

2016 KWiSE NIH-DC Joint Symposium

On June 18th, 2016, the KWiSE-NIH and DC Chapter held a joint Symposium in the NIH/NIAAA conference room at Rockville, MD. 62 participants and 10 family members attended the event on the beautiful summer day. The program ran for a full day from 9:45am to 5pm, starting with a welcoming remark by Dr. Hee-Yong Kim (Chief, Laboratory of Molecular Signaling, NIAAA/NIH).

The keynote speaker, Dr. Veronica A. Alvarez (Principal Investigator, NIAAA/NIH) delivered an inspirational talk titled “*My personal journey from postdoc to Principal Investigator in the United State*”, in which she presented exciting research activities at her lab and shared her personal adventure as a women scientist. In her talk, she



emphasized the importance of finding one’s own unique path to reach lifetime career goals and having good role models to achieve the goals.



In the following two scientific sessions (chairs: Drs. Hey-kyoung Lee, Johns Hopkins Univ. and Heekyong Bae, NCI/NIH), ten women scientists from NIH and other DC area research institutes (Johns Hopkins University, The Catholic University of America, and Georgetown University) gave brief presentations on their research. Scientists from different stages in their career (a PhD student, postdoctoral fellows, and independent researchers) participated, and the talks covered diverse topics including basic biology, disease studies, environmental contamination and building energy efficiency.





The panel discussion session was particularly popular and informative. In the beginning, Dr. Chuck Niebylski, Patent Attorney and Director at NIDDK Technology Advancement Office gave a talk on “*The Career Path to Patent Officer*”. In the talk, he shared his experiences in his transition from a postdoc fellow to a patent attorney at a private law firm, and to a patent officer at NIH. In the following panel Q & A session, we had four panelists with different careers - Dr. Eun Ah Cho (Chief, NIH/NCI/DEA/Special Review Branch), Dr. Alex KH Chung (Patent Attorney, Associate at Finnegan LLP), Dr. Yoonhee Kim (Director of Bioinformatics at Macrogen Clinical Laboratory), Dr. Chuck Niebylski (Patent Attorney, Director at NIDDK Technology Advancement Office). Moderated by Drs. Kyong-Rim Kieffer-Kwon and Sohyoung Kim (NCI/NIH), participants had a lively discussion on possible career paths in biotech, patent practice and government sector.



The day was concluded with a brief announcement about the mentoring program and an informal networking session. Overall, the 2016 KWiSE NIH-DC joint symposium provided women researchers in the greater DC area with excellent opportunities for sharing career information and advices, exchanging research ideas, and networking with each other.



Contributed by Yoo-Ah Kim (NCBI/NLM/NIH)

ID, KWiSE 6th Administration