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1w • 



This past semester I have had the most amazing experience conducting scientific research at KU Leuven in Belgium through the EuroScholars program. Here, I worked on two projects under Professor Patrick Van Dijck in the Laboratory of Molecular Cell Biology.

The first project was the investigation of the genetic basis of *S. cerevisiae* inhibition of *Candida* growth. This is useful in the potential of *S. cerevisiae* as a probiotic therapy for vaginal candidiasis, referred to more commonly as yeast infections. To look further into this project, you can view my presentation given at the University of Leiden!

[https://lnkd.in/emk7\\_Kmu](https://lnkd.in/emk7_Kmu)

The second project was improving strains of *S. cerevisiae* to optimize muconic acid production through genetic engineering. Muconic acid is a platform molecule that can be further modified into useful chemicals such as precursors for biofuels. Here, my modifications using CRISPR/Cas9 yielded titer improvements of up to 25%.

Living abroad for 5 months was extremely rewarding both culturally and academically. I am so grateful for my unique study abroad experience and would recommend this to anyone looking to gain research experience at highly accredited European institutions. Thank you [Usha Mohunlol](#), Professor Van Dijck, [Paul Vandecruys](#), Ilse Palmans, and to everyone else who helped make this possible!

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