



7-11-2019

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Recommended Citation

Kassem, Samira, "Entrepreneurial Fellowship Winner Develops Sleep Study Device" (2019).
News and Events. 3897.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/3897>

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Entrepreneurial Fellowship Winner Develops Sleep Study Device

July 11, 2019

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Medical school-bound Niyant Vora '19 (Bloomington, Illinois) can add [Entrepreneurial Fellowship](#) winner to his already extensive resume.

The 2019 Illinois Wesleyan University graduate was awarded the biannual fellowship for an in-home polysomnogram (PSG) device, which is a machine used by sleep centers to conduct detailed sleep studies. He hopes his PSG device will reduce the cost and stress that patients undergo when visiting a sleep center.

"I've been working to make this device a reality, and now — despite repeated failures — I have a working prototype," Vora said. "Through my failures, I've learned that achieving my goals requires curiosity, resilience, and knowing when to get help from others."

As the winner of the Entrepreneurial Fellowship during the spring of 2019, Vora was awarded a \$5,000 grant to help develop his PSG device. The biannual fellowship, funded by Mark Talluto '94, provides Illinois Wesleyan students with the opportunity to pursue their entrepreneurial passion under the supervision of a faculty member and guidance from a successful entrepreneur. Vora teamed up with [Associate Professor and Chair of Physics Thushara Perera](#), who agreed to serve as his advisor.

"He was the guy who stayed after class and asked questions about things and tried to make connections. He goes from one thing to the other to the other, purely out of interest," Perera said. "He's a very high-level example of what can happen at a liberal arts college."

Perera particularly helped Vora with electronic aspects of the device. Vora utilized the Entrepreneurial Fellowship grant money to hire an attorney who can assist with securing a provisional patent. It marked an exciting step toward producing the device for use in the medical community.

"Without this fellowship, securing my patent would have been significantly more difficult," Vora said. "Without the help of (Director of Design, Technology and Entrepreneurship and Instructor in Business Administration) Tara Gerstner '01, (Visiting Assistant Professor of DTE) Mark Genrich, and (Coordinator of Entrepreneurial Activities) Lauren Hicks, I wouldn't have applied for this fellowship and been as far along to fulfilling one of my dreams."

After majoring in biology at Illinois Wesleyan, Vora will attend the SIU School of Medicine beginning this fall.

"My best self demands empathy toward others but also asks for something more," Vora wrote in his medical school application letter. "It asks me to take what I have learned from academia, volunteering, shadowing, and tutoring, and apply it all to improving the lives of others, in the best way I can: as a doctor."

The next round of Entrepreneurial Fellowship proposals will be accepted in the fall.



Niyant Vora '19 speaking at the TEDx event held in Hansen Student Center. Throughout his time at IWU, Vora has participated in countless endeavors.