

Daniel Kerekes

Graduation Year: Senior

College: Engineering

Major(s): Chemical Engineering

Minors(s): none

Scholar Group Membership: Hesburgh-Yusko

Project Title: Society of Surgical Oncology Annual Cancer Symposium Presentation

Project Location: IL

ND Faculty Mentor: Joe Buttigieg

Project Type: Conference - Presentation

Did your funded experience help you:

[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]: Yes

[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]: Yes

[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]: Yes

[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]: Very Much

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]: Yes

Tell us about your experience.

The part of my research that I was presenting at the SSO conference involved my work carried out at the Mayo Clinic with Notre Dame funding in which I investigated the expression level of an immune system component (specifically MICA) in different types of breast tissue to further elucidate the role of the immune system in tumor surveillance. I hung my poster up in the exhibition hall at the start of the conference early Thursday morning, and took it down Friday afternoon. I was in front of my poster during several events that took place in the exhibition hall, and answered any questions I was asked. I was able to view all of the posters, and attend many panel discussions and speeches. I learned about all aspects of the surgical oncology field today, from new technologies, to great debates, to the economics of it all, to promising new investigations. From a different perspective, I also learned how physicians act behind the scenes - how they communicate with one another, how they make decisions, how they learn, and how they present.

Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.

As alluded to above, this project was most valuable to me in that it gave me firsthand experience observing what it would be like to be a physician out of the hospital. It helped me learn the talk of the trade, and forced me to figure out how to pick out the important results from long talks and presentations. Lastly, it gave me experience designing and presenting a poster, and required me to become more deeply familiar with my research than I had been before. Next time I create or present a poster, I will do so with the confidence of experience. The people with whom I worked benefited by having their research presented at a national conference, so that word got out about what they have been working on.

