

Collagen Gordon Research Seminar and Conference

July 15th to 21st 2017, New London, USA

As a third year PhD student, this year was my last chance to attend the internationally recognized Gordon Research Conferences (GRC). Thanks to the travel grant provided by the International Society of Matrix Biology, I got the opportunity to attend the Collagen Gordon Research Seminar and Conference in New London (New Hampshire), USA. It was an incredibly rewarded experience because of the excellent quality of the talks and discussions, the mix between PhD students, post-docs, young and senior investigators, and the very nice and friendly atmosphere.

Firstly, I attended the Collagen Gordon Research Seminar (GRS) two days before the conference with other PhD students and post-docs; it was a very good way to meet young scientists in the field of collagens and to get to know each other before the GRC started. Unfortunately, I did not get the chance to present my work during the oral presentation, but discussed my PhD project on Procollagen-C Proteinase Enhancers (PCPEs) with other PhD students and post-docs during the poster session. Furthermore, I have been selected for being the chair of the session “Collagens Expression and Molecular Intricacies in Cell Microenvironments as Drivers of Cell Biology”. It was a great way to be part of the GRS organization and to feel more comfortable by talking in front of other young scientists and asking questions, without the fear of judgement. The Seminar was very well organized and very interesting; I thank Celestial Jones-Paris and Richard Williams for organizing it and giving me the chance to be chair of a session.

The Collagen GRC, which followed the GRS, brought together in a same place, the Colby-Sawyer College, all the collagen experts from all around the world. This meeting covered a broad range of collagens and associated-diseases and a diversity of expertise, approaches, and techniques. I learned a lot thanks to the excellent quality of the conferees. All the attendees were very enthusiastic and passionate about their researches and it really made me want to continue in this field. I really felt as a member of the “collagen family”. Moreover, during the poster session, I discussed my results with scientists with high expertise in wound healing and procollagen processing, which are the main focuses of my PhD project. It gave me the opportunity to get feedbacks and suggestions for my work and think about new perspectives. The Gordon Conference was a great place to meet researchers and talk to all the attendees, especially during the coffee breaks, the meals and the organized activities. It was an honor and pleasure to meet and talk to recognized scientists that have worked for so many years on extracellular matrix, collagen processing and PCPEs. Finally, the karaoke session organized by Florence Ruggiero and Marion Gordon, the GRC organizers, was a friendly and great moment, where everybody – PhD students, young investigators as well as senior researchers – grouped together to sing and dance, there were no hierarchy and we all enjoyed it.

In summary, I really recommend to participate to the GRC and, importantly the GRS for students. It is an excellent platform to acquire knowledge in your field, know what other researchers are working on all around the world and interact with junior and senior investigators. I hope it will be the bases of futures collaborations. I really thank the ISMB for giving me this great opportunity.

Agnès Tessier, PhD student,
University of Lyon, France