

from the depths

NEW LIFE SPRINGS

Budding biologists make surprising discovery

The importance of undergraduate research became apparent when news surfaced that a new bacteriophage had been found near the Crim Dell. A group of 30 students collected soil samples from around the Crim Dell, analyzed them, and found a new bacteriophage that was studied further. Those who elected to participate in this research were excited that such an opportunity was available so early in their college careers.

"One of the primary reasons I came to William and Mary was to become involved in undergraduate research. I have always been interested in Microbiology and this research experience was too good to pass up," Sam Harvey said.

Many enjoyed the fact that the research that they were undertaking was on the cutting edge and were excited about the implications of their results.

"The bacteriophage field is relatively new," Thuy Tran said. "It's kind of like an avant-garde deal where you're really at the forefront of what's being studied. There's a lot that hasn't been discovered yet."

Because of the nature of the bacteriophage field and since this research experience was a new program within the biology department, there was no predefined method by which the labs were designed to run. For many, this uncertainty enhanced the learning process.

"This research was complex and challenging. I did not know what the results would be, but when I found out it was exhilarating. What I have learned through this research experience has strengthened my desire to continue to do research in the future," Arrykka Jackson said.

A love for research was common among those working on this project. Many expressed the desire to continue research at the College, and some had already become involved in other labs.

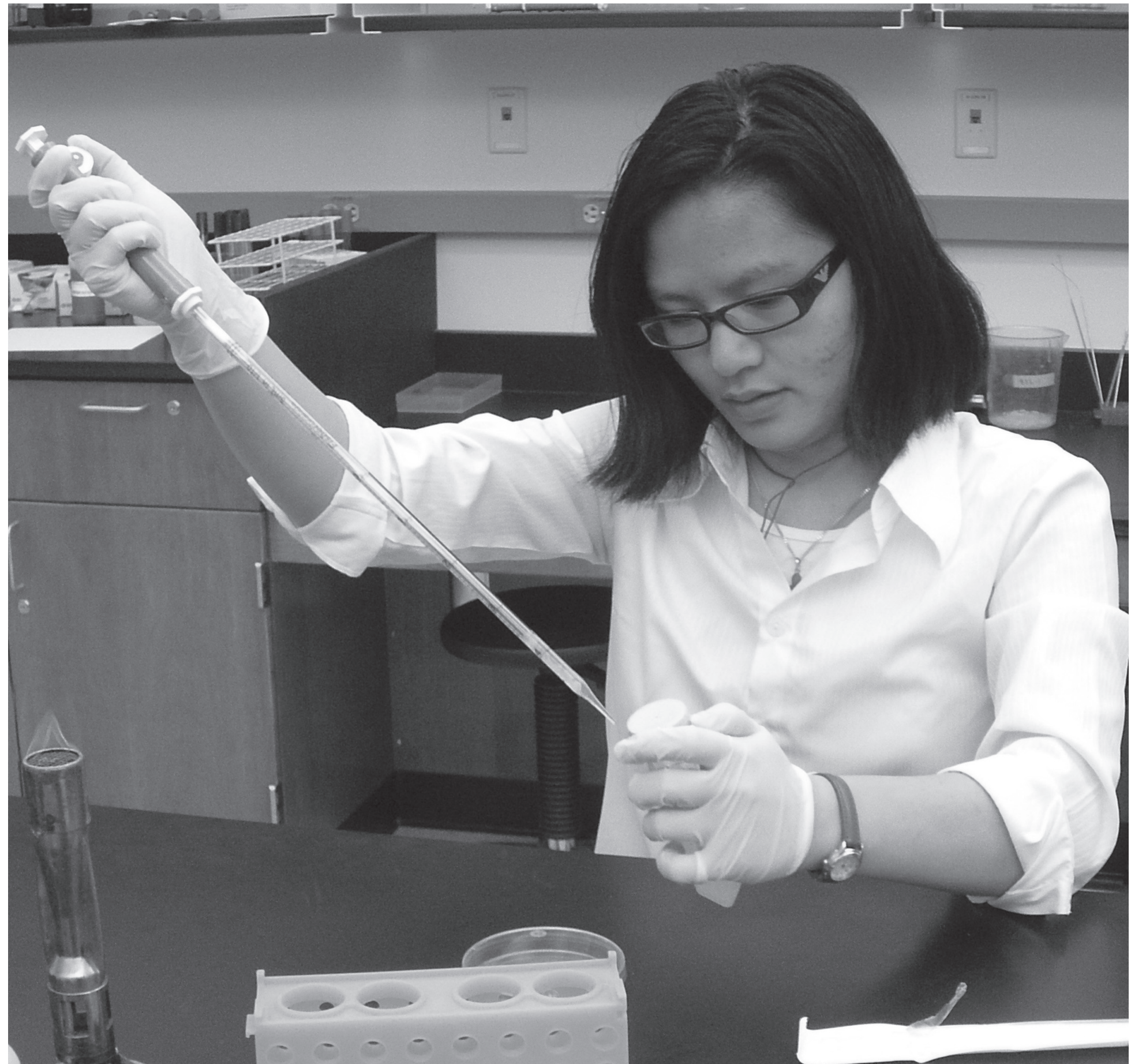
"I am certainly planning on continuing research for the remainder of my undergraduate years," Kobie Gordon said. "This experience has prepared me for the challenges of the more advanced lab procedures because I've learned how to ask questions and solve complex problems," Gordon said.

The discovery of a new bacteriophage was exciting, but this research was more important because it took students out of the traditional lab classroom and introduced them to the experience of solving real-world problems in a lab.

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Using a steady hand, Thuy Tran pipets some of a bacteriophage sample into a petri dish for testing. Although testing was only done on one bacteriophage type, each sample collected was stored for potential future studies.

>Judi Sclafani



>math&science_{inshort}

> About 20% of all undergraduates at the College majored in one of the physical sciences. The physical sciences covered the subjects of physics, chemistry and geology.

> Mathematics was one of the original "masterships" established at the College. The others were Divinity, Philosophy, Oriental Languages, the Grammar School, and the Indian School.

> A group of students and faculty in the Physics Department explored solar technology designs in order to incorporate solar power into the renovations of Small Hall.

> A grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute has led to increased research opportunities in several of the sciences. The College received this grant for three years in a row.