BALR Committee - PhD Student Representative

Eryk Gadomski - Personal statement

As a current BBSRC-funded PhD candidate in Respiratory Virology at the University of Nottingham, I am keen to contribute to the respiratory research community beyond my own project and help ensure that the views and needs of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are represented within BALR. Through my research, public engagement activities and interdisciplinary collaborations, I have developed a strong understanding of both the opportunities and challenges faced by PhD students and other ECRs at the beginning of their careers.

My PhD research investigates epithelial-macrophage crosstalk during SARS-CoV-2 infection using advanced airway models, molecular biology techniques and bioinformatic approaches. Alongside my research, I have actively engaged with the wider respiratory research community through conference presentations, scientific networking events and collaborative initiatives. Most recently, I presented my work at the Respiratory Genomics Conference and participated in the SEED Sandpit programme, where I shared research methodologies and explored new collaborative opportunities across disciplines.

I am particularly passionate about engagement, communication and community building within respiratory research. At the University of Nottingham's Biodiscovery Institute, I helped organise and deliver a patient engagement event funded by Asthma + Lung UK, bringing together respiratory researchers and members of the local Breathe Easy group to discuss research priorities, unmet clinical needs, multimorbidity and the impact of environmental factors on respiratory health. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants reinforced my belief that meaningful engagement between researchers, patients and the public is essential for ensuring that research remains relevant and impactful.

In addition, I have contributed to public engagement initiatives, including Science in the Park at Wollaton Hall, helping to develop activities that increase public understanding of biomedical science and inspire future researchers. I have also supported knowledge exchange activities by providing specialist training in advanced airway cell culture techniques to research scientists from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), demonstrating my commitment to collaboration across academia, government and the wider research sector.

I am motivated to apply for the BALR PhD Student Representative role because it provides an opportunity to advocate for fellow PhD researchers while contributing to activities that support career development across the respiratory community. I would particularly welcome the opportunity to be involved in conference organisation, abstract and grant review processes. While my PhD has provided extensive experience in research, teaching and scientific communication, these remain areas in which I have had limited exposure and would be keen to develop further through active contribution to the BALR committee.

Furthermore, this role would allow me to develop experience within a scientific charity organisation, complementing my background in both academia and industry and providing a broader understanding of the wider research ecosystem and the organisations that help shape and support scientific careers. The combination of respiratory research experience, public and patient involvement activities, scientific communication skills and enthusiasm for supporting others would enable me to make a positive contribution to BALR while helping to ensure that the perspectives of PhD students are effectively represented.