



Ace Statement

My name is Sydney Collier and I work as an undergrad researcher in Amy Boddy's lab at the University of California, Santa Barbara. In collaboration with the Santa Barbara Zoo, we are researching cancer in exotic species of animals from all over the world. Ever since I was young, the subject of cancer truly fascinated me. I have always admired the people who dedicate their careers to researching cancer, because it affects so many lives. I myself now have the opportunity to research cancer, which has greatly impacted my knowledge and experience about it. We know far less about cancer in animals than we do in humans, and even less about cancer in exotic species.

Sometimes, missing links in knowledge about diseases and their treatments can come from research on animals who have those same diseases. I think that learning about cancer rates in animals is fascinating and I want to explore this further. Working at the Boddy Lab has taught me various skills about what actually goes into research work. Learning how to analyze data properly, writing grants and tissue requests or just learning where to find resources to widen knowledge are invaluable skills to have as a student researcher. When I was gathering the data for our project on the Santa Barbara Zoo, I was very excited that much of the work was being done in the veterinary clinic.

I have always been an avid animal lover and at the zoo I was up close and personal with many species I've never seen before. Even though I was just on a computer and researching, I was able to witness surgeries and animals coming in for checkups. Being in a veterinary clinical setting helped me understand various animal pathologies and the different codes that veterinarians use to categorize animals and their illnesses. Being in that setting helped me understand why I love doing this type of research and gave me a

very well-rounded research experience. To fully understand pathology, you need real life experience in addition to learning about it through a research journal.

I think that it's truly amazing that our lab gets to contribute to a larger project about how we see cancer in animals. What I hope to see in the future is more cancer therapies for animals, and also a better understanding of cancer risk factors for animals so that zoo and pet owners are more aware. Ultimately, I hope this new information will benefit human health. In all, I would describe my research with ACE as a very holistic experience that has taught me many new things. I hope to continue this research and further my knowledge of cancer in exotic species.