Follow Up of the Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology Meeting
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Using the GWIS travel award I was able to attend the Yeast Genetics and Molecular biology meeting held at Princeton University in Princeton, NJ. This is an annual meeting, held in the United States every other year, during which yeast researchers present their newest and most exciting work. Most of the presentations concerned work done using established laboratory strains of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae,* however there is increasing interest in other species of yeast, such as *Candida albicans,* as well as non-laboratory strains of *S. cerevisiae* collected from the environment and industrial processes in which they are used. This is a large meeting, with more than 700 researchers registered this year, that allows people with widely varying interests to share ideas and techniques. In spite of its size it is not overwhelming. Therefore, I was able to meet and speak with many different people.

The majority of the meeting time was scheduled platform talks. These talks were chosen by the organizers to highlight the most important research currently being done. These talks exposed me to many new ideas and techniques that may prove useful in the future. In addition to the platform talks there were symposia highlighting the newest techniques and all of the resources available to the yeast community. These were whirlwind sessions with short, information packed talks. Though they were much too quick to absorb in the moment, there are many new techniques that could prove useful in the future. Learning about a new technique or community resource can be the inspiration for a whole new set of experiments.

The keynote address was given by John Marburger, science advisor to the president of the United States of America. He spoke about his role in government and the issues he faces in allocating money to the different funding agencies. He took questions at the end, from a hostile audience of scientists who are having trouble getting funded, and don't feel that the current administration supports, or even believes in science. He answered even the most aggressive questions very politically. He did not make anyone feel more hopeful about the current climate, but he was brave to try.

During lunch, graduate students and post docs could sign up to meet with people more established in the yeast community. I had lunch with an established professor from Sweden and a new professor from Missouri. As I have experienced previously in GWIS meetings, speaking with established people in the field changes my perspective of how science works. By seeing how other people have navigated their way through the scientific world, I can develop my own course. This was especially advantageous to more senior graduate students who were able to meet informally with those who might serve as postdoctoral mentors.

The most beneficial part of the meeting for me was the set of poster sessions. During one of these sessions I presented a poster of my most current work on the base excision repair pathway within the mitochondria, and when not presenting, had many interesting conversations with other presenters. I spoke with many people about my project and was given a great deal of feedback, and new ideas. Even those people who were not specifically interested in my project were interested in general mitochondrial questions. It is encouraging that people are beginning to realize that the nucleus is not the only place in the cell with DNA, and mitochondria are interesting subjects in their own right.

This is a particularly enjoyable meeting because it gives a perspective of the direction the yeast community is heading. As in past years I was impressed with the camaraderie among yeast researchers. I came back to the lab newly inspired to make my own contributions to the community.