CALS

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Brad Bolling
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"Research is like perfecting a recipe; it takes time to learn the details that are important for success."
- Brad Bolling

As a college freshman, Brad Bolling didn't expect that an attempt to make cheese from chocolate milk in his analytical chemistry class would end up impacting his career path. But it did.

"My analytical chemistry professor was also a food science professor," explains Brad. "One of our lab assignments was to alter the different variables for cheese production, and one group in the class actually made cheese from chocolate milk." Though the end product wasn't very desirable, Brad concluded that food was cool application of chemistry.

After talking with an advisor, he joined the food science program. Through coursework and laboratory jobs, Brad was able to do extensive mentored research as an undergraduate. Although he had initially planned to go to medical school, his growing interest in food science research led him to pursue his doctorate in food chemistry instead.

Now a graduate student at UW-Madison, Brad has focused his research on identifying compounds in natural products—such as fruits and vegetables—that may be helpful in preventing disease. "My research is focused on heath and wellness," he says, "So it combines both of my interests in a good way."

While spending one semester as a teaching assistant—a requirement for all food science graduate students—Brad discovered he enjoyed it. He decided to continue teaching, a choice that shaped his professional ambitions and lead him to join the university's Delta Program, which promotes the scholarship of teaching and learning to help prepare future faculty members for teaching appointments. Brad will graduate with a doctorate in Food Chemistry, as well as a Delta Certificate in Research, Teaching, and Learning.

Bolling's research has already been recognized by professional organizations like the Institute for Food Technologists (IFT), but he acknowledges that the path of research is not always smooth. "I've learned patience, especially with research projects," he says. "I never expect things to work out the first time. Research is like perfecting a recipe; it takes time to learn the details that are important for success."

Brad will pursue post-doctoral work at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts, where he will take part in another intensive teaching program that will allow him to teach college-level courses in the greater Boston area. The research portion of Brad's post-doctoral appointment will focus on the effects of antioxidants on aging, work that will be done in collaboration with the USDA Center for Nutrition.

When thinking back on his undergraduate experiences, Brad encourages other students to participate in clubs and organizations, and to join professional organizations while in school. One last piece of advice: "It's important to realize that things don't always go as planned. Having a positive attitude is what will ultimately help you succeed."

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