



19th May 2008

Burly Cumberland
PhD Student

The Research Student Conference Fund
The Institute of Physics
76 Portland Place
London
W1B 1NT

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to thank the research student conference fund for their support in helping me attend the Conference on Lasers and Electro-Optics (CLEO) 2008 in San Jose in May of this year. I am writing this letter to highlight some of the great experiences that your support enabled.

At the conference I presented two technical papers. Both papers were well received and several stimulating questions were raised which lead to fruitful conversations with fellow researchers and a potential collaboration on some future work. These interactions with fellow researchers have helped me to think about aspects of my research which I had perhaps not fully considered until now. This sort of interaction is invaluable as the laboratory can be an insular place often leading to more linear research progression.

The ability to attend such large international conference clearly allows you to see what work is currently being undertaken by leading researchers in the field along with their postgraduate students and post docs. Of particular interest was work done by other fibre based research groups at Bath, Russian Academy, Sydney, Jena, NRL and several others. Although I found that this year I was familiar with most of their work through their publications it was nice to hear what progress had been made since their last publication. The most useful aspect was being able to put names to faces and then finding people of interest and having a chat with them at a coffee break or joining them for lunch/dinner. Through the exhibit at the conference, I was able to discuss technical issues with some of our lab equipment with several manufactures and also find suppliers and get specifications for new equipment that we are interested in acquiring over the next 6 months. Finally I was able to discuss and pass my CV around several potential employers who were there. Now that I'm coming to the end of my PhD and wish to continue in the field of laser physics attending such a conference was a great aid in finding a job. All these experiences also resulted in a great sense of belonging to a much larger international research based community.

In conclusion, the opportunity to attend and present work at CLEO 2008, made possible with the assistance of your grant, has re-invigorated my enthusiasm to work in this field. Several in depth conversations with notable professors improved my understanding of the underling physics and the professional/social interactions have made me feel part of a much broader international research community. Thank you very much for your support.

Yours sincerely,
Burly Cumberland.