

PIPS CONFERENCE 2015 NEWSLETTER

The 3rd annual SWBio DTP PIPS conference was held at the University of Bath on the 8th and 9th June 2015. 1st, 2nd and 3rd year DTP students all took part in this informative and enjoyable event. Marking a departure from previous years, the conference was held over two days in order to make it easier for delegates having to travel long distances, in addition to increasing networking and socialising time.

After a welcome from Professor Jane Millar, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, Dr Robert Hardwick, the Senior Innovation & Skills Manager of the BBSRC, opened the conference with the keynote speech.

Students were then able to attend career enhancing workshops. 1st year students were given individual CV advice. 2nd years enjoyed a presentation from Dr Anne Cameron: *'Marketing your research skills to employers,'* which looked at bridging the gap between how postgraduate scientists are perceived by employers, and how negative connotations can be avoided by marketing oneself effectively. Dr Hardwick re-joined the 3rd years to give another inspirational presentation about available opportunities in fellowship once the PhD process has been completed. In the evening, delegates went on a comedy walk around the city of Bath, which undoubtedly provided a departure from the historical picture that is traditionally painted of the city.

Day two welcomed students who had completed the PIPS process to share experiences with those at the conference. Seven presentations were given in total which illustrated the range of internships that are available for those forming ideas of where they would like their internship to occur.



'It was great to see the enthusiastic engagement of our students with the PIPS process. The presentations from students who had completed their internships were especially inspiring and demonstrated the breadth and value of the PIPS scheme.'

-Prof. Leo Brady, Director of the SWBio DTP

Andrea Gori delivered the first presentation, which outlined his experience at the Met Office, followed by:

- Ruth Carmichael-BBSRC
- Benedict Hogan-Wildscreen
- Amanda Deakin- FAI Ltd
- Chris Wood- University of Bristol
- Caroline Phelps- Exonate
- Alex Johns- Innogen Institute

It is clear from the feedback that students gained a lot by listening to their peers, including advice on organisation and time management, the difficulties experienced, with an overriding theme of how much can be benefited from engaging with PIPS. Particular areas that were highlighted include learning new programming skills, allowing a different perspective on own research, as well as being able to take a refreshing and fruitful break from ones own PhD study.

Finally, the conference was closed by Professor Sue Wonnacott, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies at the University of Bath.

Student comments on the conference were very positive, with particular appreciation for the presentations of other students and Dr Hardwick's speech, in addition to the career activities workshops. The mini cheddars that were given out at lunchtime got a special mention on more than one occasion, however we are confident that this will not be the lasting impression of the benefits students obtained from attending this combination of workshops, presentations and networking. It is thought that students gained a lot from the experience and certainly were given plenty of food for thought as they made their ways home.

