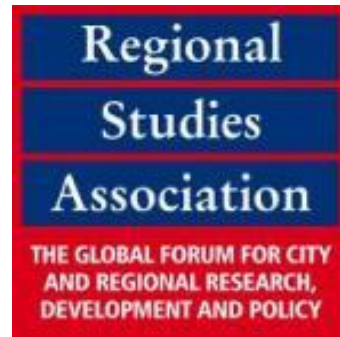




TRAVEL GRANT

EVENT REPORT



FULL NAME	Tian Miao
DATE AND PLACE OF EVENT COVERED BY THE RSA TRAVEL GRANT	April 9 to April 13, 2013 Association of American Geographers' Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, USA
TITLE OF PRESENTATION	An evolutionary view on science parks: industrial structure unlocking in Optics Valley of China, Wuhan
EMAIL ADDRESS	tm65@st-andrews.ac.uk

I. Please write the event report below (300 words minimum)

The Association of American Geographers' Annual Meeting this year was held in the sunny city of Los Angeles, South California. Within five days from 9th to 13th April, over 6,000 splendid activities were put on stage, ranging from presentations, poster shows, workshops, lectures, and field trips. Attendants would always find something that suits their special interests and taste.

For me, a young researcher, going to Los Angeles and being a part of this Academic Festival would never have happened if without the generous support of RSA's travel grant, which covered the bulk of my flight cost. Three benefits of attending this conference are particularly noteworthy.

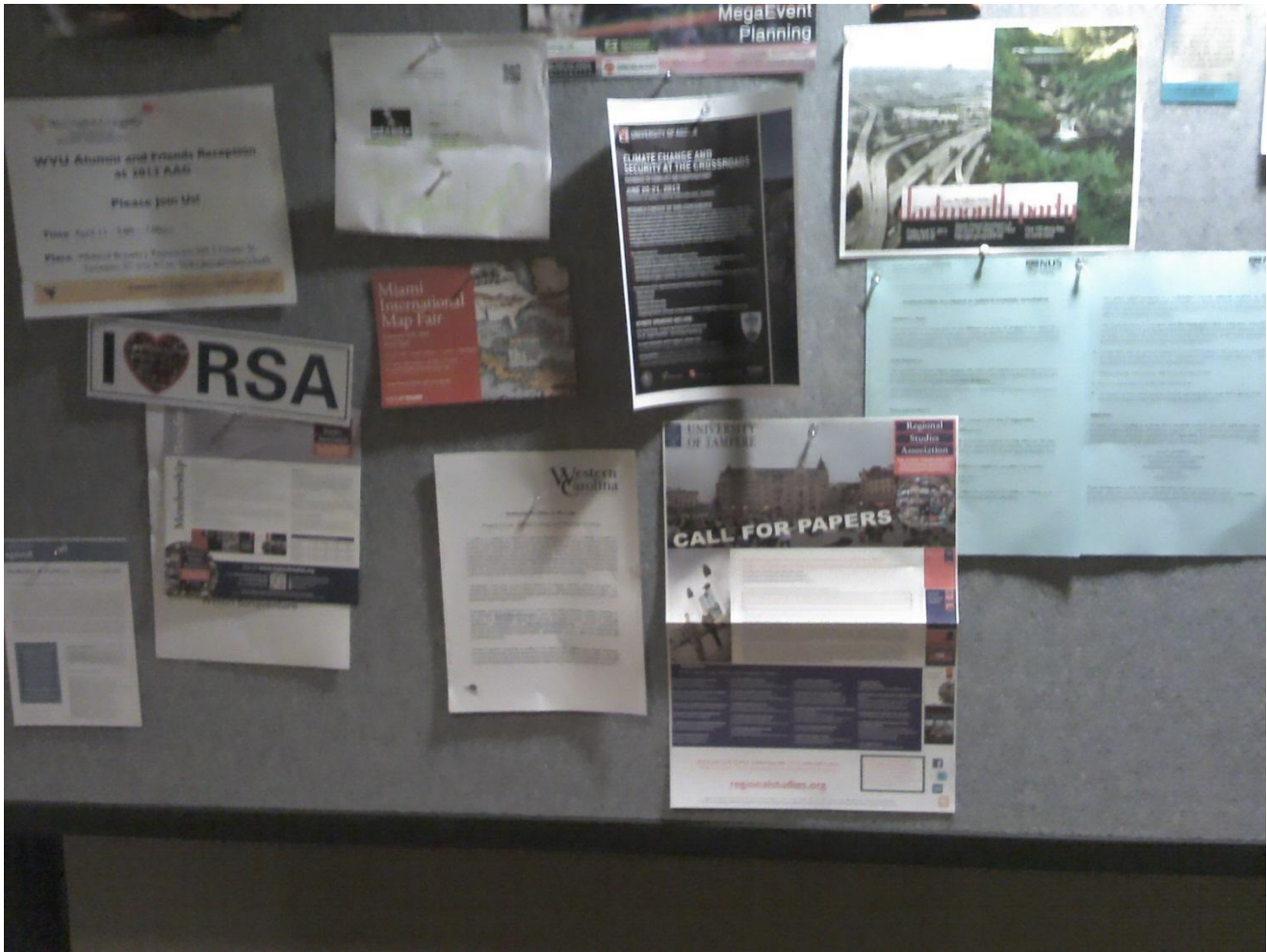
First and for most was the opportunity to get feedbacks for my research. My presentation, titled '*An evolutionary view on science parks: industrial structure unlocking in Optics Valley of China, Wuhan*', was essentially a report of an on-going paper I am trying to finish at this moment. It combines my PhD research project on the role of science parks in China's regional development and the revived interests on evolutionary economy by geographers. Actually there was a four-day special session co-organised by RSA on 'Evolutionary Economic Geography', which featured such star scholars like Maryann Feldman, Ron Boschma, and Helen Lawton Smith with over twenty presentations. Attending these special sessions offered me great inspirations for my own study. Questions raised and feedbacks received after my talk was also of enormous help to push my paper forward.

Second, discussion and socialisation with other colleagues with similar research interests was highly valuable for a young scholar like me. With a wide research interest in economic geography, regional development, foreign investment, and urbanisation of China, I found many special sessions, such as *Firms, Networks and Urban Development in China*, *New Geographies of Urban China*, and *Evolutionary perspectives on the multinational corporation (MNC)-institution nexus* highly relevant and interesting. Discussions with presenters afterwards, sharing our research interests with each other and setting up cooperation relationship were of particular value. Furthermore, Attending this conference enabled me to have a chat with such famous scholars like Professor Allen Scott, who gave a lecture on Regional Studies Association Annual Lecture; Professor Bjorn Asheim, who champions the idea of innovation system that

underpinned my PhD study; and Professor Ron Boschma, whose work on evolutionary economic geography extends my analysis on science parks.

Third, the wide variety and diversified sessions and activities provided by special groups, research organisations and the conference organisers were also highly recommended. There were Welcome and Introduction session, the Academic Job Market, the Exhibitions, Young Leaders' Networking Reception, and the AAG international reception, to name just a few. One interesting activity offered by the conference organisers was the themed field trips around Los Angeles, such as Long Beach Harbor Field Trip and Geography of the Santa Monica Mountains, which were valued by many first-time visitors to this city. Another worth noting event was the Newcomers' panel and mentoring session, which mainly targeted on students and early career researchers. For me, it relived my nervousness as a first-time attendant in this big conference and got to know young scholars in the similar situation.

I appreciated the financial support RSA provided by helping to popularize RSA during the conference as best as I could. My travel grant was acknowledged before my presentation and marketing materials were sent out to attendants in my session. Moreover, I put on our 'Call for Paper's poster in the notice board at the conference registration area of the hotel, which maximized its exposure. While socializing with other students and early career researchers, I always mentioned the support I obtained from RSA and encouraged them to have a look of our website for membership benefits and academic events. Finally, I also put on some marketing materials in the hotel lobby where most scholars gathering and having rest. Although these were small efforts of mine compared to RSA's main exhibition and special session, I was still happy to be able to contribute to the wider awareness of RSA and acknowledging the kind support I gained from its travel grant. See below some pictures I took during the conference for illustration.



Posters in the notice board



Marketing in my special session