Melanie Ng – PhD representative personal statement

Conferences are arguably one of the most important parts of an early career researcher's (ECR) journey. However, participating in such events and presenting to seasoned researchers can be daunting. PhD students often start the day intending to expand their networks, but end up with the tendency to only stick with people they know and barely meet anyone new in these events.

I am Melanie Ng, a third year PhD student at the University of Nottingham funded by the MRC Advanced Interdisciplinary Models DTP. I want to take on the role of PhD representative to empower ECRs at BALR meetings, expanding the conference experience beyond simply "gaining exposure" and being an "opportunity to present" through advocating for their wants and needs.

Working at the intersection of respiratory medicine, mathematics and computer vision has allowed me to practice bridging interdisciplinary communication gaps. I believe this skill will be translatable to facilitating communication between the BALR organising committee with ECRs, especially in advocating for BIOREME ECRs following the recent merger. Actively participating in mentoring schemes and teaching assistant roles, I listen and am able to synthesise feedback, which I believe will be a valuable skill for me as I take on the role of PhD representative.

I am eager to support BALR behind the scenes through conference planning, grant and abstract evaluations. This role represents an invaluable opportunity to engage deeply with the peer-review process to support my own career development, while allowing me to give back to BALR through dependable support and an ECR voice to the BALR committee.

(257/500 words)