

Alina Nguyen

Graduation Year: Senior

College: Science

Major(s): Neuroscience and Behavior

Minors(s): None

Scholar Group Membership: No

Did you received other funding for this project?: COS

Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding? No

More details on CUSE funding assistance?

Project Title: 2016 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students

Project Location: Tampa, FL

ND Faculty Mentor: Michael Pfrender

Project Type: Conference - Presentation

Why did you undertake this project/experience? Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Prepare for graduate school (MA or PhD), Prepare for national fellowships

Did your funded experience help you:

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

[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]: Very Much

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

[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]: A Little

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:Yes

Tell us about your experience.

I attended multiple education sessions held at the ABRCMS conference. Some of the more engaging sessions for me included one on "Picking the Perfect PhD Program for You" held by faculty from the NIH and another on crafting a successful graduate school application. I also attended daily lunch networking session and presented my summer research in front of conference attendees (primarily principal investigators from other universities). I obtained fee waivers for applications at all of my top choice schools and talked with numerous admissions board members at these schools.

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

During the poster presentation, I was asked a great deal of unanticipated questions about my work. This was good practice for presenting research results in unfamiliar conference contexts. I also built networking skills by talking with faculty at leading scientific institutions, including Stanford, Harvard, and Cornell. Lastly, many of the sessions I attended involved preparation for graduate school and gave excellent advice for me as I prepare my applications and select programs.

Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.

I will be attending graduate school next year to conduct behavior-focused neuroscience research. Attending the ABRCMs conference gave me useful experience in presenting research results, which I will use as a graduate student as I attend similar conferences or give talks on my work. The informational sessions I attended will guide my graduate school applications, and I also received excellent application advice from faculty members at my top choice institutions.

What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?

If you are a senior student, identify schools you want to attend before arriving at the conference. This will allow you to deliberately choose the faculty members to talk with and the booths to attend at the conference, thus making the most of your experience. Don't be afraid to give out CVs at conferences or network with faculty members at institutions you are interested in. These faculty members are always willing to talk about their work or recruit interested students.

I acknowledge that this form has been filled out truthfully and to the best of my ability. I understand that this information will be shared with many different CUSE constituencies. As such, I have provided as much useful information as I was able. I understand that CUSE will not complete my award disbursement until this form is successfully completed. If I have any questions or concerns, I will contact CUSE before submitting this form. To illustrate that you understand all of these points, please enter your Notre Dame email in the box below.
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