

My name is Ashley Shean and I was one of the technologists selected for the AMP Technologist Travel Award for this year's annual meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. This award allowed me to travel to the meeting to present my first author poster, compete for the technologist poster award and connect with peers from other institutions doing similar work in the clinical molecular diagnostics field.

My first day at the conference I spent at Corporate Workshop Day. I attended talks by Thermo Fisher Scientific, Astra Zeneca and Bristol Myers Squibb. Getting the opportunity to hear the latest research and development from diagnostic and pharmaceutical companies was very informative. When I attended AMP in 2016 I was unable to attend Corporate Workshop Day, so attending this year was high on my list. I found it to be a very worthwhile.

During the days of the official AMP meeting, I was able to attend a number of different talks. I was particularly impressed with one talk about using microarrays for blood donor screening for rare blood group antigens. Prior to my career in molecular diagnostics, I was a blood banker, so anything in that vein (no pun intended) I find dually interesting. I was able to attend the vendor expo multiple times and was able to gather information on new instruments, assays and commercial products. While at the vendor expo, I participated in AMP's Education station where I learned about all the resources provided by their website. I am most excited about the continuing education opportunities provided by AMP. I was able to bring this back to our lab staff for use in their ASCP certifications.

The highlight of the entire meeting was the poster sessions. My institution presented three posters, with one being my original research work. I had a chance to discuss my work, field thought-provoking questions and network with other institutions. While I was not selected as the winner for the technologist poster award, I did receive a "Looks Interesting!" note from The Journal of Molecular Diagnostics. This encouraging nod has motivated me to publish my data from this experiment. I also immensely enjoyed walking the poster sections and talking with others about their work.

Winning AMP's Technologist Travel Award was such a humbling honor. Thank you for selecting me and funding my trip to the 2019 AMP conference. I accomplished many of the goals I set for myself and came back to our institution with more enthusiasm and new ideas for the future.

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