



WEST COVINA

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

1717 W. MERCED AVENUE WEST COVINA, CA 91790 626.939.4600 WCUSD.ORG

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sept. 17, 2019

CONTACT: Lauren Creiman

(909) 833-9853

West Covina Unified Student Excels in Purdue Summer Science Program

WEST COVINA, CA – Edgewood High School senior Vanessa (Ching Ying) Li returned to West Covina for the 2019-20 year with an elevated zest for science after conducting weeks of intensive biochemistry research during Purdue University’s Summer Science Program (SSP).

Li joined 35 high school students from across the country for the highly selective program at Purdue, enjoying 39 days of hands-on, collaborative experimental research, mentorship from university professors and behind-the-scenes tours of local scientific and cultural sites.

“I learned a lot in the classes and lectures, and it gave me more confidence to prepare for a career,” Li said. “It is a real community; you live together for six weeks and have the chance to bond and learn in a supportive environment.”

Li spent her time focused on biochemistry research, using wet lab techniques and modeling software to study an enzyme from a fungal pathogen and designing a small molecule inhibitor to protect crops from the enzyme.

“I love to learn about the systems within us – molecular biology is fascinating to me and I always look for opportunities to expand my interests,” Li said.

Li’s SSP experience aligns with her studies as an [International Baccalaureate \(IB\) Diploma Programme](#) candidate, which encourages students to explore the real-world context of their studies.

“Edgewood and IB are very rigorous and it’s taught me how to absorb information quickly, so I was prepared for the work in SSP.”

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Li is an active member of Science Olympiad Club, National Alliance on Mental Illness club and Key Club and is a passionate dancer who loves to choreograph contemporary and hip-hop routines.

She hopes to explore her interest in science further by pursuing a degree in biological engineering followed by career in the medical field or at a start-up company.

"I want to inspire younger generations to work hard and achieve their goals," Li said. "It might not seem possible, but if you work for it you can do anything."

PHOTO

WCUSD_LI: Edgewood High School senior Vanessa Li conducted weeks of intensive biochemistry research during Purdue University's Summer Science Program.

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