



Temet McMichael, an enrolled member of the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, is studying virology and hopes help people by finding cures to diseases.

Luiseño Student Studies Virology, Hopes to Give Back By Finding Cures

ICTMN Staff
July 25, 2012

Temet McMichael, an enrolled member of the [La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians](#), has chosen a path in medicine, but not to be the kind of doctor who sees patients.

“I hope to conduct research in the medical field that will progress modern medicine and give back to the Native community,” McMichael, a member of the Amago Clan, said. “My plan is to obtain a Ph.D. in biomedical research with a focus in virology. I aspire to make a difference and contribute to the research field that finds cures and treatments for modern diseases.”

He doesn't want to only help Native people, he wants to help everyone with his research in virology, which is the study of viruses.

“As I progressed through school, I determined that research was the way to do that. Research allows me to have a direct role in changing things in a positive way,” he said. “Research, at least in my eyes, is the way cutting edge changes will be made and I believe I can positively contribute; thus making a difference.”

His educational journey has taken him all over. He got his diploma from Valley Center High School in Valley Center, California in 2006. He then moved to Durango, Colorado to attend [Fort Lewis College](#) for his freshman year. McMichael then moved back to California to study chemistry at Mount San Jacinto College in San Jacinto for two and a half years.

Another transfer took him to California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) where he switched his major to biochemistry.

He said there wasn't any particular reason he moved around so much for school, "that's just the way it happened."

While at CSUSM he did an internship at Loma Linda University School of Medicine in Loma Linda, California where he worked with Dr. Charles Rundle on bone regrowth. "Ideally, through this research and others like it, bone regrowth would be sped up thus reducing the rehabilitation time for broken bones," McMichael said.

He also did research at CSUSM with Dr. Jacqueline Trischman on a marine bacterial strain aimed at combating tuberculosis.

"The idea was to use a locally isolated bacterial strain to inhibit the growth of *M. marinum*, a close relative of tuberculosis," he explained. "I found a compound that did inhibit the growth of *M. marinum*, but was unable to find the exact compound that was doing the inhibition."

In May, McMichael graduated from CSUSM with a Bachelor of Science degree and soon he'll be heading to Columbus, Ohio where he's been accepted into the Integrated Biomedical/Ph.D. program at Ohio State University. And he can't wait to learn more.

"I am amazed by viruses and the more I learn the more I want to learn," he said. "The study of viruses is becoming an increasingly important field as we find that viruses seem to play a role in almost everything. The diseases caused by viruses are also very interesting to me because cures often elude the medical field. This is where a lot of my curiosity and passion for learning comes in."

McMichael advises other [Native American students](#) to expect the unexpected and not be hindered by complications.

"Life can never be predicted. One simply has to conquer the task at hand, learn, and move forward. Success in life, at least in my opinion, is being content with what you have done and will do," he said. "This is accomplished by perseverance, an open mind, and respect for all things. You have to follow your heart and never let an obstacle tell you otherwise. Remember, everyone falls down but the ones who get up are the ones who succeed."