

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/ Conference Title:	27th Fungal Genetics Conference NEUROSPORA 2013
Travel Dates:	March 12-17, 2013
Location:	Pacific Grove, California, USA
Group member(s):	Chia-Chen Chang (s1050968)
Aims:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To meet the principal scientists in the field of fungal genetics and molecular biology• Present current research in poster format• Attend high profile plenary talks, oral presentations and poster presentations• Networking and discussing new ideas with mycological scientists.

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

The Fungal Genetics Conference is one of the world's largest meetings for mycological study, taking place at the Asilomar, CA conference center in the US, every other year. The Neurospora meeting alternates biennially with this meeting. Both conferences have been held at this same venue for many years. This is a good opportunity for young researchers from different area to discuss with each other and get more information about their mutual research interests.

This well-implemented conference for more than thousand attendees was organized by the Genetics Society of America. This conference lasted six days and included three sessions per day: a plenary session, concurrent sessions, and a poster session. I very much appreciated receiving financial aid to support my travel to attend this important conference.

There were 8 themes for the poster session: Biochemistry and Metabolism, Cell Biology and Development, Comparative and Functional Genomics, Education and Professional Development, Gene Regulation, Pathogenic and Mutualistic Interactions, Population and Evolutionary Genetics, and Other Topics. More than 700 posters were presented at the conference. I had the opportunity to present my poster entitled "Ca²⁺/calmodulin signalling during colony initiation in *Neurospora crassa*". It was an excellent experience to present my study during the 3rd year of my PhD. Those discussion and feedback about my research was very important for my current study. It was also an honour that my poster won a poster prize.

My study is about the Ca²⁺/calmodulin signalling. It was nice to know and to meet other people studying in the same area. In particular, Barry Bowman's group (MCD Biology,

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University of California) gave an interesting talk on vacuolar calcium. Geoffrey Gadd's group (Division of Molecular Microbiology, University of Dundee) also present a fascinating study on the relationship of calcium signaling and thigmotropic responses in fungi. The deletion of the *spray* gene, which encodes an intracellular calcium channel with a role in maintenance of the tip-high calcium gradient, resulted in a decrease in the thigmotropic response of *N. crassa*. Pablo Aguilar (Cell Membranes Laboratory, Institut Pasteur de Montevideo) gave a talk about the role of extracellular calcium in budding yeast cell fusion. Louise Glass group (Microbial Biology Department, UC Berkeley) demonstrated that PRM-1 and LFD-1 are important, but non-essential components of the cell fusion membrane merger machinery. Sophie Lev (Centre for Infectious Diseases and Microbiology, University of Sydney) showed that the Crz1/Sp1 transcription factor of *Cryptococcus neoformans* is activated by calcineurin and regulates cell wall integrity. Hye-Seon Kim (Department of Biological Sciences, University of Delaware) presented data showing cytoplasmic tip high Ca^{2+} signatures in different species by the expression of Yellow Cameleon YC3.60. I was very pleased to exchange new idea and also share practical techniques with others at the conference. All the communication has helped me with providing a greater understanding of my research field and has further inspired me to continue pushing forwards with my scientific interests.

Finally, I would like to appreciate James Rennie Bequest for giving me this financial support. Attending this conference gave me a great opportunity to present my work to the filamentous fungal scientific community and get useful feedback which is very important for me to complete my research and initiate my science career.