll join the team as a full-time employee helping to forward that research for a year before starting graduate school.

So, besides “get involved early,” what advice does she have for incoming freshmen?

“Don’t be scared of research; UNH really makes sure the research program is accessible to everybody.”

She continues: “Connect

Published

Alyssa Kelley co-wrote a systematic review with Stephen Hennigar '08 '10G that will be published this year in the journal *Advances in Nutrition*.

with your professors. They want to help you be successful and they have so many connections — they can help you find jobs and internships that are of interest to you. That's how I got my internships — by talking to professors. Without their help and their recommendations and their putting in a good word for me, I probably wouldn't have had the experiences that I did.”

WRITTEN [Tracey Bentley](#) | Communications and Public Affairs

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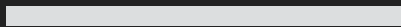
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