

# BSCIP

IN TOUCH WITH

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE CAREERS PROJECT

## Career Counsel

Spring 1994 Volume 1 Number 3

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Biotechnology is routinely cited as the area of science with the most opportunity in the years ahead. Many roads can lead to a biomedical career, and the best start is a solid foundation in the basic sciences. Beyond that, research apprenticeships, summer jobs or internships, and more specialized study can help you determine your primary area of interest, and help you find satisfying careers in your chosen field. Following is some advice from a few of the advisors who participated in the BSCP Conference in Boston on Saturday, March 26.

**Ruth C. Browne**  
*Director,*  
*Arthur Ashe Institute*  
*for Urban Health*

Ruth C. Browne, a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard School of Public Health, found her job as director of the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health through "constant networking." The center, which addresses the social, cultural and behavioral issues affecting health, particularly in low-income urban areas, is in the neighborhood where Browne grew up. "As soon as I heard about the plans for the Institute, I talked to everyone I knew who might be

involved with the project," she says.

For students who do not yet have an established network, Browne recommends contacting career planning and placement offices at college, graduate and medical schools to find out about job opportunities. ♦



**Trevor P. Castor**  
*President and*  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Aphios Corporation*

**Trevor Castor urges students to pursue opportunities in hospitals and companies where they can get laboratory experience and summer internships.**

Trevor Castor, a native of Trinidad and founder of a biotechnology company dedicated to producing enhanced biotherapeutics from plants and animals, stresses the importance of a basic science education — including biological sciences, chemistry and physics — as a career launching pad.

He urges students to pursue opportunities in hospitals and companies where they can get laboratory experience, and summer internships in which they can experience what it is really like to work in a scientific field. "If you don't know anyone working in the sciences, talk to your high school science teachers," he says. "It is not difficult to find a career in the sciences. You just have to decide what you want to do and stick to it." ♦

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# Students In Touch with BSCP

On Saturday, March 26, the Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers was filled with more than 300 minority students from different parts of New England. The students shared an interest in biomedical sciences and the desire to learn more about how to pursue that interest and turn it into a career. The conference offered something for everyone — from advice on getting into and succeeding in college, medical and graduate school to defining career paths. Following are excerpts from conversations with just a few of the many talented and eager attendees, discussing their goals and what the conference meant to them.



**Kerry Wong. A first-year medical student. Wong hopes to combine medicine with pharmacy in a career.**

**Kerry Wong**  
*Harvard  
Medical School,  
First Year Student*

Two years ago, when she was a senior at Northeastern University majoring in Pharmacy, Kerry Wong attended the BSCP conference in Boston. "The conference played a large part in my decision to go to medical school," she

recalls. "I was inspired by the large number of minorities in sciences."

Now in medical school, Wong says she finds that, "sometimes I don't think as much is expected of you as a minority or as a woman. You really have to push the professors to challenge you."

Wong has no problem pushing. Nor is she content with the status quo. In addition to her studies, Wong is a member of the medical school's student-run Black Health Organization, whose primary goal is to try to increase the number of women and minorities on the faculty. "Students

really are listened to here," she says. "It's definitely a plus of Harvard."

While she is thinking about a career either in plastic surgery or dermatology, Wong is not ready to abandon her undergraduate field of study. She currently works part-time, as a registered pharmacist, and says she would like to be able to apply medical and undergraduate education into a career that combines the two. ♦

**Rasheed Meadows**  
*Yale University,  
Biology Major*

Rasheed Meadows attended his first BSCP conference two years ago, as a high school senior with an interest in science. A participant in the Massachusetts METCO program, which sends inner-city students to schools in the Greater Boston suburbs, the Roxbury native had been recommended by his high school guidance counselor. "After the first conference, I knew I wanted to get into a health related area," he says, adding that he plans to go to medical school after graduating from Yale.

Meadows has spent the last two summers as an intern at Repligen Corporation, a biotechnology company in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He found the position through Inroads/Boston, a program in which local corporations provide extended internships and career preparation to talented minority youth. During his first

summer at Repligen, Meadows worked as a research assistant in a molecular biology laboratory. "I learned more in my first summer at Repligen than I have at any other time in my life," he says.

Meadows will return to Repligen this coming summer, but was taking full advantage of the networking opportunities at the BSCP conference. "This is an ideal opportunity for students, doctors and people in the health fields to come together," he said. "Conferences like this are so important because so many people don't know about the opportunities out there, and this helps them learn. Anywhere I could get information

**"This [conference] is an ideal opportunity for students, doctors and people in the health fields to come together. Conferences like this are so important because so many people don't know about the opportunities out there, and this helps them learn."**

**RASHEED MEADOWS**

about anything, I always took it," he says, advising others to do the same. "It's so important to be aware of your options. That's the importance of networking." ♦

**Lauretta Ugwu**  
*Northeastern University,  
Pharmacy Major*



**Lauretta Ugwu. Ugwu combines motherhood, her studies and research.**

For Lauretta Ugwu, it has been a long journey from her native Nigeria to Boston, where she is currently a Pharmacy student at Northeastern University, a wife and mother of a five-month-old baby. Ugwu attended her first BSCP conference last year, shortly after transferring to Northeastern from Roxbury Community College,

where she majored in biological sciences.

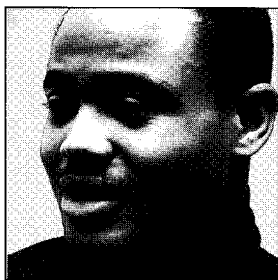
"The conference helped me focus my career goals and helped me from getting discouraged," she says. "Pharmacy is a very challenging program, and when I started at Northeastern, my grades were not as good as they had been at Roxbury. But at the conference I heard other people talking, and I realized I wasn't alone."

In addition to her studies, Ugwu has received two research grants from Tufts University — one in cell biology and another focusing on osteoporosis. Her experience at Tufts influenced her decision to shift her focus from medical school to a career in pharmacology research. "It was very hard going to school and doing research," she admits, "but the exposure they gave me at Tufts was so valuable. Two professors, in particular, have become like mentors to me. I look at them as models, and I would like to be like them."

In the meantime, Ugwu is working hard to complete her undergraduate studies while juggling the demands of school, marriage and motherhood. "It's a long, hard road," she says in an understatement, "but I'm encouraged. I know what I want to do with my life and I will persevere." ♦

**Carlos Cream**  
*Dartmouth Medical School,  
M.D./Ph.D. Candidate*

When Carlos Cream attended his first BSCP conference two years ago, he came as the sole minority student



**Carlos Cream. Cream is working 12-months a year to complete his Ph.D., before beginning his medical studies.**

in his department at Dartmouth. "Meeting with other minorities in the sciences was very helpful," he recalls. "The first year of graduate school is very hard and I felt very isolated. As a minority student, I felt even more isolated."

Currently in his third year at Dartmouth, Cream is work-

ing on a Ph.D. in physiology and an M.D. He plans to complete the Ph.D. portion of his work by the fall of 1995, when he will begin medical school. And the isolation he felt as a first-year graduate student is no longer an issue. "As you go through the process, you grow and you see that people respect you for your work and for who you are. My experience at Dartmouth is helping me see past a lot of things that society would label as racial issues but that really aren't that way at all."

Cream highly recommends the BSCP conference, especially to high school students and undergraduates. "By the time you're in graduate school, you've pretty much decided on a career path and conquered a lot of the hurdles," he says. "But this conference provides an opportunity for younger students to hear the war stories and learn that, with perseverance, you will get through it." ♦

**"The conference helped me focus my career goals and helped me from getting discouraged."**

**LAURETTA UGWU**



**Standing from left to right: Harold Amos, Henri A. Termeer, A. Clifford Barger, William M. McDermott.**

**Harold Amos, Ph.D., Henri Termeer, M.B.A., and William McDermott, Jr., M.D. were honored by the BSCP at its annual conference. Amos, the Maude and Lillian Presley Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, Emeritus, at Harvard Medical School, received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedicated pursuit of excellence in education and his lifelong commitment to the scholarship of distinguished minority biomedical scientists. McDermott, Executive Vice President of the Massachusetts Medical Society, received the Focus Award for his leadership efforts promoting the success and acceptance of the BSCP. Termeer, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Genzyme Corp., received the BSCP Entrepreneurial Leadership Award in honor of his contribution to the development of training programs that make biotechnology careers accessible to all students.**



**Keynote Speaker Marilyn Hughes Gaston, M.D., Assistant Surgeon General, had four key pieces of advice for conference attendees: Believe you can do whatever you want to do; Be persistent; Be prepared for anything; and Find role models and mentors.**

## Upcoming Events and Important Dates

### Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test (PSAT)

*Test dates:*

October 11, 15

### Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)

*Test Date:*

June 4

For information, call  
(617) 890-9150

### Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

*Test dates:*

October 8, December 10

Computer-based testing now available. For information, call (609) 771-7670.

### Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)

*Test date:*

June 18

For information, call  
(609) 771-7330.

### Science/Engineering Academic Support Network Conference

Saturday, October 1

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

For information, call NEBHE at  
(617) 357-9620

## Resources

### "Success As An Undergraduate Student At A Predominantly White College or University"

### "Success As A Graduate Student At A Predominantly White College or University"

These videos are designed to help African American, Native American and Asian American students and their families understand the importance of college and graduate school; and offer advice on applying to schools, applying for financial aid, and succeeding in school.

For information, contact NEBHE at (617) 357-9620.

### NIH Education Network (EDNET) Bulletin Board

This electronic bulletin board provides a direct link to scientists at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). It was created by the NIH Office of Education to facilitate communication with NIH scientists about intramural issues; and to serve as a conduit for communications among external students, teachers and others interested in science education.

For information on gaining access to EDNET, call (301) 496-5525, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For information on the National Help Services Corp. Scholarship Program Call: 1-800-221-9393 or 703-734-6855.

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**Kyrsis R. Rodriguez, Ph.D.**  
*Professor and Chair,  
Department of Science  
Roxbury Community College*

As technology has advanced, job requirements have changed dramatically. Unfortunately, secondary education has not kept pace, making college — and even graduate school — prerequisites to a career in the sci-

ences. Kyrsis Rodriguez urges students interested in biomedical sciences to focus on what they want to do, and to not allow themselves to get discouraged.

Rodriguez says that the reality for minorities is, generally, "You have to be even more competitive than the next person. And minority women have to do almost twice the job to be considered for a position. But don't get discouraged. Just try hard, and be

aggressive. It's the only way to get where you want to be and to make the path easier for others in the future.

"To find the best opportunities in the job market, you need to make yourself known," she adds, "because the best jobs usually are not advertised. People hear about them through others." ♦