

The event made them a team

Description

One master, one PhD and one postdoc – researchers at different levels but with the same positive experience from the Young Researchers’ program at the 2019 Marcus Wallenberg Prize event in Stockholm, Sweden.

Ilse Ileana Cárdenas Bates, Marguerite Cinq-Mars and David Myja have just participated in a discussion with Gerhard Schickhofer, the 2019 Marcus Wallenberg Prize Laureate, and are now enjoying a cup of tea at the Grand Hôtel in Stockholm, Sweden.

They were all encouraged to apply to the Young Researchers’ Program by Patrice Mangin, director at the Innovations Institute in Ecomaterials, Eco-products, and Ecoenergies (I2E3), Trois-Rivières, Canada.

All of them were very happy to be accepted.

– Coming here is very encouraging. I never thought I would ever experience anything like this, Marguerite Cinq-Mars says.

David Myja agrees:

– It is very fortunate, an amazing opportunity, he says.

Same institute, different focus

They have different research profiles, but they all represent the Innovations institute, located on the campus of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, halfway between Québec and Montreal.

– We don’t work together but we see each other now and then in the building. Going to the same event made us feel like a team, Ilse Ileana Cárdenas Bates says.

In their applications they had described their research and the impact it will have on the forest-based industry and society as a whole.

Ilse Ileana Cárdenas Bates is a PhD student with a focus on the development of a nanofibrous chitosan-cellulose. Last year she did an internship in Stockholm and was happy to return to the Swedish capital to participate in the Marcus Wallenberg Prize event.

David Myja is a post doc, studying applications and semi-industrial scale production of tempo oxidized nanofibers from thermomechanical pulp.

Marguerite Cinq-Mars, a master student, studies microalgae production in industrial wastewater.

Profitable program

Before flying to Sweden they had prepared a poster each for a session at the symposium in honor of the 2019 Laureate.

Marguerite Cinq-Mars likes to express her results in posters and was very pleased when the Laureate Gerhard Schickhofer took interest in her presentation.

– I was very proud to show him my work, she says.

Ilse Ileana Cárdenas Bates was also happy to show her poster to Kaj Rosén, Executive Secretary of the Wallenberg Foundation.

– He does not even work in my field, but he asked very good questions and said that my material has so many applications that you don’t see now, she recalls.

They also had prepared a three-minute presentation for a contest. Ilse Ileana Cárdenas Bates could

use a presentation she made for her master's degree.

– I did the same speech but included little things to catch the attention. Last time I had a mixed audience. Now I was in front of colleagues from my own field, she says.

In short, they were very satisfied with the Young Researcher's program, and they all agree on the high level on both sessions and practical arrangements.

– Professionally I have learned a lot. I got new ideas from other industrial applications that I had not encountered before, Ilse Ileana Cárdenas Bates says.

David Myja agrees. He had an interesting talk to a colleague at Aalto University in Finland, using the same polymer but different methods.

– It opens your mind to hear about applications that you did not think was possible, he says.

Ilse Ileana Cárdenas Bates wishes she could come back.

– Even if you don't have the funding you could pay for yourself, because it's worth it!

Dress code black tie

Marguerite Cinq-Mars tried to learn some Swedish before leaving Canada. She used an app where she picked up sentences like "the woman drinks water".

– It does not really help in real life, but it was interesting to listen to the language, she says.

When planning the trip, they knew they had to dress up for the ceremony, where the Marcus Wallenberg Prize is presented by the King of Sweden.

Black tie as a dress code did not worry Ilse Ileana Cárdenas Bates, already the owner of a full-length gown. Marguerite Cinq-Mars managed to borrow one from a friend. David Myja however had to buy a tuxedo.

– I can use it again for my marriage, he says with a smile.