

## **Antarctic Science Bursary Award 2007 - Report**

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*International Symposium of Antarctic Earth Sciences (ISAES X)*

*University of California, Santa Barbara. U.S.A.*

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The Antarctic Science Bursary supported my attendance at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Symposium of Antarctic Earth Sciences (ISAES X), held at the end of August 2007 in California. To make comparisons with the film industry (in an appropriate Hollywood style!), the International Symposium on Antarctic Earth Sciences has to be a blockbuster, with the tag line: “Antarctica: A Keystone in a changing World”. Falling at the start of the International Polar Year (IPY 2007-2008), there was real focus and enthusiasm on the importance of Antarctica in the global context. Held every 4 years, and hosted this year by the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), the conference was attended by a high number of delegates (over 400 scientists from 35 countries) and proved to be a must for a budding Antarctic scientist like me! Thanks very much to the Antarctic Science Bursary for supporting my attendance.

ISAES X covered an enormous breadth of topics, ranging from supercontinent reconstructions to surface geomorphology, from seismic interpretation of marine strata to drilling such sediments, and from climatic records revealed through ice cores to geophysical surveys that enable the continent below the ice sheets to be mapped. I found the varied programme of talks and poster sessions very educational. I met a number of leading international scientists and enjoyed discussions both about their work and my own PhD project. Of particular interest to me were the themes of: “Antarctica, the Southern Ocean and climate evolution”, with fascinating talks on the ANDRILL and SHALDRIL projects; “Holocene to modern Antarctic environments and global change”; and “Climate records: Ice cores and Quaternary geological records”, with several talks under these themes utilising marine palaeontological methods (comparable with my PhD project).

With respect to my own PhD project, the conference proven an excellent and relaxed forum to present my research to the appropriate international scientific community. I presented a poster outlining my research results – a high-resolution reconstruction of Holocene climate along the Antarctic Peninsula using fossil diatom assemblages, and contributed a short paper to the proceedings volume.

Finally, the UCSB campus, set round a lagoon and bordered by beaches on two sides, was a stunning location for the conference. The morning stroll across to the conference rooms was particularly pleasant and the evening walk back to the accommodation turned into a bit of a wildlife safari (families of racoons, skunks and squirrels to spot)!

In summary, I found participation in this conference highly valuable and relevant for my PhD project, both to learn from and make contacts with leading international scientists and to present my own research outcomes to the Antarctic Earth Science community. Falling at the start of my final year, this conference has really focused and aided the solidification of my data interpretations. Thank you again for the funding to attend this conference as it has been educational, inspiring and the most important international forum to present my research during the span of my PhD.