

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION / PROJECT / CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/
Conference Title:** Drosophila Genetics Meeting

Travel Dates: April 8th-April 16th 2018

Location: Philadelphia, PA, USA

Group member(s): William Palmer

Aims: Attend the *Drosophila* Genetics meeting in Philadelphia, PA and present research on insect innate immunity.

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

I attended the *Drosophila* genetics meeting in Philadelphia from April 11th to April 15th. The meeting proved to be engaging and varied, with talks occurring during the day and more informal workshops in the evening. I was able to attend talks across my interests of population genetics, small RNA biology, and innate immunity, and attend a workshop on the microbiome. Because of the diversity of topics spanning fruit fly biology, I was also able to attend presentations on diverse topics I am not normally exposed to, that have been tailored to a general audience and therefore serve as excellent primers to different fields. For example, I attended an excellent talk by Nobel laureate Michael Young, who gave a history of the elucidation of the genes involved in the regulation of circadian rhythms, and how research from fruit flies has informed association studies in humans.

I was also able to present my work, entitled "Induction and inhibition of host immune responses to Kallithea virus, a dsDNA virus of *D. melanogaster*" as a poster presentation during three poster sessions throughout the meeting. This was especially timely, because it occurred ahead of publications describing the isolation of this new *Drosophila* virus (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.ppat.1007050>) and of its immune suppressors (<https://doi.org/10.1101/358176>). Therefore, I was able to present the almost-complete work from my PhD in advance of its circulation to the scientific community. The discussions held with other scientists about this have influenced my future experimental plans, and led to its general improvement.

Finally, I met with a principle investigator about a postdoctoral position available in her lab, which I have ultimately accepted, and we have since written a fellowship application together. Thus, attendance of the *Drosophila* genetics meeting has directly resulted in the development of my academic career, both through exchange of information with other *Drosophila* researchers and through gained employment. These benefits would not have been possible without the support of the James Rennie Bequest.