

## **Graduate Women in Science Travel Award Report - Fall 2011**

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The Graduate Women in Science (GWIS) travel award that I received in the Fall of 2011 allowed me to attend the Joint International Congress of the American Society for Reproductive Immunology (ASRI) and the European Society for Reproductive Immunology (ESRI), which was held from May 31 - June 2, 2012 in Hamburg, Germany. This was the first joint meeting between these two societies and brought top scientists in reproductive immunology from around the world. This was also my first meeting specifically focused on my field of research and thus was a great opportunity to connect with other graduate students, post-docs and faculty within my field. Furthermore, this conference provided the first opportunity for me to present my research at an international level as an oral presentation. My talk was titled "The development of a novel immunofluorescence technique to visualize intact human placental architecture." This conference offered the perfect environment to present our latest research and receive feedback.

The conference covered several topics within the reproductive immunology field, including infections, complications of pregnancy, and immune aspects of male reproduction. The small size of the meeting, around 400 attendees, allowed for extensive interactions between students and faculty. The meeting was organized so that all oral presentations were plenary rather than concurrent talks. This allowed me to attend all of the presentations and have full attendance at my talk. Coffee breaks and lunch/poster sessions allowed time to talk with fellow investigators. I had the opportunity to present my latest research not only as a talk, but also as a poster. This was very exciting as the research I was presenting was our recent development of a novel technique to examine intracellular signaling, specifically IFN- $\gamma$  signaling through the JAK-STAT-1 pathway, within intact human placental villi. Our research and new technology were very well received and drew quite a bit of attention from other investigators in the field who were interested in applying my technique to their research. A number of scientists approached me after my talk or during my poster session, leading to several potential collaborations, including one with Dr. Chandra Tayade at Queen's University whose research focuses on endometriosis. In addition to forming new collaborations and contacts, I also had the opportunity to talk in depth with one of our current collaborators who was at the meeting with her student.

In conclusion, I would like to thank GWIS for giving me the great opportunity to attend the Joint International Congress of the ASRI and ESR and present my research. I would also like to thank the Graduate Student Society for a poster award and the US Department of Agriculture for a travel award, both of which provided me with additional funding for this conference. Lastly, I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Shawn P. Murphy for all of his support.