

## **Graduate Women in Science Fall 2017 Travel Report**

Valerie Fleischauer

Laboratory of Professor Michael L. Neidig

Department of Chemistry

I greatly appreciate the support that Graduate Women in Science (GWIS) has provided to me through this travel award which enabled me to attend the 254<sup>th</sup> American Chemical Society (ACS) National Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C. The conference took place from August 20<sup>th</sup> – August 24<sup>th</sup> and consisted of many diverse poster sessions and seminars presented by notable students and faculty in my field of study, drawing thousands of chemists from across the globe. Having been away from the University of Rochester during my summer internship with Kodak Research Labs, I found this conference a truly a refreshing start to my fall and return to the University.

Events at the ACS meeting included daily morning and afternoon sessions of twenty minute talks by faculty and students on a broad range of topics, including catalysis, industrial chemistry, polymers, and, as a special topic - how chemistry is being developed for the next mission to Mars. I was inspired by the connections made between the catalysis research that I do at the U of R and materials and analytical chemistry that I experienced during my internship over the summer. In addition, I was able to connect with a variety of professionals in reference to future career opportunities. I networked with several researchers from the U.S. Naval Research Labs during the almost nightly inorganic chemistry poster sessions to gain valuable information on working with government institutions. In addition, I connected with representatives from the American Academy for the Advancement of Science about opportunities in the D.C. area in science policy. I learned that there are not only opportunities for internships with the organization, but also postdoctoral-type positions.

Perhaps most importantly, I was able to present my research in the area of iron catalysis in a twenty minute talk entitled, “Structure, reactivity, and mechanistic insight in alkyl-alkyl cross-coupling with iron-NHC’s.” Several people provided some valuable feedback on my work, inspiring future directions and new ways of tackling my research problem. I was introduced to a new way of evaluating the electronic properties of the N-heterocyclic-carbene ligands that I utilize in my catalytic reaction with iron. In addition, I received suggestions to characterize a new set of molecules for an additional publication.

Overall, this conference provided me the opportunity to meet formally and informally with fellow chemists to discuss a wide variety of chemistry. I especially valued the time I was able to take to investigate new research and career directions following my graduation next year. Thank you again to GWIS for helping to fund my travels to this meeting.