



### **Robyn Miranda**

The International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) presented Student Travel Scholarships to individuals at IAFP 2018, July 8–11, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Sponsored by the IAFP Foundation, the Student Travel Scholarships provide travel funds to enable selected students to travel to and participate in IAFP 2018. Robyn Miranda, doctoral candidate in the [School of Graduate Studies](#)' Food Science graduate program, was one of 20 domestic and international students who received the award.

Miranda's doctoral research focuses on the development of a quantitative microbial risk assessment to predict the transmission of Norovirus in frozen berries. In addition, she is conducting research on developing an agent-based model to simulate ill food workers in the field during harvesting and how on-farm contamination can result in an outbreak, considering various scenarios. Outside of her doctoral work, Miranda is conducting a risk assessment of *V. parahaemolyticus* in shellfish from New Jersey waters. After graduation, she plans to be a risk modeler or biostatistician for a government agency or for a non-profit organization.

Miranda shared her thoughts on winning the award and attending IAFP 2018:

"It was an honor to have received the IAFP Student Travel Scholarship to attend IAFP 2018 in Salt Lake City. Attending this meeting four years in a row allowed me to continue to expand my knowledge on food safety topics, network with professionals and fellow students in the field and gain a better understanding of my goals for my future in food safety. IAFP is truly the go-to meeting for food safety professionals to be exposed to the latest food safety research.

One of the highlights of the annual meeting was the Ivan Parkin Lecture, "Where do you put your chopsticks?" by Dr. Gary Acuff. He spoke of the importance of food safety professionals helping those in the next generation find their way. A large part of his talk focused on his food safety heroes, making me reflect on how lucky I am to be surrounded by so many wonderfully inspiring mentors I have met through attending IAFP.

I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Don Schaffner of Rutgers University for introducing me to the world of food safety, and Dr. Deann Akins-Lewenthal of Conagra, for being such a supportive mentor whom I met through the Mentor Program for the Student Travel Scholarship. I aspire to be as knowledgeable, confident and approachable as the two of them, while sharing my enthusiasm for food safety with everyone I meet.

The meeting was filled with hundreds of symposia and presentations on a variety of food safety research topics, making it difficult to choose which to attend. The presentation that had the largest impact on what I took away from IAFP was by Dr. Frank Yiannas, Walmart's Food Safety and Health Vice President. He made us see how important food safety culture is, as well as the integration of blockchain into the food supply chain to create a safer, more transparent food system. Most importantly, blockchain has the ability to increase trust and transparency to the end user through shared processes and record-keeping.

One of the highlights of my participation at this conference was sharing my Ph.D. research through a poster presentation. I was able to share my research with others and received very useful feedback from virologists working with similar organisms.

I am grateful for the opportunity to attend IAFP 2018 through the generosity of the IAFP Foundation and continually thankful for the support of the entire IAFP community. Thank you for the wonderful experience and I look forward to attending IAFP 2019 in Louisville, Kentucky!"



L-R: IAFP 2018 President Mickey Parish, IAFP Foundation Committee Chair Vickie Lewandowski, and Robyn Miranda.