

My experience on Elastin Gordon Conference 2013

My visit to the Elastin Gordon Conference in the University of New England was my first Gordon conference. As a conference place the campus was nice and easy to get around. At first I thought that the program was tough from 9.00 am to 9.30 pm leaving only few hours free time in the middle of the day. However, it turned out that although the days were fully booked the relaxed and unreserved atmosphere together with beer during the poster sessions made the program manageable, or actually enjoyable.

I felt that one thing was very important making the atmosphere unique. That was the feeling of equality. For a Ph.D student scientific meeting can feel like a hierarchical place, not to mention if you are a woman. This was not the case at the Gordon Conference. I felt, and I'm sure that all the students did, no matter which sex, that we were considered as scientists not just as students wanting to be scientists. I think this was very encouraging environment for a young researcher. This kind of experience could convince me that a scientific community can be equal, open and supportive and this could persuade me to stay with science even after I get my Ph.D.

Another important thing making the great atmosphere was how open and positive everybody was. A setting that encourages people to show unpublished data not only brought new and exciting data but also people with open and curious minds. This was true during the talks, poster sessions as well as in the table discussions during good meals. I enjoyed the way people would just pop in to the tables, familiar people or not, and start talking. Sometimes the talk was about science, sometimes about differences and similarities of making science in different parts of the world and sometimes about something completely non-science.

One intention for each young researcher in conferences is to connect and network. The relaxed and unreserved atmosphere together with beer during the poster sessions set a great platform for this. Seeing my PI meet old collaborators appeared more like an encounter of old friends. Isn't that something that starts from contacts made in a stimulating environment, such as this, generates great co-operation and great science and eventually warm re-encountering? And isn't that something that every young researcher searches for?

For me Elastin Gordon Conference was extremely stimulating and impressive experience. Interesting contents and high quality of the talks was of course why I attended the conference but for a young scientist learning, eating, drinking and breathing science has never been so comfortable. This was because of the unique atmosphere. And one cannot take this atmosphere for granted. It will not just happen. It is generated by the organizers as well as the conferees. I was very happy to be a part of that in Elastin Gordon conference in the University of New England 2013.