

## **ISPE Annual Meeting 2010 – A Singaporean Student’s Perspective**

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Imagine you are the parent of a 10 year old child and had to tell your child that you are going to “Disney World” for a conference! Anticipate the euphoric response! That was exactly how I felt when I was announced as the winner of the ISPE Student Poster Competition on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010. Fast forward 6 months to 7 November 2010, with all the checklist and documents that Fiona had prepared for me, I couldn’t believe myself that I was standing in Disney World (Orlando, Florida) attending my first international conference!

Located in the heart of the most magical place on earth, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort provide a truly extraordinary backdrop for the ISPE Annual Meeting. Situated in its biggest exhibition hall, the Atlantic hall was the venue for the trade exhibition where pharmaceutical companies from around the globe showcased their new technologies. It was at this very place that the students’ posters were all set up in full view of the professionals.

There were also great networking chances for students and young professionals alike, to know more about the company of their interest and perhaps even snag a job with companies that are hiring!



First up for the students and young professionals was an orientation luncheon, where we got to know our fellow student participants as well as experienced figures in the pharmaceutical field. These mentors brought such friendly and approachable aura with them and were more than happy to enlighten us with their experiences and knowledge. Perhaps, this was the magic of Walt Disney at work? Jane Brown, a past-Chair of ISPE, was also on hand to give insightful details on progressing in the pharmaceutical field. However, I was disappointed that I wasn’t able to talk to her personally and seek her advice for my future endeavours.

Throughout the luncheon, various topics were brought up on the student chapters operations and membership's turnover. I noticed that the various chapters have very active student participants in the committee, taking on key roles to assist operations. These students helped to reach out to the education society and increase their awareness of ISPE. Beside this, the chapters organized various education seminars, workshops and talks which benefit both students and working professionals alike. However, we felt that the workshops should not always focus on the pharmaceutical field but rather more on lifestyle aspects since we are already so engrossed in work. Workshops on time-management, financial-management and even stress-management will be beneficial to everyone on board and add value to the membership.



**Picture of our fellow student representatives for the poster competition**

The highlight of the trip was definitely the Student Poster Competition on the following day. A total of 16 posters were set up with 10 in the undergraduate category and 6 in the graduate category. The level of research that was put into every individual poster was incredible and we got to exchange some pointers, learning a great deal in the process. During the torturous wait for our turn, we managed to lower the tension by sharing about our culture and lifestyle in different countries, making the judging session more comfortable. After the judging session, our group of students decided to head down to Downtown Disney for a dinner and a stroll, which added a magical touch to an already eventful day!



The last day of the Annual meeting was activity-laden, with an ISPE membership luncheon and a Tuesday Night Casino-Theme Party and plenty of networking opportunities being lined up. At the membership luncheon, we witnessed the handing over of leadership duties from the current committee members to the incoming batch for the year 2011. And most importantly, the results for the student poster competition were announced. The winner for the undergraduate category went to Rosemary Garofalo from the New Jersey chapter, while the graduate category went to Sheba Goklany from the Boston chapter. Although I was disappointed that I did not win, I was content with my presentation and the

experiences gained during the whole event. After the hectic schedule for 3 full days, it was finally time to let our hair down and PARTY! The night party was a massive event held in one of the biggest ball room in the resort. Every individual got a poker card upon entry and was encourage to network with guests in the ballroom. While at it, try to make a poker hand and win raffle tickets for the raffle draw. Beside these, we also got to try our hands on casino games for free!

Overall, this has been a very fruitful trip. I got to learn a great deal from attending talks and seminars held by various experienced figures. I was educated that the road to success is not a straight line, but rather it depends on the paths you choose to take. Good leadership and coordination will aid in ones progression as well as progression in the industry. So take a step back to rethink, retool and move forward. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Fiona for coordinating the trip and helping me during difficult times. Lastly, thank you ISPE (Singapore Affiliate) for giving me this opportunity and everyone that made this possible!



**Picture of me and Buzz Lightyear: Up, Up and Away!!**