



## Dr. Lingling Xu

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Dr. Lingling Xu is a research scientist at Zymo Research Corp in Irvine, California. What started as a circumstantial move from Halifax to busy California, Dr. Xu is currently leading a team working with functional proteins at Zymo Research Corp.

Her ease of working with proteins stems from the training received during her graduate studies at Dalhousie University in Biochemistry working under Dr. Paul Liu and Dr. Jan Rainey. Dr. Xu studied recombinant spider silk proteins and their structure and function relationship. Due to the expansive and complex nature of her projects, Dr. Xu was able to successfully transfer to a Post-Doctoral program and continued her research on spider silk proteins.

Prior to joining Dalhousie to conduct her PhD research, Dr. Xu started her graduate school in biotechnology at Donghua University in Shanghai, China. One of the hardships that accompanied such a bold move, Dr. Xu recalls, was getting accustomed to the translation of scientific terms in literature from mandarin to English and vice versa. But it is clear that her persistence and dedication has triumphed any linguistic barrier she may have faced as a young scientist.

Apart from the complexities of scientific terms and heavy literature reviews, Dr. Xu also recognises the demanding nature of a career in research. “Knowing what you want is key” she says affirmatively. Research is challenging and can often times be discouraging, so staying curious and passionate is important.

Her generous advice to new graduate students is indeed noteworthy. First, Dr. Xu encourages students to work in multiple labs if the opportunity arises. “working in multiple labs, not only teaches you different skill sets that you can apply later in your research career, but also gives you different angles when facing challenges”. Second, always have



good line of communication with your supervisor “talk to your supervisor if you have any doubts or concerns to avoid feeling alone in your studies”. Third is to go to conferences and to practice speaking in front of large audiences to get comfortable presenting your work to the scientific community. This, she says is highly advantageous to any young scientist. Lastly, Dr. Xu emphasizes the importance of expanding your connections and networking to guarantee a successful journey in research.