I would like to take the opportunity to thank the ACS Pittsburgh Section for enabling me to attend the 250th ACS National Meeting and Exposition held in Boston, Massachusetts. My primary goal was to present some really exciting findings from my research project, but I took advantage of my time there to listen to seminars, attend workshops, visit the employment expo, explore Boston for the first time and re-connect with old colleagues. I had such a wonderful time there, and it would not have been possible without the student travel grant that you so generously provided.

Much of my time at the ACS meeting was spent listening to seminars given by speakers from the polymer and organic divisions. I presented at two national ACS meetings as an undergraduate researcher, but my years in graduate school have certainly given me a much greater appreciation for the amazing science that was showcased. Personal highlights included the plenary lecture by Paula Hammond on multilayered polymer surfaces tailored for drug release, the surprisingly philosophical Fred Kavli lecture given by George Whitesides, and several engaging lectures on expanding the scope of olefin metathesis and starting a small business by Nobel Laureate Bob Grubbs.

Some of the most rewarding moments from the trip took place while I presented my work “Sequenced copolymers with controlled molecular weight prepared via entropy-driven ring-opening metathesis polymerization” at both the Polymeric Materials: Science and Engineering (PMSE) Division poster session and the Sci-Mix poster session. During these sessions, I was able to share my enthusiasm for my research findings with scientists of all backgrounds and levels of experience – including a few of my personal science “heroes.” For my efforts, I was awarded as a distinguished poster nominee for the PMSE Division.

In addition to research seminars and poster sessions, I also spent a great deal of time in the ACS-sponsored networking sessions, interviewing with potential employers at the career expo and attending career development workshops. These experiences were incredibly valuable and excitingly allowed me to secure employment several months later. Because it was my first time in Boston, I made good use of my free time by exploring as much of the city as I could fit into my short stay. Such quantities of delicious food were consumed that medical professionals might be concerned. The history geek in me was thrilled to walk along the historic Freedom Trail, a wandering path through the downtown area that passes sites such as Boston Common, Paul Revere’s house, and the site of the Boston Massacre. I was also able to go on a Harpoon Brewery tour, serendipitously acquire Red Sox tickets for seats behind home plate, and visit the incredibly fantastic Science of Pixar exhibit at the Museum of Science.

Overall, I had a wonderful time at the ACS meeting, and am incredibly grateful to the ACS Pittsburgh Section for making it all possible.