As a senior medical student, it is difficult to incorporate fundamental research into our tight schedule. Joining École Polytechnique and taking on full-time research duty gave me the opportunity to experience a completely different field in person. There is no need to underscore the prestige of the École Polytechnique. Recently regrouped with several other institutions to form the Institut Polytechnique de Paris, the school continues to offer the best academic training and to produce cutting-edge research in the field of engineering.

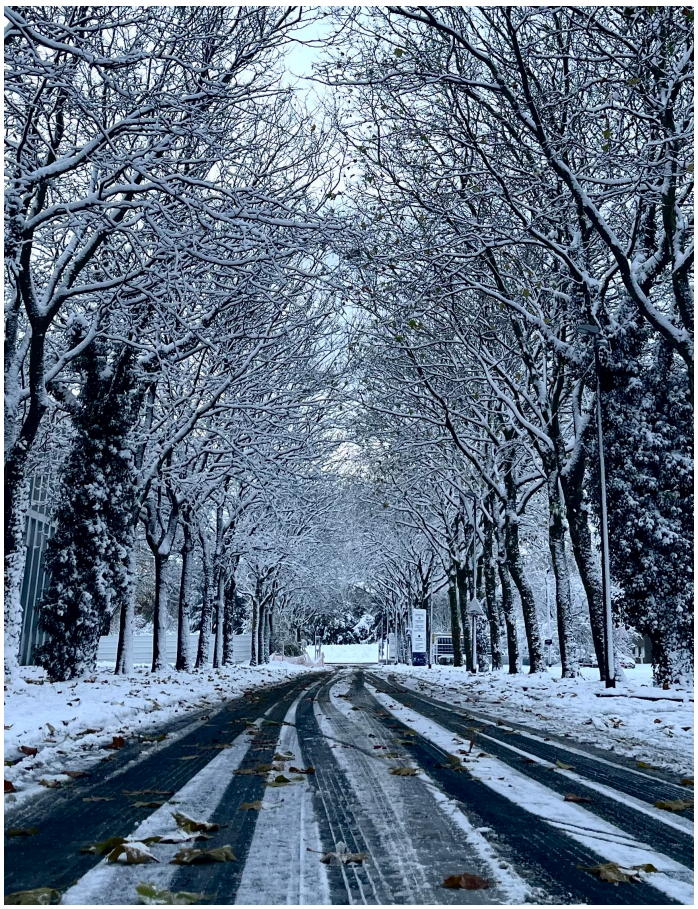
One of the major advantages of the program, namely the Research Program for International Talents, is the reasonable funding and housing offer. Located in the distant suburb of Paris, it is not easy to find ideal and affordable student housing in the region of Palaiseau or Lozère as a foreigner. Luckily, we are hosted in an on-campus dormitory, offering quality at a very low price. Combined with the monthly payment and the transportation reimbursement, it can be said that the majority of our costs are covered by the school.

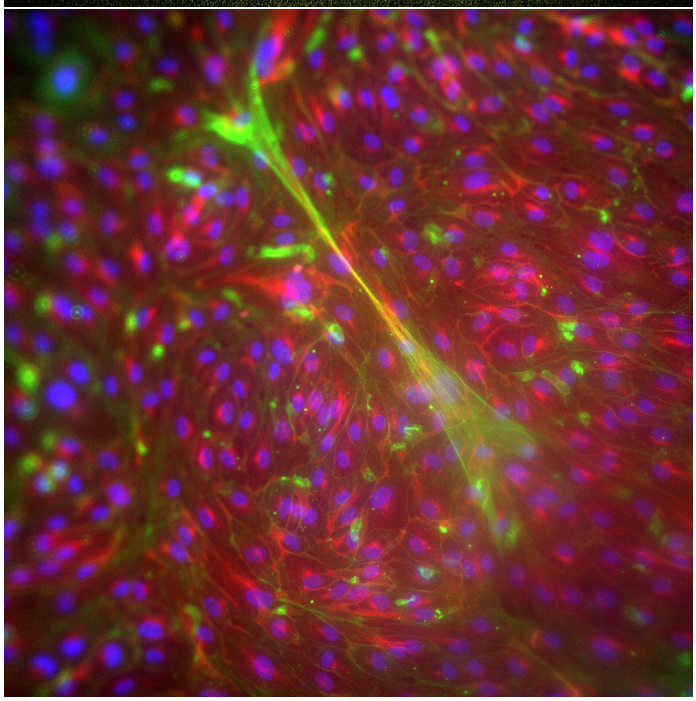
With no need to worry about the miscellaneous quotidian chores, it would become much easier for us to integrate into our labs. Fortunately, I met a group of very nice colleagues who warmly welcomed me at my arrival as well as helped me through the initial phase of settling down. Moreover, knowing that I, as a medical student with no previous engineering training, am unfamiliar with the field of biomedical engineering and hydrodynamics, my supervisor gave me ample time to study the recommended readings and to retrieve my laboratory skills.

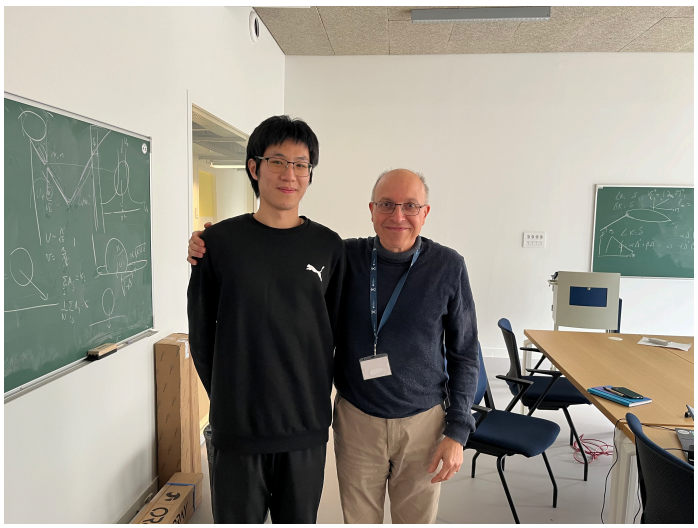
Honestly speaking, abruptly engaging oneself in an unfamiliar field is highly challenging. In terms of research outcomes, I did not obtain many promising results throughout my four-month internship; on the contrary, most of my time was spent on troubleshooting and learning new techniques. However, these not only made good chances for me to enrich my skill sets but also served as a precious opportunity to experience the authentic ups and downs of research works, which we as medical students do not have many chances to live through.

On top of everything in the lab, immersing myself in French culture as a francophone is a very interesting experience. Being close to my labmates meant that we could chat on very diverse topics, further deepening my understandings of western culture and society. Located in the midst of nature, École Polytechnique is very spacious for studying, living, and exercising. Profiting from the weekends and holidays, I was able to go to Paris multiple times. I even had the chance to visit Strasbourg in early December, when the renowned Christmas market was open.

From conducting cutting-edge research to embracing new cultural experiences, the internship was a blend of intellectual rigor and personal growth. I am deeply grateful for the mentorship, resources, and opportunities provided by the institution, which encouraged me to embark on a brand-new journey of fundamental research. I am equally grateful for all the support from NTU, which enabled me to conduct research work in a foreign country.







Left Upper: École Polytechnique

Right Upper: Campus, snow-covered

Left Lower: Human umbilical venous endothelial cells

Right Lower: Photo with my supervisor Dr. BARAKAT