



Sowing the seeds of science

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George Washington Carver, a pioneering American scientist once said, "How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these." Often in our drive to build a Scientific Career, we all too often forget the importance of Carvers message.

On Tuesday May 17th, I, like a seed being carried on a tradewind of yesteryear, landed on the fertile shores of Bahia, Brazil, near the small town of Olivença. Soon after landing, my radicle formed and I began to germinate. After spending the first night sleeping on the beach, I realized that I was in for a treat. I had not only landed in an environment completely tolerant of all forms of diversity but one that not only sought to provide sustenance but also strived to engage with individuals of all walks of life.

The next day the meeting started, and I watched as others arrived also undergoing the same transformation from seed to seedling to plant. Within a day the small resort had been transformed into a Scientific Jungle with a rare diversity of cultures, minds and souls. While there were many highlights, I decided to describe a few of the situations that I experienced.

During the first day of the posters I traveled from poster to poster listening to the new generation of "Scientific Seeds" begin their new lives. I watched as undergraduate, masters students, doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, and young professors stood in front of their work eagerly waiting for someone to engage in their experiments. I was luck enough to watch as the eyes of a young Professor Larissa Andrade Vieira light up with joy as she presented

her plans to identify new lead compounds that target unique stages in the mitotic cycle of plants.

I was also able to engage in a warm conversation over breakfast with Prof. Thales Lima Rocha outlining some creative new approaches to target the remediation of a number of plant nematode. Again, the energy from this discussion was so engaging that I actually forgot that my legs were itching due to the barrage of mosquito bites obtained from my first night on the beach.

... and then there was Andre Mauricio Caraballi Rodriguez from the Pupo laboratory at the University of Sao Paulo. Andre caught me as I was leaving the poster talk session and was interested in my views as to how natural products translate into patents. After providing a brief answer I told Andre that I would meet him at the posters session to provide a clear example of how to approach patent considerations. After a brief walk around, we found a poster with a structure that due to its novelty and relation to commercial alkaloids may be of use if patented. Over the next hour, an energetic discussion followed unveiling some of the key considerations over the optimal patent landscape for that poster.

Finally, I met many new friends and revived some dear older friendships. I now leave the Simpósio Brasileiro de Farmacognosia, as my time for harvest has come. As a seed who has grown not only to feel part of the Sociedade Brasileira de Farmacognosia, I now feel that my time on the shores of Olivenca will not have an end but rather provide a beginning for a energetic new era of scientific thought and action. As you read, I strongly recommend that you not only attend this meeting but also take a few spare moments and apply your unique skills to join and help support the Sociedade Brasileira de Farmacognosia.

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