Learning Report

I am a third year undergraduate student in The University of Hong Kong, majoring in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology. I have always had an inclination towards the academic sphere and science. To have a greater understanding regarding how it feels to work in the lab and conduct research, I worked in School of Biomedical Sciences as a research fellow under the Summer Research Fellowship Programme provided by the Faculty of Science. This research experience provided me the scope to have a project of my own, for the first time in my life.

It was through this research that I applied to the National Collegiate Research Conference 2016 organised by the Harvard College Undergraduate Research Association (HCURA). In many ways, this experience left some indelible marks in my life. This was the first time I had the experience of an international research conference where participants came from some of the most prestigious universities in North America and all over the world. I was the only participant from Hong Kong and it felt great carrying the name of The University of Hong Kong in front of this extremely talented audience.

However, this conference was not only about presenting my research. One segment of the conference consisted of speeches from keynote speakers. The speakers were some of the most renowned and widely acclaimed individuals in the field of science. There were people like Rosina Bierbaum, who chairs the Scientific and Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility and serves on President Obama’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. The brilliant speeches and words of wisdom that they shared made me rethink my perspectives regarding science and society.

There was also a career fare where large biotechnology companies like Amgen was present along with representatives from highly acclaimed universities like Brown University and Harvard College. In addition, there were individual sessions where people with real life experiences in biotechnology industry, graduate school, public health etc came and shared their experiences. All this information made me realise how much there was left for me to know and explore.

I did not only learn but also grew into a more open minded individual at the end of this conference. Each and every participant in that conference were brilliant individuals with a keen interest in obtaining and developing knowledge. I will be lying if I said that I was not taken aback by the strength and confidence that prevailed among this crowd. However, I realised how much more I wanted to continue to belong among this crowd of intellectuals who were preparing to pledge to serve the community through knowledge.

Thus, when the conference ended, I felt like I was a changed person with new goals, motivations and aspirations in life.