

Jamie Lou Mallonga: Research Scholar Travel Award Recipient 2007:

This April, I was given the opportunity to participate in my first national poster presentation at Posters on the Hill with the help of the Research Scholars Program. The program is supported by the Council of Undergraduate Research and the American Chemical Society. It consisted of eighty students presenting their research from varying disciplines, ranging from Biology and Mathematics to Psychology and the humanities. We displayed our research on Capitol Hill and spoke one-on-one with our representatives, senators, and various members of both, civil and federal organizations.



Two of the more memorable experiences from the trip was learning about the history of the Washington monument and attending a hearing for the Committee on Science and Technology. The hearing involved amendments to increase the amount of

money provided for various NSF programs, such as summer Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs). I really appreciated attending the hearing because it gave me a chance to see the politicians' view on science and research. For example, ten or fifteen minutes of the meeting involved a disagreement between two of the representatives. One of the representatives continuously claimed that he "witnessed" a misuse of the NSF grant when visiting a gaudy global warming facility that served no purpose in terms of science or research. He



claimed that the money for the building came from NSF grants. The second representative repeatedly tried to assure the first representative that strong restrictions were in place to prevent anyone from misusing the NSF grants, but the first representative refused to believe him until other representatives intervened.

At the poster presentations, I was able to speak with other students, professors, Congress members, and members of various organizations. The experience was a good chance to work on my oral presentation skills, as well as converse with people from different backgrounds. For example, I was able to work on how I spoke about our research to people from both scientific and non-scientific backgrounds. Some of the people we were able to meet with were Dr. Catherine Hunt, the president of the American Chemical Society, Dr. Ralph



Cicerone, the president of the National Academy of Sciences, Representative Ruben Hinojosa from Texas, and Representative Brian Baird from Washington. It was also interesting to see some of the research other students were doing at their own schools. There were students from Marshall University in West Virginia who built a two-integrator differential analyzer that can solve second order linear differential equations. They are also working on building a four-integrator instrument that could solve nonlinear and higher order differential equations. One of the reasons they build these instruments is to use them as teaching tools to give students a chance to see how the instrument computes the equations in a mechanical sense as opposed to just using a calculator.

All in all, I am thankful to the Research Scholars Program and the Council of Undergraduate Research for giving me the opportunity for this experience. Posters on the Hill was a valuable learning experience and I highly recommend that other students apply to participate in this event.