

To the Jan R. Cloyde Foundation,

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for your generous sponsorship, which made it possible for me to attend the *Steroids and Nervous System* conference this year. This opportunity was invaluable for my development as a researcher and for advancing my doctoral project.

The meeting brought together leading scientists working at the intersection of hormonal regulation, cardiovascular physiology, and circadian biology. These fields align closely with the research conducted in our lab. Attending lectures and engaging with experts provided new perspectives and helped me position my dissertation work within the broader context of neuroendocrine signaling both in the hypothalamus and throughout the periphery, and the importance of retaining a clear understanding and focus on the independent and cooperative effects of the brain and body. I also had the opportunity to speak directly with Marija Kornakovich, Claudia Barth, and several other investigators whose feedback was particularly insightful for integrating computational methods to my data analysis.

At the conference, I co-presented a poster on a project investigating *reprimo*, a sexually dimorphic gene expressed more robustly in the hypothalamus of female mice. The feedback I received from senior researchers has already shaped the next phase of my work, helping refine my analytical approach and experimental design. It also strengthened my ability to communicate my research to audiences outside my immediate field. Several discussions sparked unexpected connections, such as the potential relevance of this project to energy metabolism and brown adipose tissue function, beyond the stress and temperature phenotypes we described. These perspectives are valuable not only for guiding future experiments but also for anticipating reviewer feedback when preparing a manuscript.

Beyond the scientific exchange, this experience allowed me to build professional relationships that will continue to influence my career. I am deeply grateful to the foundation for supporting emerging scientists and for making opportunities like this possible. Many scientists expressed interest in future collaborations, which will enrich both my dissertation and my long-term career trajectory.

Traveling with my PI and lab members also strengthened our team's cohesion and mentorship. The experience fostered thoughtful discussion about our research approaches and provided meaningful guidance on how to engage productively with other professionals in the field.

Altogether, attending this conference was an exceptional and formative experience that profoundly enriched my understanding of science and my place within the research community. I am sincerely thankful for the support in making this possible.

With appreciation,

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