



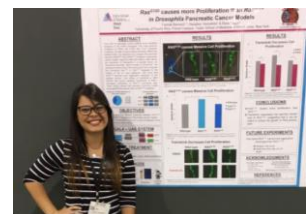
UPR-PRISE EARNS 3 AWARDS AT ABRCMS 2017

The Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) is one of the largest professional conferences for underrepresented minority students interested in pursuing advanced training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). It is organized by the American Society for Microbiology and funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences of the National Institutes of Health. Held in Phoenix, Arizona on November 1 – 4, 2017, this year's meeting brought together 4,400 attendees comprising undergraduate, post-baccalaureate and graduate students as well as postdoctoral scientists, faculty, program directors and administrators.

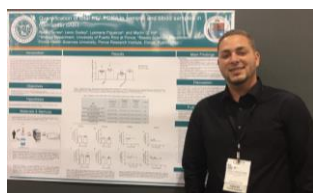
During the four-day conference, attendees participated in an exciting program including prominent keynote speakers, plenaries, networking gatherings, and numerous professional development and scientific sessions on a variety of topics. The exhibit area was packed with over 700 representatives from US colleges and universities as well as scientists from government agencies, foundations, and professional scientific societies sharing information about graduate school, summer internship and research opportunities, funding sources, and professional networks. Approximately 2,200 students from over 350 universities and colleges of the U.S. and its territories participated in poster and oral presentations in twelve STEM disciplines. All undergraduate student presentations were evaluated and those earning the highest scores in each scientific discipline and educational level were given an award.

Despite the many trials faced during this challenging year, our students were able to present 18 research projects in a variety of scientific disciplines ranging from microbiology and genetics to neuroscience and physiology. Our delegation was overwhelmed with pride and excitement when the **University of Puerto Rico in Ponce** was called to the grand stage three times thanks to the exceptional presentations of our students Faviola Bernard Vazquez, Eric Rodriguez Lopez and Rafael Torres-Strubbe.

Senior PRISE student Faviola Bernard-Vazquez won best poster presentation in the discipline of cancer biology for her research "*RasG12D cause more proliferation than RasG12V in Drosophila Pancreatic Cancer Models*", which was conducted during the summer at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai New York.



Junior PRISE student Eric Rodriguez-Lopez won best oral presentation in the immunology and microbiology section for his work "*Characterization of s1289 in Biofilm Formation and Infection in S. flexneri*", which was conducted during the summer at the University of Virginia.



Senior biology student Rafael Torres-Strubbe won best poster presentation in the microbiology discipline for his research "*Quantification of total HIV-1 DNA in seminal and blood samples in men under cART*", which was conducted at the Ponce Health Sciences University. Rafael also received an ABRCMS Travel Award to attend the meeting.

UPR-PRISE acknowledges the dedication, commitment and professionalism of its students and is extremely proud of each participant and presenter. We are fortunate to be part of their professional and scientific development and look forward to seeing many great accomplishments from them in the future!

