

Your Name: Nevin Aresh

Host Lab in Japan: Kino-Oka Sensei, Osaka University, BioProcess Systems Engineering

### ***Meaning of Nakatani RIES Fellowship:***

For me, the impact of the Nakatani RIES Fellowship program is something that cannot be covered in a couple of sentences but is something that I know has left a life-long impact on me. While I expected a trip where I would be able to see the major tourist sites in Japan, I received far more than that. We were able to foster friendships in our lab that would last us a lifetime and experience cultural events like the Gion Matsuri. I think the feelings of fun and fellowship that were developed in Japan serve to show how the impact of the Nakatani RIES Program is something we will carry with us for the rest of our lives.

### ***Research Internship Overview:***

At the Kino-Oka lab, I worked to further explore the differences that arise in the cytoskeleton and nuclear skeleton due to the time spent in culture. I learned how to use immunostaining to stain for F-actin, Lamin A/C, and the nucleus. Furthermore, I was able to take initiative and find a way to combine my previous knowledge in coding to create a 3-D representation of the distribution of these proteins within the nucleus. I think this project provided me the opportunity to take initiative on my own project, learn new laboratory techniques as well as combine them with previous experience. I think the experience of working in an international lab was great for me because the environment was a lot friendlier than that of American labs and provided me with great networking opportunities in another country. I think the main take aways from this opportunity were related to the techniques I learned as well as the friends I made and I know that the lab experience I had will help solidify what I want to do in the future.

### ***Lab Environment Overview:***

For me, the lab provided me with the ability to work on my own project and let me be flexible with the work I wanted to do. I think my research group had a great working style where every member of the lab was open for consultation on whatever problems I ran into during my project. Furthermore, even people who were not involved in my project kept asking me how my project was going and would give me advice on how I could improve my research track. I really loved my mentor as well because he worked to prioritize me during the two months that I was there and ensured that my project was a success as well as getting to know me on a personal level outside of lab. I really enjoyed getting to work with my mentor and the overall group dynamic in my lab.

### ***Daily Life in Japan:***

My daily life in Japan revolved primarily around my lab and research on the weekdays and travelling, tourism and cultural experiences on the weekends. Usually on the weekdays, I would interact primarily with my mentor in lab, the people who sat around me and the other members of the lab. During lunch, I would either go to the cafeteria with members of my lab or other

members of the Nakatani program who were also in Osaka University with me. Afterwards, I would usually head back to my room and eat dinner that I either cook, bought from a convenience store or go out to an Izakaya with friends. On the weekends I tried to get away from Osaka and explore as much of Japan as possible from cities as close as Kobe and Kyoto all the way to Fukuoka. These weekends provided an opportunity to see other cities and try different foods that I wouldn't be able to in Osaka.

***Experiences with Japanese Culture:***

My most meaningful experience with the Japanese culture was my interactions with the individuals in Japan. I'd heard many times before that Japan had the nicest people in the world and there were many situations where that was exemplified, but the most memorable one was during the first week when I went traveling around Tokyo on my own and discovered that I had not set up my phone properly and, therefore, couldn't turn on data or access google maps. However, I had a whole list of items to see in Tokyo that day and was determined to see all of them. Therefore, I would go around asking passerby's directions to those locations in my very broken Japanese and even though they didn't understand everything I was saying, they waited and worked with me and even walked with me to where I was trying to go. It showed how much kindness and patience the average Japanese person and was a big cultural difference as compared to America.