

**Graduate Women in Science 2015 Spring Travel Award Follow-up Report**  
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The generous Graduate Women in Science (GWIS) Travel Award has supported my attendance at the 20th Annual Meeting of the RNA Society in Madison, Wisconsin from May 26-31 2015. This was my second time attending an international conference, my first time being last year at the 19th Annual Meeting of the RNA Society in Quebec City, Canada from June 3-8 2014. The RNA Society Conference draws around 1000 participants interested in diverse aspects of RNA Science and this year over 600 abstracts were accepted for either an oral or a poster presentation.

The conference was mainly organized into sessions of 10 minute talks, however, mixed in with these sessions were special events and social gatherings that facilitated meeting new people and promoted thoughtful discussions on RNA research. For instance, there was a Science & Society dinner featuring a talk by Jon Lorsch, director of the National Institute of General Medical Science (NIGMS), and a History of RNA Research panel-discussion led by the founding members of the RNA Society. Jon Lorsch talked about some of the flaws in how research is currently being funded, and he presented ideas that the NIGMS is implementing to improve the current system. The History of RNA Research panel-discussion is a new addition to the conference. It was an absolute pleasure to hear the stories of the leading figures in our field as they presented their personal stories, including what it was like to do RNA research in the mid-1900s, and then to witness if not influence changes in the field throughout the years.

I was able to take advantage of several opportunities to talk and connect with both well-established scientists in the RNA field and junior scientists. For instance, there was a Mentor/Mentee Lunch one of the days where students and post-docs could talk to faculty about various topics. I chose the topic of “teaching at an undergraduate institution”. At our table, we discussed some of the ways to stand out from other applicants and the types of experience we should seek out in preparation for a job focused on teaching but still including research.

Finally, I presented my work at the first of two poster sessions with a poster titled “Inhibitory Codon Pairs Affect Translation by Distinct Mechanisms”. There, I met many people. Although most worked on research projects that weren’t directly related to my topic, they all showed interest and enthusiasm as I talked about my findings. During the second poster session, I was able to more freely visit other posters and convey that same enthusiasm to others as I listened to and learned about their work.

This RNA Society conference was interesting, educational, and extremely fun to attend. I am very grateful to GWIS for this travel award and opportunity to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the RNA Society.