

Travellers' tales

Providing grants to attend scientific meetings

The 50th 'American Society for Mass Spectrometry and Allied Topics' conference was held on 2–6 June in Orlando, Florida. The conference comprised of plenary sessions, oral and poster presentations, as well as exhibits and tutorials. With the aid of a Biochemical Society Travel Grant, Joanne Connelly went along and presented a poster.

“My first ASMS conference could hardly have been in a more exciting location than sunny Florida. The setting also allowed me to travel to the USA for the first time in my life, and so for many reasons I was very excited about attending the convention,” says Joanne.

“My conference began quite hectically by helping out with the registration procedures on Saturday and Sunday before the official opening of the convention. This proved to be a good opportunity to put faces to many important names that were in attendance at the conference. A more relaxed welcome mixer evening on the Sunday allowed a gathering of new and old MBCMS lab members and new friends.

“Each day comprised of two poster sessions and two oral sessions. Each session had different themes running side-by-side. So as to cover as much science as possible, each of the attendees from the MBCMS was assigned to a different topic. The sessions important to my own research were of a fundamental nature and included: peptide fragmentation mechanisms, sequencing and Zwitterions.

“I presented my own work in a poster session early on Tuesday. After a nervous wait I manned the poster between 8.45 and 10.15. To my

delight I received a lot of interest and positive feedback. It was a great help and inspiration to encourage the writing for my paper on the same topic.

“The conference finale took place that evening at Universal Studios on Thursday where we were able to have fun on ‘The Hulk’ and ‘Spiderman’ rides. Even the heavens opening at the end of the evening did nothing to dampen the party spirit.

“All in all ASMS was an enjoyable and rewarding experience. I was able to meet and discuss my work with some of the most prestigious scientists in mass spectrometry today. The experience has given me much more confidence about presenting my work and has given me strong ideas about how I would like to progress in the field.

“I would like to thank my supervisor Simon Gaskell for allowing me to attend the conference and present my work.”

Joanne received funding for this conference trip from The Peter Allen Travelling Fund, BMSS travel grant fund, UMIST association travel fund and the Biochemical Society General Travel Fund. She is a PhD student at the Michael Barber Centre for Mass Spectrometry at UMIST.

www.biochemistry.org

Guidelines for Applications

The rules and regulations for applying for a Travel Grant are strict and can be viewed in full at www.biochemistry.org where you can also obtain an application form. The main points are listed here for your information:

1. The Travel Grants Committee meets six times a year with closing dates for applications of 1st January, 1st March, 1st May, 1st July, 1st September and 1st November. Applications received after these closing dates will not be considered. Furthermore, applications should be for meetings or visits which take place at least one month after a particular closing date.
2. One original plus four photocopies of a completed application with enclosures should be submitted by post to Alison McWhinnie, Assistant Director, Personnel and Administration, The Biochemical Society, 59 Portland Place, London W1B 1QW. All parts of the form should be completed – if necessary writing “not applicable” for some sections. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the most cost-effective form of transport and accommodation is to be utilized. Faxed and e-mail applications will not be accepted.
3. New members may apply for their first Travel Grant after they have been a member of the British Biochemical Society for 1 year by the relevant closing date, although applicants will not be eligible if they have been awarded a Student Travel Grant within the last year. Furthermore, applicants will not be eligible if they have been awarded a Travel Grant from the Society during the previous 2 years.
4. Applications which do not comply with the full set of guidelines will not be considered.