

Eleanor Small, reporting on the ICU 2009, Santiago Chile.

The International Congress on Ultrasonics (ICU) was held in Santiago, Chile from January 11 to 16, 2009. The ICU focuses on all things ultrasound with a wide variety of topics from the fundamentals of wave forms and ultrasound image quality improvement, to biomedical and therapeutic applications of ultrasound. I was selected to present a contributing talk in the special topic of Therapeutic Applications of Microbubbles and Sonoporation. Thanks to the Office of International Programs and many others, I was able to obtain enough funding to attend.

The conference was a great success. The first day was mostly tutorials and keynote speakers. I was able to learn much about other areas of ultrasound outside my research scope. At the reception that evening Dr. Wrenn (my PhD Advisor) and Dr. Lewin (a member of my PhD committee and a great influence in my studies) introduced me to many of their colleagues from around the world. We also had an opportunity to catch up with colleagues from Poland. As each day passed I attended different talks on subjects that were interesting to me, even if they did not pertain to my work. On Thursday afternoon I gave my talk, Lipid-Controlled Ultrasound-Induced Drug Release. My session was well attended and the 2 talks preceding mine were a perfect segue into my work. There were many questions after and a few people stayed after to speak with me in more detail.

Thursday evening was the banquet where Dr. Bjørnø (this man is a Titan of ultrasound) was honored with a lifetime achievement award. The dinner included entertainment of traditional Chilean dance and traditional Chilean cuisine. Friday morning the final sessions were held and the closing ceremonies. I was honored to be awarded one of the seven RWB Stephens Prizes for my presentation, out of 33 participants.

During my stay in Chile, there was some time for culture learning as well as scientific learning. One of Dr. Lewin's Colleagues, Dr. Elisa Konofagou from Columbia University, joined us for an afternoon at the Chilean Museum of Pre-Columbian Art. It was wonderful to get to know her. The following day, the group headed to the coastal towns of Valparaiso and Vina del Mar. Dr. Konofagou and I spent much of the day discussing careers in academia and her experience in getting her job and her current review for tenure. It was on the bus ride home that Dr. Konofagou convinced me to give a career in academia a second thought, and I realized that I have a new example and mentor to look up to.

Our visit to Chile ended on a perfect note. We took a trip to Vina Undurraga, a vineyard and winery owned by the family of a friend from my undergraduate years. After a private tour by Daniel Picciotto, the owner and father of my friend, and wine tasting, he invited us to lunch at his favorite roadside empanada (a Chilean favorite) place. I know that Dr. Lewin, Dr. Wrenn, and Dr. Nowicki enjoyed the tour and the lunch conversation. For me, it was a joy to see Senor Picciotto, as I had not seen him since graduation in May of 2006.

Of all my experiences in Chile, I must say that meeting Dr. Elisa Konofagou was the most valuable and most enjoyable. I hope to see her again at the ACS Colloids and Surface Science Symposium in June of 2009. Thank you again to the Office of International Programs from awarding me the International Travel Award that made all of these memories possible.