

March 10, 2026

Dear Jan R. Cloyde Legacy Award Selection Committee,

I want to first thank the organizers and donors for their support in offering trainees the opportunity to present their work at renowned conferences, helping us advance our science and future careers. This award made it possible for me to attend the Steroids and the Nervous System meeting in Turin, Italy.

As my first international conference, I had the opportunity to expand my network and meet leaders in the field of women's health who are conducting innovative work across the globe, allowing me to connect with professors from Italy, Canada, India, etc. Presenting a poster on my dissertation work to such a diverse audience was a truly transformative experience. I learned how to effectively break down complex topics into synthesized insights that could be understood by a general audience. I learned about innovative techniques and established the possibility for future collaborations. Ultimately, I gained new perspectives on how to address and tackle challenging scientific questions and received valuable feedback to help me as I prepare my first first-author manuscripts for publication.

Additionally, this conference allowed me to connect with fellow trainees from diverse academic and cultural backgrounds and learn about the cutting-edge work they are doing to transform the scientific landscape. From thoughtful conversations regarding our scientific endeavors to sharing the experiences of career development, this allowed us to form connections that will undoubtedly offer support and guidance as we progress in our careers. Learning about science programs offered across Europe also exposed me to various career opportunities available after completing the PhD.

Furthermore, I attended this conference with two other lab mates. From helping each other navigate the often-intimidating process of networking to sharing notes and talking about our favorite talks, this experience helped us develop as individual scientists while simultaneously strengthening a cooperative and collaborative relationship within the lab.

The experiences highlighted here would not have been possible without the support of the Jan R. Cloyde Legacy Award, and I will be eternally grateful for the opportunity to attend my first international conference. From the feedback I received, the network I established, and the connections I strengthened, attending this conference will undoubtedly help me advance my science as I prepare to defend my dissertation and embark on the next steps towards a career where I can merge my expertise at the intersection of science and technology to advance women's health.

Sincerely,

Norma Sandoval