Bench Scientists Recognized at asm2015

Nine young clinical laboratory scientists were recognized at asm2015 for their enthusiasm and commitment to the clinical microbiology profession. The recipients were awarded professional development grants to help facilitate their attendance at asm2015.

Funding was generously provided by Accelerate Diagnostics, BD Diagnostics, Biofire, bioMérieux, COPAN Diagnostics Inc., Evergreen Scientific, GenMark Diagnostics Inc., LumineX, Medical Chemical Corporation, Nanosphere, OpGen, TECHLAB, TIB MOLBIOL, and ASM.

“Keeping up with the advancing technology and research in the field of microbiology is a must, so attending asm2015 enhanced my knowledge in the field and motivated me to keep up with up and coming advancements,” says Abigail Cunanan, MLS(ASCP), a 2015 recipient.

Initiated by the Clinical Microbiology Mentoring Committee (CMMC), the grants provided an opportunity for the recipients to interact with preassigned mentors, attend symposia, visit poster sessions, peruse industry-sponsored exhibits featuring the latest technological advances, and learn more about the profession of microbiology. To be eligible for the grant, applicants must be ASM members, have less than five years of clinical laboratory experience, be nondoctoral bench-level clinical microbiologists, never have attended an ASM General Meeting, and not be presenting a poster or talk at asm2015.

“Besides the number of new techniques and strategies I am able to bring home, I have also returned with a newfound desire to advance my career. I honestly had no idea where a career in clinical microbiology could take me,” says John Ford, MLS(ASCP), another 2015 recipient.

CMMC Chair Janet Hindler, MCLS, MT (ASCP), says “There is a compelling need to identify and support promising young professionals who embody the future of clinical microbiology. The challenge of combating infectious diseases is unrelenting, and will remain so in the years ahead. We need dedicated, creative, and energized people on the front lines who are focused on improving the ways we process, analyze, and report results from diagnostic specimens. Immersing those prospective leaders now in the abundance of scientific information and networking opportunities available at asm2015 is an excellent step forward for their careers and our profession.”

“I met many people who gave me useful career advice and suggestions that I plan to use. A few of the conversations sparked ideas in me that I plan to use for future research projects both for work and in graduate school,” says Melissa Olson, MLS(ASCP)CM, another 2015 recipient.

The 2015 grant recipients are: Robert Bowden, University of Florida Abigail
Cunanen, Sentara Norfolk General Hospital

John Ford, United Regional Lab

Phillip Lansang, Kaiser Permanente S. CA Regional Lab

Melissa Olson, Johns Hopkins Hospital

Yvette Phillips, Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center

Kristen Romero, Tri-Core Reference Lab

Megan Waller, Inova Health Systems/Johns Hopkins Medicine

Kayla Wieting, OSU Wexner Medical Center