
MIZZOU

The magazine of
the Mizzou Alumni Association

[Home](#) » [Fall 2007](#) » [Around the Columns](#) » Web exclusive: Worming his way into medicine

Around the Columns

Worming his way into medicine

Jordan Marshall plans to be a doctor, but for now, he's happy to be a worm curator. The junior biology major from O'Fallon, Ill., is starting his third year as a student researcher in the lab of Karen Bennett, associate professor of molecular microbiology and immunology.

Though many students might find the job boring, Marshall jumped at the opportunity take on the rigors of lab work. He credits his discipline and drive to his Air-Force-surgeon-turned-ER-doctor dad. "Being the first son of a drill sergeant makes you realize you need a certain order to things," he says.

Many undergraduates choose MU because it offers [research opportunities for undergraduates](#) to get a head start by participating in research. One of several hundred undergraduate researchers at MU, Marshall assists graduate students researching the reproductive systems of *C. elegans*, a 1 mm-long roundworm.

It's a job of humble beginnings, but one that's paying off for this ambitious student. As curator, Marshall monitors the worms, which are stocked in petri dishes in a refrigerator maintained at 20 degrees Celsius. Over the months, Marshall's responsibilities have increased from keeping tabs on the stock to performing laboratory techniques such as genetic crosses and polymerase chain reactions, which amplify DNA so an individual gene can be analyzed.

His job is separate from his studies, but Marshall says each enhances the other. A genetics class helped him better understand the processes he helps with in the lab, and his lab experience reinforces what he learns in class. "For me, it's a lot easier to learn by doing it hands on."

Jordan Marshall

Biology major Jordan Marshall's part-time laboratory job reinforces his course work. "I'm not only learning [procedures] in class, but also doing them hands on." Photo by Rob Hill.

[More Fall 2007 Around the Columns](#) »

Published by MIZZOU magazine, 109 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, MO 65211 | Phone: 573-882-5916
| E-mail: Mizzou@missouri.edu

Opinions expressed in this site do not necessarily reflect the official position of MU or the Mizzou Alumni Association.

Copyright © 2021 — Curators of the [University of Missouri](#). All rights reserved. [DMCA](#) and other [copyright information](#).

An [equal opportunity/affirmative action](#) institution.

Last updated: Feb. 15, 2013