

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/Conference Title: Kinetoplastid Molecular Cell Biology

Travel Dates: 25th – 30th April.....

Location: Woods Hole, Massachusetts, USA.....

Group Member(s): Sarah Kabani

Aims: Present a poster at this international conference, held only every 2 years

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

As this conference is only held on alternating years, it is very well attended by many people working with trypanosomes, including 7 travelling from the University of Edinburgh. We arrived in Woods Hole to 28°C weather which was unexpected and we had an hour to explore prior to the first talks. As it happens this conference was so intense that this was the only occasion when we were not either at talks or in poster sessions, but it was ample time to walk around the village and admire the sea view. The conference was opened with a session on Cell Biology with one of the talks being given by a postdoc in our lab. Another of the postdocs in our lab gave a talk on the final day and the 2 PhD students presented posters, so our lab was well represented.

The second day included sessions on Biochemistry where one of the speakers referenced my work, as microarray data I had gathered had provided her with an avenue for investigation. My favourite session was that afternoons; Genetics and Epigenetics, which I found really inspiring having lost touch with genetics since my degree and it fired up my enthusiasm to maybe return to pure genetics in my future career. That evening at dinner the seating plan was arranged by raffle, and I found myself at a table with a chemist a postdoc and a PI. This provided a clever means to make people network and allowed me to learn a bit about other fields outside of my immediate interests.

The poster session that night was extremely busy, but I managed to get to all the ones I was interested in, aided in part by a glass of wine and nibbles. I talked to all of the people I had highlighted as being potentially helpful to me and managed to get some insights into how other labs are trying to conduct synchronisation and microarray experiments, both of which I have been doing. I also met up with a PhD student from Germany who I had met previously after we had discovered our research overlapped significantly. We had subsequently decided to submit our papers to the same journal and these had been sent a matter of days before the conference, so we chatted about how we had got on and what our plans for future work included.

Another day of talks was followed by the second poster session where I presented my work on a microarray analysis of genes expressed in the mammalian form of *Trypanosoma brucei* throughout differentiation to the form that lives in the insect midgut. I was extremely apprehensive about it before hand as I knew a lot of people were also conducting similar experiments and might not agree with my methods or findings. As it turned out everyone was very positive and the PI that had been planning to do her own microarray on a new version of microarray chips confided to me that her chips, whilst better than mine in some respects, also had a tremendous number of different problems to the extent that they would not be pursuing them, but would be willing to share preliminary results with me. This was fantastic news, and everyone else who visited my poster was keen for the data to be made available so they could look at their own genes of interest.

I found the conference to be overwhelmingly successful, and everyone I met without exception has been helpful and encouraging. I am very grateful to the James Rennie Bequest for financial support towards attending this conference which I would say has been one of the highlights of my PhD.