

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Conference Title: 48th American Society of Cell Biology Annual Meeting

Travel Dates: 13th -17th of December 2008

Location: San Francisco, California, USA

Group Member: Nikolaj Zuleger

Aims:

1. To present my work in form of a poster about the “Translocation mechanisms of membrane proteins from the endoplasmic reticulum into the inner nuclear membrane”
2. Get input and suggestions on my work from leaders in the field and attend a variety of talks and poster sessions to gain an update on the leading edge research in cell biology.

OUTCOME

The 48th American Society for Cell Biology Meeting 2008 was held in the beautiful city of San Francisco, USA. Research was presented in form of talks and poster sessions. The variety of science presented was enormous. The ASCB meeting is known to be the biggest cell biology meeting held annually and knowing this one can imagine that a single person could not possibly attend all sessions. I was prepared due to a program booklet that we got handed out a month before the meeting. It was not easy to choose the sessions as I was interested in so many but in the end I had my personal program choice which was basically a compromise between sessions in my own research area and other not directly related fields which I was interested in for my post-doctoral training.

Many of the talk sessions I have attended were rather disappointing as most of them presented already published work, however I realized that most of the research presented on the posters was unpublished and novel, thus I reorganized my schedule away from the talk sessions to focus more on the posters from this moment on. I realized that several presenters during the poster sessions had results similar to mine but somewhat in a different context which was nice as we could exchange our results without fear of direct competition.

My own poster session started a little bit unexpected as I passed my poster 30 minutes before my actual presentation realizing that a group of scientists were discussing it. Most people who were interested turned out to be people from my area of research. Most of them left a lot of feedback to my work and rather more important many suggestions were made on how to improve and

strengthen my data. I finished my poster session with 30 minutes overtime. I was exhausted and very happy at the same time as I would not have expected to get such a huge resonance on my work. Most of the advices given I have already incorporated and currently we are writing up the publication.

The top highlights of the meeting were the talks given by the recent Nobel price laureates Roger Tsien and Martin Chalfie. Both were awarded the price in 2008 for their discovery and development of the green fluorescent protein (GFP). Their talks could not be any more different from each other – Martin Chalfie gave his presentation in the rather traditional style drawing a resume from the discovery of the GFP to its nowadays broad usage in basic research, whereas Roger Tsien presented his most recent discovery to use a variant of GFP which can be imaged in the infrared spectrum. He advertised this tool for usage in medicine where it can be applied to visualize tumors during operations thus allowing removing them more efficiently. A very impressive example on how basic research can go hand in hand with medicine.

In summary this meeting was of incredible value for me as I got input for my own work and got a glance at the leading edge research which gave me an idea on how to orientate for my post-doctoral training period.

I would like to thank the James Rennie Bequest committee for the award which enabled me to attend this exciting meeting.