



Respiratory Cell & Molecular Biology

Message from Darcy Wagner, PhD, 2016 ATS Foundation Research Grant recipient

I have been an assistant professor and group leader at Lund University in Sweden for almost a year and a half. As I have begun mentoring postdocs, I have been reflecting with them on the pivotal moments of my career. Time always helps us gain perspective on the importance of a moment. While I had received postdoctoral fellowships to move from the US to Germany, the ATS Foundation grant was my first independent grant while in Germany. This was critical moment #1. The grant helped me continue to develop a project which eventually led to a corresponding author publication. This became critical moment #2.

Despite the fact that I received the grant, one reviewer was particularly critical. The feedback from this and the other reviewers was instrumental in the development of the project as I moved forward. This feedback led to critical moments #3, 4, and 5. I have recently been awarded three major European and Swedish national level starting grants totaling nearly \$4.5 million USD over the next five years. In all of the reviews of these grants, the ATS Foundation Grant and senior author publication which came from it were specifically mentioned as highly positive aspects of my CV as a young researcher. Receiving the ATS Foundation Grant opened the door to independence for me. I am forever grateful to those that reviewed my grant application and those that donated to the foundation to invest in my research ideas for lung disease, but more importantly to invest in my career.