Diana Salcedo

Attending the XVth Deep Sea Biology Symposium co-hosted by MBARI (Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute) and the Monterey Bay Aquarium was a remarkable and productive experience, even beyond my expectations. I had attended other international scientific meetings before, but never one so huge, and this allowed me to connect with students and scientists from all around the world who are involved in similar topics to that of my PhD project.

I´m a Mexican student enrolled in the PhD program of the Institute of Ocean Sciences and Limnology, UNAM, Mexico City. Considering the scopes of this type of meetings I was very interested in attending the XVth DSBS, but at the same time I was concerned because the registration fees and the travel costs were very high considering the exchange rate. However, months ago I applied to request a travel award, and it was very exciting to know that I had been selected to be recipient of an award granted by the Deep Sea Biology Society and the International Seabed Authority, which allowed me to attend this meeting.

I presented my PhD project in a poster session, and I was able to give a lightning talk before. Although it lasted only two minutes, I loved the experience. It was challenging to speak in front of such a large audience in a different language, to summarize my project in two minutes and to capture the attention of the attendees to learn more about my project, but I enjoyed it immensely. I was not nervous at all, which made me realize that I`m ready for future scientific talks, and it was even better when I received very good comments from some colleagues. My poster was not in a very visible area inside the expositions room, but many people showed interest in my project and stopped by to ask questions. It was a very pleasant and enriching experience to be able to explain my project in a different language, to answer all kind of questions and to discuss my results with other researchers, hence improving my scientific communications skills.

During the meeting, I could hear many interesting talks about deep-sea topics that I was not aware of. I learned a lot about new deep-sea exploration and study technologies and about priority issues. It was very nice to meet most of the deep-sea community, the interesting projects they are conducting all around the world, and to feel the warm welcome to young scientists.

Attending this meeting was also an amazing experience because I met some colleagues that I had met before in other scientific events such as international courses, oceanographic expeditions, etc. It was great seeing them again and catches up. In addition, I had the opportunity to meet many other students and researchers. These interactions allowed me to solve important doubts that I had about the interpretation of the data of my project, which will allow me to improve it. This also allowed me to meet researchers with whom I could establish future collaborations according to my scientific interests. Additionally, I could meet some MBARI colleagues with whom I currently collaborate and could establish new and promising collaborations, which includes the joint publication of scientific articles, obtaining data, obtaining samples for new projects, etc.

This was a unique and amazing experience that will surely have a remarkable influence on my academic and scientific career. I am very satisfied, happy and proud of all that I could achieve during this meeting. I feel very grateful to the DSBS, the ISA, and all the people involved in granting me this award, without their support, this could not have been possible.



