Through this Enrichment Award, I was able to purchase scales to measure career-decision self-efficacy (CDSE), which is the confidence in ones’ ability to make a career decision, for my thesis study. I assessed whether religiosity was related to CDSE and then if this relationship was mediated by a sense of calling and life meaning. This would mean that religion was related to CDSE, but this relationship was actually due to a sense of calling and/or life meaning that was related to religiosity. I used the CDSE scale along with many other scales in an online survey that was completed by undergraduate students in exchange for class credit.

I distributed the survey and collected data. From there, I analyzed that data and wrote up a research article of my research project. Unfortunately, I did not find that religiosity was related to CDSE, which was the main hypothesis I studied. Therefore, I did not find that this relationship was due to a sense of calling and/or life meaning as I did not find a relationship in the first place. However, I did find CDSE to be related to a sense of calling, life meaning, depression, academic satisfaction, career adaptability, and career optimism. This suggests that having higher CDSE is related to having a calling and sense of life meaning, lower levels of depression, and greater academic satisfaction, career adaptability, and optimism regarding a career.

Although I did not find support for the main relationship and hypothesis I was studying in regards to CDSE, I did find some significant relationships to CDSE and relationships with other variables. In my thesis, I found religiosity to be related to life satisfaction and academic satisfaction, partially due to a sense of calling. I also found religiosity to be related to career optimism and career adaptability due to a sense of life meaning. The relationship between religiosity and career adaptability and optimism had not be found previously, to my knowledge, so it was really interested to find this result. It was inspiring to find something new in the field of psychology and possibly discover a new relationship.
Overall, I gained a lot from my experience with my thesis. Although the results with CDSE did not turn out as I expected, the enrichment award was fundamental to my thesis experience. Without the award, I would not have been able to study CDSE and wouldn’t have discovered the relationships I did and didn’t find. Through this experience, I have learned how to conduct intense literature reviews and use that to shape and formulate ideas for a study. I learned the entire process of conducting research, such as getting approval, compiling a survey, collecting data, analyzing data, and writing it into an academic literature. It was an intense process to learn, and I gained a lot of new understanding on how much work goes into conducting research and making new discoveries. I learned how to interact with professionals more and present my work in a formal way. Through conducting my thesis, I really gained an experience above and beyond my classes. I felt like I was really contributing something to the field and using all the knowledge I have gained, and it was overall a great experience for my education.