

SciFinder® Future Leaders in Chemistry

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In September 2013, the 15 chemistry PhD students and postdoctoral scientists from 13 countries involved in the *SciFinder® Future Leaders in Chemistry (FLIC)* programme came together to “help shape the future of chemical information”. As the NZ representative I had a very enjoyable 10 days of the latest science, fruitful teamwork, and exclusive meetings with senior staff of the Chemical Abstract Service (CAS), and their great US hospitality.

The SciFinder® FLIC provided a wonderful, compact programme which included full expenses, all transportation, US\$1,000 cash per person, and attendance at the ACS Fall Meeting & Exposition in Indianapolis as well as the CAS Campus in Columbus, Ohio. Starting with a stroll through the Indianapolis Zoo to whisk away jet-lag and break the ice between the 15 of us, the programme was crowned by two days at the CAS Campus where we found out just how the information goes in the SciFinder® database and the efforts made that keep it one of the best databases for chemists, biologists, and material scientists. Here, we worked in small groups to identify where SciFinder® has potential for advancement and the developments we, end-users, wish for. My personal highlights were a visit to the impressive server room and the workshops with Product Development on the latest SciFinder® prototype.

The ACS Fall Meeting attracted 10,000. Here, I spoke about my VUW/MacDiarmid Institute research on nano-gold as a value-adding colorant for NZ wool fibres and spent three stimulating days learning of the latest colloid research, networking at poster sessions, workshops, and attending a hilarious Alton Brown show about science in cooking.

One of our excursions was to the headquarters of the Battelle Memorial Institute that performs contract research for industry and governments and is the world's largest non-profit research and development organization. Another excursion took us to the business incubator TechColumbus that hosts many small start-up companies which share facilities to decrease fixed costs; collaboration and shared knowledge is encouraged. Imagine, nanofibres are made in your 4 x 4 m² clean room facility while next door a designer revolutionises the fashion world!

I gained a new level of understanding SciFinder®, exposure to the latest research in my field, and new friends/colleagues from Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Israel, Japan, Poland, South Africa, the Netherlands, the US and

UK. Dr. Peter Carlton and Sherri Syfers, the FLIC programme coordinators, were excellent hosts and did an outstanding job in selecting an awesome group of young researchers. I was privileged to represent NZ and become a SciFinder® FLIC.

NOTE: Applications for SciFinder® FLIC 2014 in San Francisco open soon.



Dr Thomas Faust (Sydney) and Andrea Kolb (VUW)



CAS workshop with Michael W. Dennis (Vice-President); bound volumes of Chemical Abstracts are around the walls