I didn't take AP Chemistry or Biology in high school, and I avoided learning calculus like it was the plague. Despite my love of science and technology, I didn't see how any of these classes would be useful for what I really wanted to pursue: law. After all, what kind of attorney needs to know how to solve integrals? My entire mentality was changed the summer before my freshman year of college when I discovered the field of patent law. Here was a type of law that required a strong foundation in the hard sciences in addition to all the traditional legal knowledge; it was the combination of innovating and litigating that I had been looking for. I had already been admitted to the University of Arizona as an undergraduate law major, but I quickly chose a new STEM major that seemed interesting and found myself in the biomedical engineering advisor's office a few days later.

It's safe to say that I underestimated what I was getting into. I had always been decent at math and science, but I soon learned adequacy simply wouldn't suffice in weed-out classes full of students who lived and breathed such subjects. I've never been more confused, lost, and defeated in school as I was those first few months of college. Making it through law school seemed like an impossibility if I couldn't even endure introductory chemistry, and I wondered if patent law was worth everything that I was feeling. It took many weeks of studying to start seeing some success, but eventually I began to enjoy going to class instead of dreading it. By the end of my sophomore year, I finally felt like I belonged in STEM and decided it was time to start using everything I had worked so hard to learn.

I applied to the Kim Research Group because I saw it possessed both incredible research and admirable goals centered around improving the environment and healthcare. The project I was assigned to aimed to create a coating for implantable prosthetic limbs that mimicked human skin, reducing the tearing and inflammation that normally occurs after surgery. My experience at the lab has been invaluable, allowing me to pick the brains of researchers at the forefront of the biomedical field and apply my own studies to tangible products. It's one thing to read a paper about research but performing it myself has made me realize the immense amount of effort and resources it really requires, demonstrating to me the importance of patents firsthand.

While I didn't enroll in any legal classes within my coursework, I never let law get too far away from me. I immersed myself in a variety of legal clubs to not only improve my own litigation skills, but also to make some new friends with similar goals. The James E. Rogers College of Law quickly became my second home, and I found myself there almost every evening for meetings. Between mock trial and Phi Alpha Delta, I like to joke that I've spent more time in those classrooms than the law students actually enrolled there. The few hours related to law I could get each day were always enjoyable after staring at numbers and equations in all of my classes.

As much as I enjoyed my time in research, I know now more than ever that I'd rather work as an attorney. Some of my favorite memories in college came from my participation in mock trial, which I've been doing since I started high school and has played a big role in my pursuit of law. I had the privilege to travel to a number of tournaments hosted by colleges all around the country, and each one has taught me something new about the art of litigation. Within Phi Alpha Delta, I was able to meet attorneys from a wide range of specializations through the weekly guest lecturers we hosted. The presentation given by our patent attorney guest lecturer was especially rewarding. As drawings and schematics flashed across the screen, I couldn't help but think to myself how fitting the term "prior art" was to describe it all. Both of these clubs reminded me of my passion for the law and fostered my adolescent interest into an actual career path.

My undergraduate experience has confirmed that my leap of faith into STEM paid off. I've gotten the opportunity to study, interact with, and even create the type of amazing medical technology that I hope to one day represent in a courtroom. I've seen the life changing results that one product can have for millions of people and gotten a sense of the work that goes into such projects. My coursework and laboratory experience have given me an appreciation for math and engineering I never thought I'd have. While I know I likely won't get a chance to use this knowledge for any more of my own creations, the research skills and problem solving I obtained can only benefit me in law school. Hopefully, my newly acquired scientific background enables me to have a long career as a patent attorney, and I'm excited to take the next step towards that dream by enrolling in law school.