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The 254th American Chemical Society National Meeting and Exposition in Washington D.C. provided an opportunity that allowed for both personal and professional growth. During my stay in D.C., I was able to see a number of national and historic monuments including the National Mall, Holocaust Museum and Memorial, National Air and Space Museum, National Gallery, and Arlington Cemetery.

After the exploration around the city, I was lucky enough to spend several hours exploring the Exposition prior to my poster session. The time at the Exposition proved to be extremely informative by providing exposure to state-of-the-art analytical instruments and many novel synthetic techniques. I was able to get a sense of the vast expanse of research topics. In addition, since my research focused on lead(II) and copper(II) ion concentrations in drinking water, I made a point of examining other posters that also dealt with water analysis and remediation

Near the end of my poster session, I was approached and handed an envelope that contained an award for my poster: "Certificate of Appreciation" for "outstanding material content." Included with this award was an invitation to an Environmental Division reception. I also had the opportunity to attend the Analytical Division reception, where I was introduced to Dr. Karl Booksh from the University of Delaware – my current top graduate school choice. In our discussion, I spoke with him about his research and lab and learned he is very interested in accepting new graduate students. The chance to network with a professor whose research interest aligns with my interests will assist in my professional development.

To summarize, my time spent in Washington D.C. provided a stellar experience that allowed me to learn about a wide breadth of topics both chemistry and non-chemistry related, including American history, art, astrophysics, the United States Military, and international history. The ACS National Meeting and Exposition provided the chance for professional growth through award ceremonies, presentations, and networking opportunities. All in all, I think my time in Washington D.C. has made me both a better chemist and person. I would additionally like to thank the Pittsburgh Section of the ACS for the Travel Grant which provided this unique opportunity.

