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Class of 2013 – Aerospace Engineering

BMES Annual Meeting Conference Presentation

Atlanta, GA 8/26/2012

My project, which was made possible by funding from CUSE, involved presenting my undergraduate research at the Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES) Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA. BMES is the largest professional society for biomedical engineering and bioengineering, representing over 5,600 members worldwide. The 2012 annual meeting, hosted by Georgia Tech, was the largest BMES annual meeting ever.

Since the fall of 2011 I have been working in the Multi-Scale Cardiovascular Bioengineering Laboratory working to develop a three-dimensional model of the aortic heart valve using micro-CT imaging. Inherent in this research thrust are many challenging problems which all had to be addressed to achieve this objective. After obtaining a surprising amount of success, I submitted an abstract to the BMES annual meeting in April of 2012. The abstract was accepted for a poster presentation in July. I finalized my research and prepared my poster in the 2012 fall semester, and thanks to the generous funding from CUSE, I was able to travel to Atlanta to present.

The whole experience of the scientific conference was spectacular. Although my research experience so far had already enticed me to pursue a Ph.D., everything about the atmosphere of the scientific conference revealed my true passion for research. I now know without a doubt that I want to be a part of academia and the research community, at the very least until I receive my Ph.D. and possibly in my future career. The best take-away I have gained from this experience is the certainty that I now know what I want to do after I graduate in the spring, something many are struggling with.

I was fascinated by the enormous variety of research being done all throughout the country. Topics ranged from the behavioral effects of brain trauma to stem cell applications to bacteria robots, and I found many of them captivating. In addition, simply the experience of talking to other researchers, from fellow undergraduates to established professors, was quite different from anything I had done before. One truly feels the mutually shared drive for new knowledge as people from all over geographically come together to share research success and discuss common problems. Almost everyone I talked to about my poster expressed genuine interest in my research while also suggesting potential solutions to the problems I am still facing.

There are simply too many lessons I learned to fit into one page. However I can say that this experience has shown me what the scientific community is truly all about and inspired me to pursue my Ph.D. and a career in research. I strongly encourage my peers to attend a scientific conference because it will provide a greater understanding of the scientific community that cannot be matched. Thanks so much to CUSE for giving me the privilege of this experience.