

# SCI microbiologist earns prestigious scholarship

By Tony Zerucha

A Springfield Collegiate (SCI) graduating student's dream of becoming a microbiologist recently became much easier after receiving a prestigious scholarship.

Larry Denisiuk earned a BMO: Leader of Tomorrow Scholarship from the University of Manitoba. It provides \$16,000 over four years of study. Only nine are given each year.

Denisiuk learned about the scholarship on SCI's website. After reading the criteria, he decided to try his luck. The process was short but involved. Denisiuk had to apply by Dec. 1, 2023. He first answered online questions about his goals, work history and experience in various situations.

After making the shortlist in early February,

Denisiuk had a series of interviews. He toured the University of Manitoba and met with university officials.

"Then came the big interview," Denisiuk said. "You were in a room with all five panellists, and each panellist gave you a very deep question to answer. You only had 15 minutes to finish each question, and there was no extra time. I was pretty scared because I was the first to go, but I did very well and was calm and collected."

"After the interviews, I found out on March 8 through email that I was selected to receive the scholarship!"

Denisiuk admitted to being shocked because he was declined for other awards. He said he was proud to receive it. So was his fam-

ily, who threw a small party. Then it was back to work.

"I didn't focus too much on it, but rather, I focused on applying for more scholarships and bursaries," Denisiuk said. "I don't cling to good and bad news for a long time; I focus on what needs to get done."

The award allows Denisiuk to attend his top university choice. He said the University of Manitoba is close to home, culturally diverse and offers a variety of programs. It also boasts the Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Program.

"Their microbiology program is one of the best in Canada, and they have their very own department for microbiology," Denisiuk explained. "The U of M has countless co-op programs that you can apply for to earn while you learn. You can even work at the National Microbiology Laboratory in downtown Winnipeg, where I would want to work after my post-secondary schooling. The cost of tuition is very man-

ageable, and all the other services within campus make the U of M a lively place to learn."

Denisiuk has been working for years to reach this moment. In 2022, he earned a two-week internship at the International Institute for Sustainable Development's Experimental Lakes Area (ELA). Calling it one of the best experiences of his life, Denisiuk learned about freshwater lakes and ecosystems, met researchers from across North America, and formed friendships with like-minded students.

That experience deepened his desire to pursue microbiology. Denisiuk knows he wants to help the environment and conduct research in the lab and field.

"I also gained a deeper love for learning, as I would feel comfortable doing multiple years of schooling," Denisiuk said. "The researchers discussed how being in school doesn't mean constant studying and homework but rather a balance of learning what you love and doing what you

love to do. These principles have helped me shape my career goals, and it is all thanks to my ELA internship."

Denisiuk isn't waiting for September to immerse himself in the university experience. He met with the Undergraduate Microbiology Student Club (MiSC), asking for advice on how to

get into the Microbiology department at the U of M.

"I have learned many things about pursuing a career in microbiology, thanks to MiSC," Denisiuk said. "I hope to get into a co-op program at the National Microbiology Laboratory, as it would be a dream of mine to work at such a prestigious laboratory."



Photo submitted

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