Three years down, and only one more to go. As junior year closes, I look back and reflect on all that came to pass. One of the most significant events that happened this year was my entrance into the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine Department of Surgery Research Lab. In this new position I had a year of firsts: the first time I worked on clinical research, the first time I created a poster presentation, and the first time I was part of a published article. Going into the experience I was doubtful if I would be able to translate the knowledge I gained in class into practical laboratory skills. I quickly realized that the translation was achievable and that much of my undergraduate course work was applicable. This confirmed my interest in both research and my degree in biology. I also learned about the interdependence between treatment and clinical research. I saw firsthand that both are equally important and that they build off one another. This experience has revealed to me my interest in continuing research, and I look forward to working in the lab this following year. Working in the lab also taught me skills like how to work in a large team to achieve a common goal, and how to communicate scientific findings in a way that has meaning to a broader audience.

This past year has also been significant in terms of learning. In the spring I enrolled in, African Health and Development. I chose to take this course because I have identified a passion for global health. To pursue this passion I sought out courses that would give me the skills and knowledge to further explore global health. This course taught me about the strengths and weaknesses of all the individual African nations in both the past and the present. I also learned about public health issues in Africa and current interventions that are both effective and infective. I found this learning experience influential because I desire to pursue a career in global health. Going into the course I had little knowledge about the African nations individually, and I had a mental bias to lump them all together. I now understand the unique difference between the public health of each nation and this allows me to have a greater appreciation for the people groups that inhabit them. I feel that I am better prepared to serve in the future as a global physician because I have a better understanding of the people that I wish to serve.

As I embark on my final year of college, I have some advice I would like to give myself as I prepare for the upcoming year. Throughout the course of my undergraduate career I have focused my time and energy in key areas on campus. So as I go into my senior year my advice to myself would be to explore areas of campus life that I have not experienced thus far. I want to go to plays and concerts in CCM, watch a women’s soccer game, and/or go into the College of Business for a cup of coffee. Another goal that I have set for myself for the upcoming year is to intentionally transition new people into the positions of leadership that I currently hold. I want to make sure that the legacy I leave at the University of Cincinnati is preserved and continued on by the new class. Finally, in this upcoming year I want to use the experiences I have had at UC to give back to new students. I want to serve as a mentor for new Pre-med students in both the Honors program and in the Connections Dual Admissions Program. I plan to pass on the wisdom I was once given by those who mentored me.