



# APPRENTICESHIP SPOTLIGHT

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NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS



**RHONA**  
APPRENTICE

## HIGH SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



**DR. ILKI KIM**  
MENTOR

## WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN THIS FIELD?

**RHONA:** From a young age, I've been curious and passionate about the mysteries of the Earth. I've also noticed from historical books and personal experience that Applied Mathematics advances the quality of daily life and improves society. I'm therefore inspired by and interested in this field to support my community.

**DR. KIM:** I became interested in thermodynamics because it has been a critical part of physics, chemistry and biology and it has become an interesting part of information science and even economics etc. Its backbone concepts apply to many different existing fields already, as well as, I believe, to some future fields.

## WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP?

**RHONA:** The most important part is gaining hands-on experience to solve problems, ask more questions and acquire new curiosities. Encouragement by and discussions with my mentor and peers inspired my further understanding of advanced knowledge and raised more challenging questions beyond any traditional classroom.

**DR. KIM:** Mentor and mentees need to participate together in the subject, say, by reading articles step by step. In doing so, the so-called open mood is critical such that they can ask questions whenever they have problems in understanding. I think, it is the best way of delivering information to mentees.

## ADVICE TO A STUDENT, JUST BEGINNING TO CONSIDER A CAREER IN SCIENCE?

**RHONA:** It is important to remember your curiosity to discover new things and to explore challenging questions. Pursue opportunities to participate in STEM mentorship programs, such as those offered by AEOP.

**DR. KIM:** If you have a problem with understanding the current subject, then step back for a while and concentrate on a totally different subject. Then come back to your original subject. Now, you may have renewed fuel for attacking the problem more efficiently.

Each month AEOP features some of our program participants. Read what these current and future STEM leaders have learned and what they are up to now. If you're an AEOP alumni [student and mentors] and want to tell your story visit us here: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/AEOPAlumniSpotlight](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AEOPAlumniSpotlight)