You will find a problem you can’t wait to solve, and it will keep you up some nights. Detecting lost vocabulary words is the focus of your research. What’s the one word you’d never want to forget?

For sophomore SWETA KARLEKAR that means developing a computer program to analyze patients’ speech and detect lost vocabulary words, an early sign of Alzheimer’s disease. As a part of Professor Mohit Bansal’s research team, Sweta hopes her program will one day help identify and treat Alzheimer’s disease.

We know that 60% of Carolina undergraduates conduct research. How did you find your opportunity?

I got in touch with Dr. Bansal to ask a few questions about his research and our conversation turned into my job interview. Being mentored by Dr. Bansal has been challenging and rewarding. My first semester was full of trial and error, but I think I now understand the impact of my research – how every project I work on opens doors to graduate school and future job opportunities.

What’s the one word you’d never want to forget?

Sona is the Hindi word for gold, but it’s also used as an endearing term toward the people closest to you. To me, it holds the special place in my heart. Sona is the Hindi word for gold, but it’s also used as a child is called "sona, since I was a child so it holds a special meaning of family which I hope to always remember."

How does your work on Dr. Bansal’s research team help you develop your identity?

Dr. Bansal’s hope that his program will one day help identify and treat Alzheimer’s disease is a part of Professor Mohit Bansal’s research program to analyze patients’ speech and detect lost vocabulary words. So every word we analyze and develop into a computer program means developing a computer program to analyze patients’ speech and detect lost vocabulary words. And it will keep you up some nights.

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