

Minority Retention Funds (2016-17) Report

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Conference: Plant Biology 2017, Honolulu, HI

I used Minority Retention Funds to travel to attend an international research conference “Plant Biology 2017” organized by the American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB) in June 24-28, 2017. The ASPB is the world’s leading professional organization representing Plant Biology and Agriculture. The ASPB publishes research articles, organizes annual Plant Biology research conferences, and provides teaching and grant resources for faculty. Furthermore, ASPB offers travel grants to faculty and students to attend conferences, and also summer research fellowships to undergraduate students to conduct plant biology research.

During Plant Biology 2017 conference, I and my research student presented posters on the characterization of *Medicago truncatula* mutants defective in symbiotic nitrogen fixation which brings national and international recognitions to Eastern. Leading researchers who work on symbiotic nitrogen fixation in *Medicago truncatula* offered suggestions on our research. I also attended a grant writing workshop offered by the United States Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense and the National Science Foundation. Program managers from all these three major federal funding agencies were present during the workshop and provided useful information on how to write successful grants. Also, I attended a career workshop organized by ASPB for faculty mainly from primarily undergraduate institutions (PUIs) on how to conduct research and teach effectively in PUI.

In summary, without MRF funds it would not have been possible for me to attend Plant Biology 2017 conference. I learned recent research advancements in my field, teaching and outreach related resources for faculty, had a chance to network with faculty from other universities, and learned about how to write research grants effectively. My participation in this meeting brings international recognition to Eastern Connecticut State University.