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| NAME | | Denis Barry | | |
| UNIVERSITY | | Trinity College Dublin | | |
| NAME OF AWARD | | Symington Bequest | | |
| PURPOSE OF AWARD *conference attended (full name) with city and dates* | | | | |
| Experimental Biology, Boston MA, 27th March to 1st April | | | | |
| REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits? | | | | |
| Experimental Biology promoted a wide range of scientific themes and I anticipated that my research interests in neuroscience, immunology and medical education would benefit greatly by attending the conference. The meeting also represented a prime opportunity to participate in anatomy education and research based symposia and poster sessions from a broad base of speakers and contributors from across the UK, Ireland, Europe, Africa and the USA. At the Department of Anatomy, Trinity College Dublin (TCD) we are adapting our teaching curriculum and teaching and assessment methods in line with changing student demographics and learning profiles. We are also initiating studies in medical education research and it was envisioned that the meeting would allow our teaching practices and education research at TCD to be placed into context with anatomy education standards in other similar sized and resourced departments. Developing collabatorations with fellow researchers to progress my anatomy education and neuroscience research perspectives were also high on my agenda. | | | | |
| COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar. | | | | |
| The confence was exceptionally well organised, informative and comprehensive. I mainly attended symposia hosted by the AAA and the Anatomical society on each day. I visited a range of posters, placing more emphasis on posters pertaining to neural development and anatomy education. I am currently establishing a research laboratory in the Department of Anatomy, TCD and supervising a number of research projects in the anatomical sciences and neuroscience. As such, the Saturday morning symposia regarding the role of the mentor and publication strategies in anatomy education research were particularily informative. My laboratory is in the process of developing a biopolymer based substrate for neural tissue transfer, and the symposium on tissue-like technology on Saturday afternoon was also of much interest to me. The extensive network of anatomy education symposia throughout the conference were enlightening. It became clear that the issues facing TCD in the face of new teaching practices are in line with those experienced by many other anatomy departments. I found speakers addressing the benefits of cadaveric education and social media in anatomy education particularily interesting. The symposia entitled 'Best practices for Using Social Media as it reshapes Academia and the Classroom' and 'Didactic Methods in the Anatomical Sciences: How does Technology Help or Hinder?' stand out in this regard. Likewise, the neurobiology symposia highlighting spinal cord repair, and stem cells and regeneration were excellent and overlapped greatly with my personal research interests in spinal cord formation and repair. I attended each of the keynote plenary talks and was particularly impressed by Eric Kandel and Stanley Pruisner. I presented two posters at the late breaking poster session based on medical education and spinal cord development. Both were very well received and I was pleased with the interest they generated. I garnered some potentially positive collaborative links during the session. | | | | |
| REPORT: In relation to skills, what were the most important things you gained? *(does not apply to equipment grant)* | | | | |
| Many of the contributors to the education based symposia demonstated adaptions to their anatomy teaching to promote learning, such as incorporating social media platforms to enhance student lecturer interactions and ''flipping the classroom''. This is where students are first exposed to new material outside the lecture hall, via academically derived reading or lecture videos, thus allowing lecture time to assimilate that knowledge, perhaps through problem-solving case reports, discussion, group learning and assessment. These are methods I hope to integrate into my teaching at TCD through enhanced video-based teaching and closer monitoring of student learning resources. In addition, the symposium based on the creation of tissue-like structures was particularly informative and I garnered some key experimental methodologies by attending, especially in the use of hydrogel scaffolds and organotypic cultures. | | | | |
| REPORT: How do you think you will put this learning experience into practice in the future? | | | | |
| I aim to employ much of the experimental knowhow gained through attending posters and talks into practice in my laboratory. In particular, the use of three - dimensional scaffolds to support dissociated cell culture is an avenue of investigation I intend exploring immediately. Based on the success observed by many of the conference delegates and speakers, I also plan to implement a greater degree of online learning into my anatomy module delivery. In this context, online continuous assessment, social media and video - based learning will be an integral component of my future teaching. I hope to conduct an education study based on the advantages, and potential disadvantages, of these in anatomy education and intend to publish my findings in due course. | | | | |
| SIGNATURE | Dr. Denis Barry | | DATE | 17 / 4 / 2015 |

*If submitted electronically, a type-written name is acceptable in place of a hand-written signature*