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Report on James Rennie Bequest Travel Funds 2000.

Use of Grant

The funds were used to contribute towards the travel costs to the Mouse Molecular Genetics Conference held in Cold Spring Harbour, Long Island, New York, during September 2000.

Conference Background

The Mouse Molecular Genetics Conference (MMG) is held annually and its location alternated between the Cold Spring Harbour Laboratories in Long Island and the EMBL laboratories in Heidelberg. The conference is attended by two to three hundred delegates from academic and commercial science, from the fields of : developmental biology; genome engineering; transgenesis; cell and molecular biology.

Purpose of Conference Attendance

At the conference I presented a poster on the experimental progress of my PhD project. I was able to mediate a deletion of 70 kb using hetero-specific lox sites by co-transfecting a plasmid carrying hetero-specific lox sites and a Cre expression vector into murine embryonic stem cells. This was the first demonstration that this genome engineering technique could be performed with distances approximating 10^2 kb.

Usefulness of Conference Attendance

The poster I presented was well received and generated many useful suggestions, in addition to gaining interest from groups wishing to use the technology our lab is currently developing. I was able to meet with other researchers using similar cutting edge technology and discuss with them the different experimental protocols being employed enabling me to gain a good insight into the field of work that was currently being undertaken and make useful contacts. I was able to use the contacts I had made to eliminate some of the problems I had encountered with experiments I had not yet been able to perform successfully.

This was my first international conference and the level of scientific expertise and data presented was inspiring and encouraging to my own work. The experience gave me a true insight into the various components of the scientific community and the quality of science expected on an international platform.

After attending the conference I reported to the rest of the Targeting Group at the CGR the evolving technologies that were presented at the conference during a morning group meeting. My presentation was followed by an open question and answer session. In

addition, the conference abstract book is made available to the group for inspection and has provoked interesting discussions within the group.

Future Influence of Conference Attendance at MMG 2000

The conference organisers invited me to talk at MMG 2000, however at that stage I did not have enough data to warrant a presentation. For the MMG 2001 I submitted an abstract and was invited and able to present my PhD project in the form of a short presentation. I believe the interest generated from my poster from the previous year was an important factor in the organisers' decision to choose my abstract for presentation from the large number of abstracts received each year for the conference. Once again the project was well received and generated interest from the scientific community, useful contacts and suggestions, offered collaborations and enabled me to meet existing collaborators.

I would like to express my thanks to the James Rennie Bequest committee for choosing my application for the travel fellowship. The grant enabled me to attend an international conference, a trip not affordable with the conference allowance included in my Medical Research Council PhD funding.

I would also like to express my apologies for the tardiness in my delivering this report to you. I have had reminders to send this report and realise that this must take up your useful time. I am sorry to have inconvenienced you in this respect. I hope this report is satisfactory, please let me know if you wish me to make any amendments or supply any further information,

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Penfold.