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### **GSU Chemistry Students in The Fight Against COVID**

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# GSU Chemistry Students in The Fight Against COVID

Edgar Rubio was presenting at a chemistry conference during his senior year at another university when he struck up a conversation with the [Governors State University](#) (GSU) [chemistry](#) student presenting next to him. The conversation convinced Rubio to check out Governors State himself, and not long after he registered in the [Master of Science in Analytical Chemistry](#) program with a [graduate assistant](#) position which provides him with a tuition waiver and a monthly stipend.



Coming from a private school, Rubio said he was not prepared for what he found at the public university. “I was stunned by the equipment GSU had,” Rubio said. “The first question labs ask you when you interview is ‘Do you know how to use the equipment (spectrometers, chromatographs, etc.)?’ And GSU has it all.”

Rubio chose analytical chemistry because he wants to work hands-on in creating products using his chemistry expertise.

“Analytical Chemistry is moreso the application of chemistry that the consumer is looking to make sure their products deliver.”

Rubio was putting what he had learned as a graduate assistant into action at Medical Assay Laboratory as a lab tech where focus had shifted to COVID-19 testing in the fall. “I was the one that got the tubes and did the testing. It was interesting. A little scary at first.”

Now, Rubio is back in the Governors State lab sampling and measuring with instruments such as titrators, spectrometers, particle size analyzers, rheometers, elemental analyzers thermal analyzers. His classmate Mohmad Vahora is working on COVID-19 related projects as well at Scientist II at CSL Behring, Kankakee, since January 2020.



“My main role is to conduct research, deviation support and formulation of medication using bioanalytical techniques (practices used to develop pharmaceutical drugs),” Vahora said.

The lab is currently developing a COVID-19 anti-body that is under clinical trial.

“I utilize my bioanalytical experience to support the anti-body production,” he explains. “I have learned these techniques at GSU, which I am using to assist with production and release testing.”

Vahora and Rubio are two of many GSU students and graduates involved in the fight against COVID-19. The university is celebrating [chemistry alumni](#) who are hard at work developing and producing the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

Professor of Chemistry Walter Henne, says their hard work is indicative of the program and of Governors State's mission.

"Their efforts, and that of several other GSU alumni engaged in COVID-related testing and therapeutics, is an amazing testament to our mission and the global impact of Governors State University," Dr. Henne said.

"These student and alumni stories are literally the fabric of what we do and to see the magnitude of their work is breathtaking."

With Rubio and Vahora's prospective graduation date of 2021 looming, both are ready to take on their future with excitement.

"Graduate school really gives me a lot of confidence to do more things," Rubio states.

Vahora hopes to take on more responsibilities at the lab once his diploma is in hand. For now, he's just happy to be where he is.

"I'm feeling 100% satisfied and relaxed knowing that my contribution to science is helping humanity."