Dil Patel considers himself lucky. He came to the College of Charleston because it was close to home and because it reminded him of the University of Cambridge, where he once hoped to study. He discovered amazing support for his interests and a series of opportunities that helped him prepare for medical school and life beyond that.

“I didn’t know a lot about this school before I arrived,” explains Dil, “but I quickly realized the advantages it offers. For me, the size of the College has been huge because it has enabled me to have important interaction with faculty members. Also, you can really build community with students in your major because most of the upperclassmen know each other; we’re in a lot of classes together.”

Dil was inspired to pursue medicine and he knew that a degree in biochemistry would give him the right background for success. He dove in, signing up for the required classes – organic chemistry, physical chemistry and quantitative analysis among them. To complement that coursework, he sought experiences in the field. For two summers, he volunteered at a local hospital. Then, he started pursuing research opportunities.

Under the supervision of his advisor, Dil did neuroscience research at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), a teaching-research hospital just a few blocks from campus. Specifically, he studied drug addiction in rats. “In that project, we were looking at cocaine relapse in our subjects. That work actually became part of my final project for the Honors College.”

Dil is enthusiastic about his experiences in this department. He says one thing that has truly made a difference is the support he’s found. “Everyone in this department is so welcoming. I’ve been invited to do research with a number of professors. When you’re in this major, you see faculty and students getting to know one another pretty well. I would say that it’s a very open environment here.”

So, what’s the best thing about his experience as a biochemistry major? “The opportunities that you get here at the College. You really don’t find those at other schools, especially because we’re so close to MUSC and the College has such a good relationship there. I can’t stress that enough. If you want to pursue healthcare or medicine, this major is such a good opportunity. It’s huge.”