

GWIS Travel Report  
Sally Rocks

The International Conference on Biological Inorganic Chemistry (ICBIC) is one the major conferences in my field and I found it to be a most valuable experience. The conference, located in the beautiful city of Vienna, Austria, had scientist attending from all over the world and both lectures and poster presentations.

There were talks directly relevant to my current research topic, and I learned in what directions others in my field were going. It was valuable to gain insight into the future of the field and to determine my place in it. I really enjoyed meeting the people behind the papers I'd read and being able to ask questions. I also had the opportunity to sit in on talks that did not relate directly to my thesis research, but this was also most valuable. I will need to be aware of what other areas of research are out there so that I can develop my own projects and ideas as my scientific thinking grows. I particularly enjoyed a session on environmental bioinorganic chemistry- this field is growing rapidly and offers many exciting, new ideas.

One of the most beneficial parts of the conference was the poster session. I presented a poster that highlighted some interesting results, but also highlighted areas of my project where discussion and new ideas would be most constructive. The researchers I most wanted to talk to all stopped by to discuss my project with me, and their comments were very useful. I have many new directions in which to take my project now that I hadn't considered prior to the conference.

Not only did I gain some wonderful advice in my research, I also made new contacts. Several people offered their assistance should I have questions in the future and I also made connections with the students of one of our collaborators. I learned so much from others during the talks and poster session; however, a valuable experience for me was being able to help others as well. I met some younger grad students who were making some materials I had made in the past, and I was able to suggest synthetic routes.

The conference made me feel part of the international scientific community and the realization that I could contribute in a meaningful way was just as valuable as the new research ideas I brought home with me. I thank the Graduate Women in Science for providing me with the means to attend such a wonderful conference.

Sincerely,  
Sally Rocks