

Leadership Alliance Program

In every person's life there is one event that forever alters their future. For me that life-changing moment came the first time I opened Dr. Oliver Sacks' eye-opening book, "*The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*". I instantly knew that I would vigorously pursue a career in neurological research. Since that time, I have taken the careful steps to stay on the path towards that goal. My participation in the Leadership Alliance would be a major advance into my future and will be a vital contribution to my academic goals.

Just as a book can change my life, events on the molecular level can change and devastate life for others. I am fascinated by the mystery behind the genetic construction of our nervous system and our thought processes. I hope to someday unravel part of the mystery behind debilitating genetic disorders with the hope of the eventual elimination of their threat. In this light, I have recently been involved with research on cAMP response element-binding (CREB) proteins and how they impact the DNA's transcription properties. This project was conducted through the UC Department of Biological Sciences as part of a mice spatial behavior and neurology project. This important research could lead to the discovery of the action of the p300 binding protein and its relationship to Rubinstein-Taybi Syndrome (RTS).

I hope to build upon this initial research with a goal of becoming a participant in a graduate program and eventually receiving a doctoral degree in this field. This would allow me to expand my research into areas such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) or other human based clinical trials that are related to neurology.

I would prefer to remain in an academic environment and have a personal motivation to one day be awarded with a position as a professor.

The Leadership Alliance program will immeasurably add to my ability to attain my personal and professional aspirations. It will expose me to a level of research that will be not only fascinating, but will be necessary for my intellectual growth. The program will give me exposure to the brightest ideas in my field of research. Aside from the research, I look forward to getting acquainted with other people who are pursuing their ambitions to attain excellence in other fields. It will give a sound basis of what is required for the successful completion of a graduate research program. In return, I would bring my Melanesian ethnicity to the program, which would increase the awareness of the other members to the rich cultural traditions of the island of Fiji.

I am confident that I can succeed in the Leadership Alliance program. I have laid the foundation for my future by being active in the Social Ecology Student Association, the Student Body Leadership program, and the Tau Sigma Fraternity. My previous studies and research have given me a deep appreciation for the value of this opportunity. I anticipate the other participants learning as much from me as I learn from the program. The writer Lowri Williams once said, "Your life lies before you like a path of driven snow, be careful how you tread it cause every step will show". This is an important step on my career path and one that I hope will continue to show by the life changing effects that it has on my future.