

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/
Conference Title:**

114th General Meeting of American Society of Microbiology

Travel Dates:

16 – 25 May, 2014

Location:

Boston, Massachusetts

Group member(s):

Kwabena O. Duedu (C. French Group)

Aims:

Present poster on PhD work and network with other people in the field

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

The 114th General Meeting of the American Society of Microbiology was held at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Centre in Boston, MA, USA. Over 7000 scientists and students from all over the world attended. The presentations, seminars and workshops covered broad areas of microbiology practice and education. The categories included antimicrobial chemotherapy, microbial pathogens (bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites), fermentation and biotechnology, genetics and molecular biology, public health, among others.

Plenary sessions, workshop and symposia were organized parallel to each other within the various categories. Morning sessions began at 8:00am with presentations. Poster sessions were between 10:30am to 2:00pm. However, posters could be viewed at any time from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Afternoon talks began at 2:00pm and ended at 4:30pm. From 4:45pm to 6:15pm, there was happy hour and meet the speakers as well as special interest scientific sessions. The conference did not just have scientists presenting. There was a huge industrial presence where various equipment and reagent suppliers and manufacturers presented their technologies and also answered questions from the attendees.

I attended the full sessions or portions where I wanted to listen to a particular interesting topic. Some of the interesting sessions I attended were:

- Microbiology Career Choices: What's Available and How to Succeed (Workshop)
- NextGen Microbiologist
- A World of Archaea: A Tribute to Carl Woese
- Microbial Biotechnology for Production of Advanced Biofuels and Biochemicals
- Systems Biology Meets Synthetic Biology: Harnessing the Power of Biological Organisms for Biotechnological Applications
- Bugs as Drugs: Harnessing the Power of Microbes to Combat Disease

In addition to the above, I also attended the poster sessions on each day as well as the international discussions sessions.

Talks delivered at the systems biology meets synthetic biology had direct relationships with my PhD work. I learnt of approaches that other people are using to produce biofuels in yeast which are similar to what I am using in bacteria. Furthermore, I also learnt of new strategies to design novel pathways for advanced chemicals. I also met and discussed work being done by other scientists and implications for my work and career.

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I made the most of my experience at ASM 2014. I did not just listen to talks but also had the opportunity of discussing next steps in my career development. I networked with other students and scientists and hopefully will be able to take it further in the form of future collaborations. I also obtained some useful feedback on my poster which is going to help me put together a manuscript for publication.

Further to the scientific sessions, the trip helped me to experience the United States for the first time and I had the opportunity to visit some other institutions like MIT, Harvard, Tufts and the University of Louisville.

I am grateful to all who contributed to this trip namely the James Rennie Bequest, the Molecular Biology Fund and the Society of General Microbiology. It was a great experience.