

# JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

## REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

**Conference Title:**

FASEB Research Conferences' Mechanism in plant development'

**Travel Dates:** 10-14 August 2008

**Location:** Vermont USA

**Group Member:** Saima Umbreen

**Aims:** To present a poster based on my PhD project

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**OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-**

I am thankful to The James Rennie Bequest for paying a part of my airfare to attend FASEB Summer Research Conference 2008 titled 'Mechanism in Plant Development'. This biannual conference was organised by Neelima Sinha and Cris Kuhlemeier, both of whom have innovative findings in the field of Evolutionary Developmental Biology. The conference was attended by 100 delegates from all over the world. It was small gathering of great researcher and provides me an opportunity to talk all the great scientist of my field in person and enabled me to discuss with them their current research interests.

The conference was comprised of eight sessions starting at 9.00am and finishing at 11pm with short breaks covering topics such as Meristem and Organogenesis, Natural variation, Gametophytic development, Signalling in Plant Development, Role of small RNAs in Development and Evolution of Development. It looked like you were going to utilize every single minute of these five days discussing beautiful work in your field. This was a fantastic opportunity for me to be exposed, first-hand, to the most recent, cutting edge research coming out of the best labs of my field across the world. I presented a poster entitled 'Are changes in *ARP* and *KNOX* genes responsible for the evolution of leaf shape in *Begonia*'. A major part of my PhD project is based on Neelima Sinha hypothesis that *ARP* genes control both simple and compound leaf shape who was co-organizer of this meeting. It was a fantastic opportunity for me to discuss with her my research outcomes and my future plans. She provided me with valuable guidelines to guide my project and showed a great interest in my work. There were two poster sessions each of two hours duration. All poster presenters were asked to present their poster in both sessions so that was an excellent way to discuss yours research with each delegate. I was asked many interesting questions from the audience. My lab is trying to develop a new model system to study the evolution of developmental mechanism and many delegates were interested in our progress. This was the first time that I had attended an international conference. It helped me establish a network with my fellow researchers in the same field. I was also lucky enough to get the chance to present my own work during second year of my PhD; this gave me an idea of what the other fellow researchers could expect from my project and enabled me to think about my research outcomes in a more definite way. This has been a huge help in planning work for my final year.