



Academy of Science  
"AlumnAOS of the Month"  
Name: **Eleni Papadopoulos**  
AOS Class of: **2014**



What are you doing now and how did you get there?

I am a 4<sup>th</sup> year chemical engineering student at Georgia Tech. As a Tech student, 5 years to graduate is the standard and thus I am not yet on my way out. The majority of the time, I work as a personal trainer at our recreation center and teach students how to rock climb safely outdoors. Getting to this point is a slightly complicated story, but for a compact answer I would like to say that I have been interested in fitness since I stopped doing gymnastics my sophomore year of high school. When I got to college, I began to explore that area more and discovered personal training and rock climbing.

As we grow older, the challenges we face change. How did the challenges you faced at the AOS prepare you for the challenges you have faced since graduation?

I would say that the most important skill I learned from AOS was time management. Being able to get all my homework done and getting to gymnastics practice took a long time to learn, but it helped me to balance my extra curriculars with school work. Additionally, I learned freshman year that I was not the smartest person in the room, which is a tough lesson to learn the older you get.

What have you done that you are most proud of?

I came into college not knowing anything about the outdoors, and last year I spent 2 weeks camping and climbing in Squamish, British Columbia. Over the last 4 years, I have learned how to climb huge cliff faces and how to lead expeditions, such as the one to Squamish.

You were once an AOS freshman with a dream. How has that dream changed?

As an AOS freshman, my biggest goal was to get into college, and I had little to no idea what I wanted to do afterwards. AOS taught me that I love research. I spent the last year studying abroad in Germany and learned to love a culture that is not my own. Now, I know that I would like to do pharmaceutical research for a smaller company in Germany.

Could you share some favorite AOS memories?

My favorite AOS memories range from research difficulties to the senior lock-in. My Singapore partner and I had a hard time keeping our spiders (and later fibroblasts) alive long enough to conduct our experiments. This was definitely type 2 fun, but I am so glad I learned how to deal with those difficulties. Of course, the Bahamas is high up on this list as well. There is nothing like spending a week snorkeling and learning about pretty fish with 50 of your closest friends. Those bonds made in the Bahamas lasted throughout high school and into college, making our senior lock-in bittersweet and totally worth staying awake for 36 hours. My class still has semi-annual reunions that always make my trip home.

Do you have any advice for current AOS students?

**Breathe. Everything in high school (especially at AOS) is stressful and seems like the end-all-be-all of your life. It is not, and you will soon forget about that B you got in Bio Junior year. Try to focus on things that make you happy, while also keeping up with your school work. As Mr. Wolfe always says, "Do a few things greatly." I took that lesson to heart so much that I have that quote tattooed on my wrist (don't tell your parents).**

Fact File:

Lives: **Atlanta, GA**

Education: **(Georgia Institute of Technology, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, 2019)**

Interests: **German, rock climbing, fitness, traveling**