BE Has High Impact on the Institute of Biological Engineering at 2019 Annual Conference

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April 9, 2019 — Student and faculty (15 total) participated in the international Institute of Biological Engineering (IBE) Annual Conference in St. Louis, MO, April 4-7. BE students Jake Accordino (junior) and Kyle Hillman (M.S. graduate student) received two of the four awards for the poster competition event. Jake Accordino, president of the BE/USU IBE Club, received the 1st place award, undergraduate category, for his presentation titled "Analysis of Productivity and Characterization of Microalgae Grown on Bioreactor for Wastewater Remediation." Kyle Hillman received the 2nd place award, graduate category, for his presentation titled "Struvite Formation Influenced by Microalgae Biofilms."

Andrew J Walters arranged a tour of the Bayer-Monsanto Facility in St. Louis, MO the Conference participants. There were individuals in attendance ranging from undergraduates to professors. AJ also gave a platform presentation during the "Engineering Education" session of the conference titled "Development of Synthetic Biology Kits for STEM Education." During the awards banquet, AJ was recognized for his exemplary service this last year as the IBE national undergraduate counselor.

Dylan Ellis was recognized as the newly elected, IBE international undergraduate counselor. As part of that position, he attended the IBE Council leadership meetings that took place over the course of the conference. In addition, Dylan presented a poster during the student poster session of the conference titled "Production of Bioproducts from Waste Nutrients."

Nathan Guymon was recognized as the newly elected IBE international graduate counselor. Nathan also attended the IBE Council leadership meetings. Nathan also presented a poster during the student poster session titled "Wastewater Remediation of Anaerobic Digester Effluent by a Rotating Algal Biofilm Reactor."

BE/USU is proud to announce that the youngest presenter at the conference was Gary Zhan, Logan High School student and son of BE professor Jixun Zhan. Gary's platform presentation was titled "Enhanced production of indigoidine using a cold-shock inducible promoter" that was part of the Metabolic Engineering session.

The BE Department sponsored a student social at a local pizza shop as a way to facilitate interactions among students attending the conference from across the U.S., Spain, and Mexico and to introduce the BE/USU Chapter. Jake also gave a brief presentation to conference attendees at the awards banquet on the success of the IBE USU chapter in order to promote activity among local chapters at other universities.

In addition to those students identified above, additional BE students and faculty who participated through the platform and posters include: Anna Doloman (PhD), Wei Zhang (PhD), Ozkan Fidan (PhD), Dr. Elizabeth Vargis, Dr. Ron Sims (former IBE President), and Dr. Anhong Zhou. he new BE/USU Department Head, Dr. Keith Roper, was elected as the next President of IBE. He currently serves as IBE President-Elect for 2019, then as President for 2020, then as Past-President for 2021.

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