



Euroleague for Life Sciences Scientific Student Conference 15-16 November 2019

Melissa McMULLAN

Master of Planning Student, Lincoln University, Christchurch, New Zealand

The Euroleague for Life Sciences (ELLS) Scientific Student Conference was held at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Uppsala from the 15th-16th of November 2019. The theme for the Conference was “Managing Broad Environmental Interests for a Sustainable World.” Lincoln University is a partner university to the ELLS network, and three Lincoln University students were invited to take part. Following the selection process, my project, “Protecting productive land and allowing for urban growth: Can we have our carrots and eat them to?”, was selected to give a poster presentation under the subtheme “Solutions for an urban ecosystem”. The other subthemes covered: the future use of natural resources; green entrepreneurship; and, innovations in the food chain. Students from across the ELLS universities presented their research in either oral or poster presentation format. The numerous sessions on at different times meant that there were a range of different topics to listen to at any one time. As a planner I found the work of landscape architects to be particularly interesting, especially where they are considering the impacts of development on amenity. One particular presentation argued that large online stores, such as Amazon, should be required to invest in improving ‘nature’ around their large mega-warehouses to try to limit the impact on amenity. While I did not connect with any other planners, there was still a great deal of value in discussing with other students how they are proposing to manage some of the issues we are facing – particularly with losses

to open spaces occurring due to expanding urban centres and commercial activities.

My presentation at the conference required a 4-5 minute poster pitch, followed by another 5 minutes of questions from the audience. Coming from a system with the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), it proved to be quite a challenge to convey how the RMA hierarchy works in 30 seconds – particularly the relationship from National Policy Statements down to District Plans, but the presentation was received well. Future attendees should be aware that they may be asked very out of left field questions, and no amount of planning can prepare you for some of it.

Overall, the conference was really valuable and an interesting experience. It was interesting to see how the European universities carry out their Masters research, as well as the scope, scale, and funding behind these projects, which create some fascinating work. I could really see the value for Lincoln in being a part of this network of universities. It made me lament that I was at the end of my Masters rather than the start, as I would have loved to have done a semester abroad at one of the ELLS Universities. I would like to thank Lincoln University for their generous travel grant that allowed me to travel to Sweden and finish my Master of Planning on a very cold, but rather wonderful high!