

## MYCOLOGISTS KNOW HOW TO HAVE FUN (EVEN AT MEETINGS)

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On the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, a lone South African arrived at the 2016 meeting of the Mycological Society of America (MSA). The MSA meet annually at exciting locations across North America and this year was no different: the University of California (UC), Berkeley! Despite the society's name, numerous international researchers belong to the MSA, something I quickly discovered when I met another South African in the lunch line.



The purpose of the MSA is to advance research in a diverse range of fungal-related topics. As such the meeting not only had great keynote speakers and symposia, but also numerous student oral and poster presentations. Several events were also scheduled to facilitate student interaction and

the interaction of students with noted mycologists.



The theme of MSA 2016 was “Sequencing the environment” and a range of talks about community studies, genomics and systematics of fungi were presented. Although in a different hemisphere and on the other side of the globe,

the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI) was represented by both an oral presentation (given by me) and a poster (presented by Alison Harrington from the Watson Foundation in New York).

The MSA 2016 meeting was more than four days of listening, learning and interacting. Halfway during the second poster session (and every one thereafter), musical instruments appeared and group of prominent academics began playing tunes. Let no one say that mycologists don't

know how to have fun! This summarised the attitude in the San Francisco Bay Area: informal and fun, but hard working.

