

Evidence of Learning #7

Date: April 13, 2017

Subject: Astrobiology

Analysis:

After two days of research, I went to the Lunar Planetary Science Conference with my mentor and her colleagues. It was a very important experience because LPSC is the largest conference for planetary science. Scientists from all over the world came to this meeting to share their research with others.

The first thing we did when we got to the conference was network with other professionals. I got the huge opportunity to meet Dr. Everett Gibson, who worked with my mentor on the Allan Hills Meteorite. In addition to that, he is known worldwide for his work in astrobiology. During lunch, he told me about the whole Allan Hills discovery, his experience in Antarctica, and also his NASA career. He told me that he started working for NASA when Apollo 11 splashed down. That just blew my mind away. I couldn't believe that I got to speak with a living legend. In addition to Dr. Gibson, I got to meet Dr. George Flynn and Dr. Brownley. These individuals are highly respected in their field. To be more specific, there is a particle named after Dr. Brownley because he was the first person to discover it (Brownley Particle). I also got to meet a professor from Brown University. He talked about his work and also asked me about my experience with ISM and NASA. He was really impressed and told me that I should consider Brown as a place where I could study biochemistry. It was really great talking to people like this because it gave me a good feel to the type of people I will be working with when I become an astrobiologist.

After networking, I attended the exobiology talks with my mentor. Scientists from Japan, France, Germany, and the United States all came to present their research. Each of them were given exactly twelve minutes to talk and six minutes for questions and answers. Some were great presentations and some could have had more preparation. In the exobiology session, individuals talked about particle collections, lava tubes, extremophiles, early earth, and prototypes for DNA sequencing. It was really interesting and mindblowing of what these scientists found. Another thing I noticed is that during the Q and A, other astrobiologists will criticize any minor flaws they found during the presentation. For example, one of the scientists said that Mn is one of the main elements that indicates signs of life. A German scientist demanded for multiple evidences to support that claim. So, you have to be prepared everything. I am personally glad that I am in ISM because Mr. Wysong teaches us some really good tips for public speaking. After seeing these presentations, I feel like I have a head start.

Once we finished watching the exobiology session, we went to poster board session. It was just like research showcase. Again, scientists from all over the world were answering questions about their research. I definitely learned a lot from that time. My mentor and I also met a couple of individuals that go to Antarctica to collect our wonderful meteorite samples. I found it very interesting about what they do. The LPSC Conference was a great experience. I got to meet famous scientists and also saw the different perspectives people have on the biology of Mars.

