

# 2017 Undergrad Spotlights: Ifechukwu Okeke

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## Undergraduate Research Spotlights

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### **Ifechukwu Okeke**

Bateup Lab, intended MCB Junior Transfer, 2017

Ifechukwu Okeke has had an impressive start in the Bateup Lab, where she's been assisting with research since the Fall of 2016. This Fall, Okeke will begin a new chapter, when she transfers to UC Berkeley as an undergraduate and gets to experience life at Cal as a student. She plans to continue contributing to research in the Bateup Lab.



*Ifechukwu Okeke*

MCB graduate student, Daniel Kramer, has been mentoring Okeke in the lab, and he says, "Ife has been in the lab for two semesters and was selected to do a competitive summer research program at UCSF. She is one of the most genuinely curious undergraduates I have worked with or taught. She is constantly asking questions to everyone in lab to gain as much knowledge as possible. Experimentally she has great hands and has already contributed to my projects in a short time. All the more impressive is her clear maturity and independence — moving far away from family [Okeke is originally from Nigeria] to start a new life in the bay area as a first generation college student."

Okeke says, "Working in the lab is actually the most meaningful experience in my life currently, because of how much of a privilege it is to contribute to finding out more about the brain, and more specifically how significant of a role gene expression plays in neuron functioning at the molecular level, something I did not realize before starting lab work. I get

to understand how scientific questions which could lead to new discoveries are formulated, and how experiments are conducted to answer them by integrating knowledge of genetics, calculus, chemistry, developmental biology, physics, neurobiology, and more."