



Nathan Weatherbee-Martin

Written by Tom Gillis, M.Sc. Trainee



Nathan Weatherbee-Martin obtained a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Acadia University in 2013. He completed the co-op program; earning valuable biological and biochemical experience from labs at Acadia and Dalhousie University. He particularly enjoyed a semester spent with Dr. Jan Rainey at Dalhousie. After 6 months of graduate studies at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick, Nathan returned to Halifax to restart his Master of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology working under the supervision of Dr. Jan Rainey. Here he focused his studies on developing and optimizing an automated fiber production method for bacterially produced spider wrapping silk protein.

Nathan made a number of connections with fellow researchers in academics and industry through various conferences and mutual connections. He emphasized the importance of connections and strong communication skills in any career. With the help of these contacts, Nathan earned a position at Pillar5 Pharma Inc in 2017. The company is a contracted manufacturing development organization (CMDO) specializing in sterile ophthalmic manufacturing, solid dose manufacturing, niche products manufacturing and developmental, technical transfer and analytical services. Nathan's position as a Technical Services Specialist provides him with an opportunity to blend science, business, and project management. He works on projects ranging from product transfer, small scale to commercial production, technical support, and quality assurance. Nathan stresses the importance of validation and quality control at Pillar5, as this is the backbone of successful projects.

Nathan's typical day varies quite a lot; it primarily depends on the projects that he takes on. Tasks include process improvement initiatives, supporting operations, validation activities, and smaller projects to troubleshoot and resolve issues. The departments at Pillar5 are integrated, so Nathan gets to work with a variety of people. Depending on the project, he'll



work with people from quality control, operations and packaging, engineering, maintenance, and business development. He claims that communication is an extremely important part of his job as it helps facilitate a steady workflow. He enjoys the fact that he gets to use his scientific toolkit and communication skills to practice problem solving and critical thinking.

Nathan says he appreciates multiple aspects of his job. His studies in the sciences drive his curiosity for getting novel results. He enjoys the project management aspect and is keen on working with other people. He highlighted the importance of having communication and people skills when working in industry. When asked if he had any advice for students interested in working in industry, he says to stay focused on your research but stick your head out and talk to people at conferences. A great piece of advice he had was to, "like what you do and don't lose sight of the end game."