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WHAT WOULD BE YOUR MOST SAGE ADVICE TO A STUDENT, JUST BEGINNING TO CONSIDER A CAREER IN SCIENCE?

Be tough and persevere! Science is hard and will always be hard. Follow your passion and do something that excites you each day you step into the lab.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP THAT YOU FIND/FOUND MOST BENEFICIAL, INSPIRING, OR MOTIVATING?

Communication! In order for any mentorship opportunity to work out, you have to have good communication skills and be willing to share information freely. This includes science and related topics, but also being upfront about expectations. I explain that performing fundamental science is difficult and that you will dedicate a lot of time to science, but I also explain the benefits which include CV building, authorships on manuscripts, and being trained in advanced chemical techniques and spectroscopic techniques such as X-ray absorption work that is performed at the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Lightsource.

DID YOU HAVE A LIFE CHANGING EVENT THAT ALTERED YOUR PATH TO WHERE YOU ARE NOW?

There have been many! I took chances. I left California for 6 years after my PhD studies and lived in Austin, TX, New York City and Boston. In Boston, I met my wife and my life has never been the same. Live your life to the fullest and don't ask yourself what life would be like if you had made a certain decision. Make that decision and go big!

WHAT IS MOST REWARDING ABOUT YOUR JOB? WHAT MAKES IT ALL WORTHWHILE?

Helping young students get the research experience they need to get to the next level and succeed.

HOW HAVE YOU BENEFITTED FROM PARTICIPATING IN YOUR AEOP PROGRAM?

I have benefitted by refining and understanding how to be a better mentor during the pandemic by providing support and understanding to AEOP fellows.