

**Conference Presentation Travel Award (CPTA) Statement of Intent
American Association of Laboratory Animal Sciences (AALAS) National Meeting
Dates: 10/13/2019 – 10/17/2019**

The AALAS National Meeting is the only national meeting for laboratory animal veterinarians in the United States, and veterinarians, research scientists, and technicians from many different disciplines focused on biomedical research and comparative medicine participate in the event. My intentions for participating in this year's AALAS meeting are three-fold; to present my PhD research during an oral platform session, to participate as an invited lecturer during a meeting workshop, and to network with prospective employers.

My research presentation for AALAS focuses on a rat model harboring a human mutation of a gene known to increase susceptibility to Crohn's disease, a category of inflammatory bowel disease. My PhD work has been devoted to characterizing this model and determining how it can be used for future downstream Crohn's disease research. I will be presenting the findings from a study I designed and conducted evaluating the response of this model to known environmental triggers of Crohn's disease in humans. It will be the first time that I will be presenting this new data which will be included in a chapter of my dissertation. This oral presentation will be given during the "Laboratory Investigations" platform session on Monday, October 14th at 2:30 PM.

I have also been asked to participate as a guest lecturer in a meeting workshop focused on grassroots advocacy for STEM and working with your legislators. It is generally unheard of for a student or resident to be asked to speak at a larger workshop or panel discussion, and I am extremely honored for the ability to participate in such a capacity. I will be giving a 30 minute presentation on working with your legislators at the local and state level as well as assisting with the interactive section of the workshop during which participants will work on formulating their elevator pitches to legislators on the comparative medicine topic of their choosing. Participating in the national meeting as an invited lecturer will not only look excellent on my CV but will also grant me access and exposure to many of the advocacy and policy organizations present at AALAS that I would like to work for post-degree.

Finally, I will have a myriad of networking opportunities with veterinarians and scientists from non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and advocacy groups during two specific networking sessions as well as in the exhibit hall throughout the entirety of the meeting. I have already been reaching out to individuals from the National Association for Biomedical Research

(NABR), Americans for Medical Progress (AMP), and the legislative and advocacy arm of The American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners (ASLAP) to schedule one-on-one meetings with their recruiters. These meetings will prep me for any potential future interviews and will introduce me to the administrators of these different organizations. I already have business cards and copies of my CV prepared for these meetings and have been researching these different organizations to prepare questions. I am optimistic about the potential of these networking opportunities during AALAS.

The funds received from the Graduate Professional Council (GPC) CPTA will grant me the opportunity to attend this meeting at a much lower out-of-pocket cost than I had originally planned. If I receive funding to attend AALAS through GPC, I am planning to use the saved out-of-pocket funds to either attend an additional conference where I can practice my presentation skills and further network with prospective employers or to travel for job interviews in the spring. Thank you for considering my application for the October cycle of the CPTA to attend the 2019 AALAS National Meeting.

Sincerely,

Student's Name

Research Fellow in Veterinary Pathobiology

University of Missouri