

**REU Mentor Training Workshop
Iowa State University**

Case Number 1

All Alone Case Study

I have a motivated undergraduate student who does lab work for me during the school year, and I wanted to hire him to help me with field work for the summer. He accepted the position, which involved living and working at a field station a few hours away from our university. Other graduate students and undergrads also lived on station, and everyone had to share rooms, cabins, and general space. When my undergraduate asked me questions about what it was like to live on station, I told him that it was a lot of fun and that usually by the end of the summer, everyone became a tight-knit community.

When the field season started, I noticed that my student didn't often participate in social events on station. Every night after work was finished he would just sit alone in his cabin and chat with his friends online. In the beginning, some of the other undergraduates made an effort to invite him, but he always politely declined. I wondered if it was because he was the only Asian student at the station. In fact, he was probably the only Asian person in the whole town that summer. I didn't know how to ask him about it, and eventually everyone just accepted that he wasn't interested in hanging out and stopped inviting him to events.