Learning to the Max

Attending college is a major decision for students and families. For Junior Tamara Luna, Crookston, Minn., that decision was made easier by the addition of a biology degree program at the University of Minnesota, Crookston. Luna, a recipient of several scholarships, says those dollars were also a big factor in her decision. Always interested in science, she never wavered from her interest in biology as a major, and she continues to prepare for what she says is the next step—graduate school.

Working with faculty on research projects has been a big part of Luna’s collegiate career. She works closely with assistant professors Katy Smith, Ph.D., and Venugopal Mukku, Ph.D., who both teach in the Math, Science and Technology Department. Smith, who teaches biology, botany, and plant physiology, directs Luna as part of an undergraduate research opportunity funded by the Crookston campus entitled, Root O2 Release, which looks at radial oxygen loss from plants grown under anaerobic conditions.

“I like the small class sizes and the individual attention I receive on this campus,” Luna explains. “I get to work closely with professors, and I am involved in research that I find captivating.”

As part of a directed study under the guidance of Mukku, Luna engages in another avenue of research examining the toxicity of plant and marine animal extracts toward brine shrimp. This busy young woman also assists Ed Wene, Ph.D., as a microbiology lab assistant at the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute located on the campus.

Her collegiate experience has been deeply enhanced through engagement with faculty, but a chance to study abroad was a powerful influence as well. Luna chose an
Luna, a junior at the U of M, Crookston, found her internship in Thailand rewarding and a great cultural experience.

General Manager Natalie Brown (seated) is surrounded by her exceptional staff in Dining Services. In July 2008, Sodexo, Inc., took over food service operations at the University of Minnesota, Crookston in an effort to offer students new options for on-campus dining as well as greater menu variety. Sodexo specializes in food hospitality services and brings many resources to the table, including a well-developed understanding of the market and a focus on customer service.

internship in Thailand working with a pharmacist collecting information on the medicinal uses of plants for two months last summer.

“I spent two weeks in Bangkok when I first arrived, says Luna. “Then, I went into the rural areas to assist with the work. It was a great cultural experience, and while I found the language to be a challenge, it also created a wonderful learning opportunity for me.”

Undergraduate research, study abroad, small class sizes, and personal contact with faculty help create an exceptional student experience on the Crookston campus. Students, like Luna, are taking advantage of the small campus that offers a big degree, and getting an extraordinary education in the process.

A Fare Extraordinaire

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