

AQUACULTURE 2019: AUBURN STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Annual conferences provide opportunities for students to learn from leaders in their field, interact with industry professionals and present original research. Based on attendance at World Aquaculture 2019, two undergraduate and one graduate student from Auburn University share their perspectives about the conference here. Two undergraduate students were able to relate the research methods learned in a classroom setting to real-world aquaculture applications and found



LEFT TO RIGHT: *Riley Buley, Catie Adams and Brynne Garner.*

attending presentations as a means to better understand what is required to present original research on an international level, while a graduate student was able to present their research to leaders in the field and interact with industry professionals to develop new avenues of research and enhance their professional network. All three students found the annual meeting to be a beneficial experience in their professional development and strongly encourage other students to attend future meetings.

It was a distinct pleasure for me to have students from my limnology class at Auburn University join me in attending Aquaculture 2019 in New Orleans. Any opportunity that could be potentially enriching for my students professionally is welcome and the conference proved to be a perfect learning environment. The diversity of lectures, in which a newcomer could be exposed to numerous topics within a single session or spend a whole day going in-depth on a single topic was quite special.

— *Alan Wilson, Associate Professor, School of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences, Auburn University*

The WAS conference was an eye-opening experience for us, having never attended a national conference, and greatly exceeded expectations. Being given the opportunity to select the oral presentations to attend based on each of our specific interests allowed us to broaden our range of knowledge. Moreover, attending oral and poster presentations made the prospect of presenting our own future research less daunting. In addition to helping quell the intimidation that accompanies presenting at an international conference, WAS helped open our minds to the range of possible niches within the diverse fields of aquaculture. A wide spectrum of presenters and

vendors at the conference revealed numerous career paths. The WAS annual conference provided a rare opportunity for us as undergraduate students to be a small part of a worldwide event that brings together so many different researchers to share their novel ideas. This opportunity allowed us to explore career paths within aquaculture, watch research projects presented

in a professional way and connect with professionals from diverse fields. These experiences will be of benefit to us in the future. Every research professional and vendor that we encountered was genuinely interested in our WAS conference attendance and all welcomed us with open arms. The sense of community we felt with those in attendance, considering the massive scale of the conference, was surprising and encouraging to both of us.

— *Brynne Garner (Junior) and Catie Adams (Senior)*

Attending an international conference as a graduate student offers an opportunity to learn from leaders in the field, interact with industry professionals and present original research. The WAS annual conference provided a venue to accomplish these goals within a few short days. The research presented at the conference showed where the aquaculture industry is today and where it will be in the future. Moreover, it showed me areas where I could apply myself as a developing researcher to help put forward solutions to the industry's most pressing issues. The engagement of industry professionals with researchers at the conference was also notable, as many industry leaders expressed interest in my research and provided a connection for further research ideas that would be of mutual benefit. These combined factors made my attendance to the conference very worthwhile. The enthusiasm of the industry representatives at the trade show cannot be understated. They had a genuine interest in the harmful algal bloom and water quality research that the Wilson lab at Auburn University conducts and provided contact information that may be of interest to me, independent of the company they represented.

— *Riley Buley (Second-year Ph.D. student)*