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SAVE THE DATES

Evening of Hope

Wednesday, September 22, 2021
7 PM to 7:30 PM EST

Skills Workshops Webinar Series

October 5 to October 30, 2021

New England Science Symposium

Friday, April 29 and Saturday, April 30, 2022
The deadline for abstract submission is January 14, 2022.

For more information, please contact Rodolfo Ramos at Rodolfo_Ramos@hms.harvard.edu or visit the NESS website: www.NewEnglandScienceSymposium.org.

REMINDER

Please remember to update your contact information at www.bsccp.org.

Click on "Update Contact Information" and then "Current BSCP Students/Fellows and Alumni."

PAYING IT FORWARD

BSCP alumni help build partnerships between the organization and their businesses.

As BSCP students graduate and transition into the professional world, a significant majority remain connected to the organization. Recently two alumni have taken that relationship a step further, spearheading initiatives to create partnerships between their employers — both life sciences companies committed to expanding their diversity and inclusion efforts — and the group that nurtured them as they launched their careers.

Djadé Soumana, PhD, MBA, Cytiva

Djadé Soumana, PhD, MBA, was drawn to Cytiva when he was a postdoctoral fellow under the tutelage of Peter Kwong, PhD, at the Vaccine Research Center at the NIH Institute of Allergies and Infectious Disease. An account team from Cytiva (then GE Healthcare Life Sciences) visited the lab regularly to help identify solutions to research

needs. "I noticed that they were always happy and they brought in a vibrant energy to the lab," Soumana recalls. Over time, he got to know the extended team, and when a job opened up in the Boston area, he was excited both by the opportunity and the chance to return to Massachusetts.

In the five years he has been with Cytiva, which provides technologies and services that advance development and manufacture of therapeutics, Soumana has advanced from consumables representative to research hardware product specialist to his current position, account manager for all business activities.

Soumana attended his first Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference in 2008, when he was an undergraduate at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. As a graduate student of biochemistry and molecular pharmacology in the University's Worcester medical school, he attended several more conferences, as well as New England Science Symposia. He was awarded a Hope Scholarship in 2013 and was named a BSCP Board member in 2017.



Djadé Soumana, right, advising a student.

He has been a student advisor since 2018. "I live and breathe BSCP," he says.

In 2020, Cytiva was planning a celebration for the 30th anniversary of one of its businesses, auctioning off products and donating the proceeds to a set of charities. "I've always seen the potential for some sort of partnership" between his employer and BSCP, Soumana says, and the anniversary presented a perfect opportunity. He introduced BSCP leadership to Cytiva's charitable donation committee. The latter was so impressed they opted to enter into a partnership rather than make a one-time donation.

Hollie DeSilva, BSCP executive director, wrote a proposal for a multiyear partnership. Phase I, from 2021 to 2023, focuses on four pillars:

- **Infrastructure Revitalization:** Cytiva will give BSCP \$100,000 over three years for infrastructure revitalization to set the stage for BSCP's virtual future. This will include a marketing strategy to improve communication with students and mentors.
- **Social Equity Scholarship:** In 2021, with funding from Cytiva and other partners, BSCP introduced the COVID-19 Educational Relief Fund, offering up to \$1,000 to students, many of whom applied the money to pay for the computers they needed for remote schooling and to tuition.
- **Programmatic Support:** Cytiva will provide volunteers and funding to support programs such as the New England Science Symposium and BSCP Skills Workshop. "We don't want to be a partner that just writes a blank check and hands it to you," explains Soumana. "We want to get our hands dirty."
- **Pipeline Development:** Cytiva is committed to establishing an internship program for BSCP students. There are currently seven students working in the company's marketing and sustainability organizations. Riya Gupta, who graduated from Northeastern in 2020, met Soumana, Kyle Thomas and Matt Blome at the Cytiva booth at the 2021 BSCP Conference. As a result, she is currently an intern at Cytiva, where she says she

loves the culture and people and will always rely on the three she met at the conference as trusted mentors.

The partnership offers a host of benefits to BSCP students. But it is valuable to Cytiva as well. "In 2020, the organization said we have the opportunity to make of our culture what we want," Soumana explains. "It was very clear from the get-go that Cytiva wanted a culture of inclusivity and diversity. The partnership with BSCP aligns perfectly with that desire."

Seblewongel Asrat, PhD, Regeneron

When Seblewongel Asrat, PhD, was working toward her degree in molecular biology and microbiology at Tufts University School of Medicine, she wasn't sure whether she wanted to remain in academia or move into industry. She learned about Regeneron, a biotechnology company that creates medicines for people with serious diseases, through a fellow BSCP student who had interned there. She applied for and was accepted into a postdoctoral fellowship at the company in 2015. Currently she is a staff scientist, working on therapeutics in immunology and airway inflammation.

Asrat, who was born and raised in Ethiopia, received a BS from Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany. She first became involved with BSCP when she was a graduate student at Tufts, attending BSCP Conferences in 2012 and 2014 and Evening of Hope from

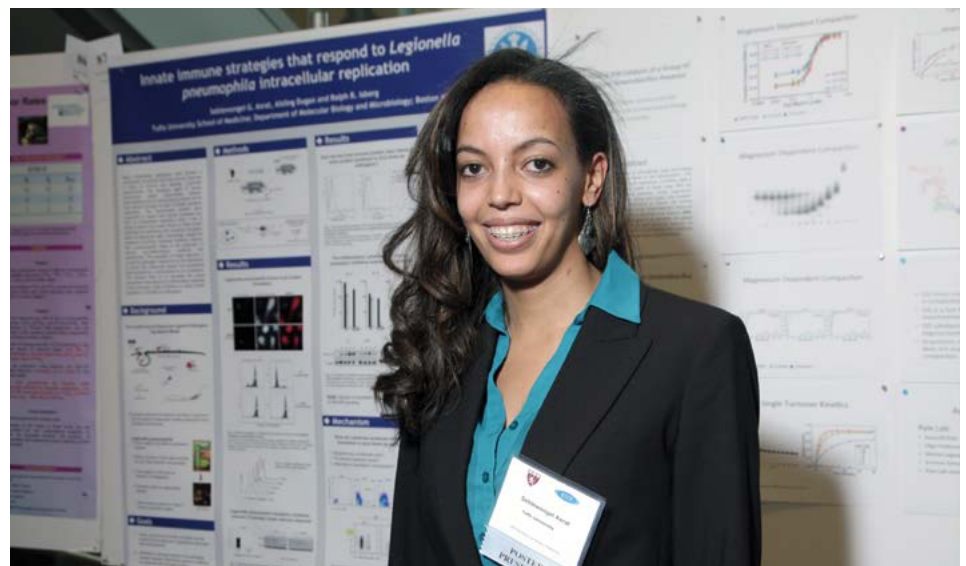
2012 to 2015. She also presented a poster at the New England Science Symposium in 2013. She has remained connected to the organization since graduating, serving as a student advisor in 2020 and 2021.

In 2020, a fellow BSCP and Tufts alum suggested to Asrat that Regeneron might be a good BSCP collaborator. She spoke to the company's Human Resources representatives, who were interested immediately. They held several virtual meetings, along with heads of the company's research organizations and with BSCP's Hollie DeSilva.

To date Regeneron has held a roundtable forum in which personnel from several different departments presented an overview to BSCP students nearing graduation who may be interested in internships or jobs at the company. The company actively recruits through BSCP as well. And Regeneron was a financial supporter of the 2020 Evening of Hope.

For her part, Asrat continues to mentor BSCP students and encourages her colleagues to become involved with the organization's activities. Her co-workers were panelists and mentors at the 2020 Skills Workshops webinar series and BSCP Virtual Connect sessions, and 2021 Biomedical Science Student Careers Conference, and she says many others are interested in participating in the New England Science Symposium.

Asrat is the only full-time BSCP alum working at Regeneron, but she looks forward to welcoming more. ■



Seblewongel Asrat at NESS.

2021 HOPE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

At the 24th annual Evening of Hope, six students will receive \$7,500 Hope Scholarships awarded over two years (\$5,000 in year one; \$2,500 in year two). The scholarships are awarded to underrepresented minority students enrolled in high school, college, medical, graduate or professional school for the upcoming academic year who have demonstrated an interest in biomedical, biopharmaceutical or other science-related fields, and have had direct involvement in BSCP. The students selected are highly motivated, have recognized potential and seek opportunities for educational advancement.

Harry Reyes Nieva **PhD Candidate, Columbia University**

Scholarship sponsored by Merck & Co.

Originally from Brooklyn, Harry Reyes Nieva is currently a third-year PhD student in biomedical informatics at Columbia University and a visiting predoctoral research fellow at Harvard Medical School. The first in his family to attend college, Harry holds a BA in sociology and history from Yale University, an MASc from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and an MA in biomedical informatics from Columbia University. Harry is especially passionate about better

understanding, improving and facilitating the study of health in underserved communities. He has served on more than a dozen research studies at Brigham and Women's Hospital in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Primary Care, and developed his own projects with support from Harvard Catalyst. He was a member of the Strategic Information Division of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) project at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, which aimed to rapidly expand care for people living with HIV/AIDS in Botswana, Nigeria and Tanzania. Harry attended the 2008, 2014, 2018 and 2021 BSCP Student Conferences. He has also been an active participant in the BSCP New England Science Symposium (NESS), presenting a poster in 2009 and attending in 2014. At the 2018 NESS, Harry received the third-prize Ruth and William Silen, MD Award for his oral presentation. Harry plans to pursue a medical degree, with the goal of a career as a physician-scientist.

Grace Assabil-Bentum **College Student, City College of New York**

Scholarship sponsored by the Termeer Foundation

Grace Assabil-Bentum is a first-generation college student born in Ghana and raised in New York. She is currently an undergraduate at the City College of New York (CUNY) majoring in biology with a minor in Black studies and international relations. Grace is a Boys and Girls Club Ambassador and was awarded the 2018 Youth of the Year award at the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club-house. She is currently a Lupus Research Alliance Young Leaders Board member, helping fundraise to work toward a cure for all those affected by the disease, especially women of color who are more likely than their counterparts to be affected. With Mentoring in Medicine, a nonprofit that helps underrepresented and disadvantaged students pursue a career in the health professions, Grace is currently conducting research on the prevalence of health inequalities and diseases as they relate to the zip code in which someone is born. At CUNY, Grace serves on the City College Academy for Professional Preparation (CCAPP)/ Collegiate Science and Technology Entry

2021 EVENING OF HOPE HONOR ROLL

The 24th annual Evening of Hope, BSCP's sole fundraiser, will take place on September 22 at 7 PM. For the second year in a row, the event will take place virtually due to COVID-19. This year six students will receive Hope Scholarship Awards (see related story). Three people will also be named to the BSCP Honor Roll, which was established in 1998 to recognize the dedicated volunteers who have shared their time, expertise and talent with BSCP students over the years, and who are responsible for the organization's success.

This year's Honor Roll members are:

- **Michelle Hamlet, PhD**
Team Lead
National Institutes of Health
Division of Scientific Programs
All of Us Research Program

Previous BSCP Student

Involved since 2002 as an advisor, panelist and judge
- **Michael Baker**
Registrar
University of Massachusetts
Medical School

Involved since 2008 as a panelist and planning committee member
- **Eydyth Comenencia Ortiz, PhD**
Associate Director, Alliance & Advocacy Relations
Genentech Inc.

Previous BSCP Student and Hope Scholarship Recipient

Involved since 2008 as an advisor, panelist and planning committee member

For more information on the Evening of Hope or to attend, visit www.bscp.org/event/evening-of-hope or email Hollie Borek DeSilva at hollie_desilva@hms.harvard.edu. ■

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Program (C-STEP) advisory board. She attended the 2018 and 2021 BSCP Student Conferences. Grace's goal is to become a physician who will help end health inequalities within her community and globally. She believes that everyone deserves the opportunity to have a physician that looks like them and can relate to their experiences.

Opeoluwa Olukorede
MD Candidate, Ross University
School of Medicine

Scholarship sponsored by an anonymous sponsor

Opeoluwa (Ope) Olukorede was born in Lagos, Nigeria, and moved to the United States in 2007. She is currently a third-year medical student at Ross University School of Medicine. In 2012, as a high school student, Ope participated in insulin-resistance research at Boston University School of Medicine, where she studied the pathophysiological response of pancreatic beta cells in the construct of diabetes. While completing her undergraduate degree at Johns Hopkins University, Ope studied glioblastoma cancer stem-cell therapies and assisted with clinical research studying the relationship between HIV and hepatitis C interventions in Baltimore City in an effort to increase patient compliance. In 2018, she joined the Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts Medical Center, where she studied the relationship between high-sugar diets and aging, and in 2020 helped publish a paper with the group. Ope attended the 2012, 2014, 2018 and 2021 BSCP Student Conferences. She has been named a Boston MLK Scholar, a member of the Red Thread Foundation for Women and an Edwards Fund Scholar. Ope currently serves on the alumni council at her alma mater, the Rivers School in Weston, as well as on the alumni council at the Steppingstone Foundation in Boston. Ope hopes to make an impact in her community by increasing interest in STEM careers in youth from underrepresented communities.

Najah Walton
PhD Candidate, Tufts University

Scholarship sponsored by Sanofi Genzyme

Najah Walton is a first-generation college student, born and raised in Massachusetts. Currently she is a neuroscience PhD candidate in the lab of Jamie Maguire, PhD, at Tufts University. Her thesis research is

focused on investigating how disruptions in neurosteroid signaling leads to brain network dysfunction in chronic stress-induced depression. Prior to graduate school, Najah attended the University of Massachusetts Boston College of Nursing and Health Sciences, where she completed her BS in nursing. It was there that she was first introduced to research as part of the U54 Program sponsored by the UMass Boston/Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Cancer Center. Subsequently, she continued conducting undergraduate research in the behavioral pharmacology lab of Tiffany Donaldson, PhD. Prior to graduating, she participated in the Pathways to PhD Program and Building Diversity in the Biomedical Sciences Summer Program at Tufts, which solidified her plans for graduate school. Najah attended the 2016 BSCP Skills Workshops and the 2016 and 2018 BSCP Student Conferences, and presented a poster at the 2016 BSCP New England Science Symposium. At the 2020 NESS, she won the first-prize Ruth and William Silen, MD Award for her oral presentation. Najah aspires to conduct bench to bedside research investigating novel biomarkers of neuropsychiatric diseases to further the development of therapeutic strategies.

Ayushi Aggarwal
MD Candidate, University of Maryland
School of Medicine

Scholarship sponsored by the Termeer Foundation

Ayushi Aggarwal is a third-year medical student and entrepreneur who is passionate about uplifting underserved women and advocating for a more inclusive health care system. A Maryland native, she graduated *summa cum laude* from University of Maryland, Baltimore County, as a Meyerhoff Scholar. During her junior year of college, she participated in the Harvard Catalyst Summer Clinical and Translational Research Program, which opened her up to the possibilities of a career in both medicine and science. She earned her MPH from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and started medical school at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 2019. Ayushi attended the NESS in 2016, 2017 and 2018, and presented her research on the impact of diabetes on breast reconstruction in 2021. She has also benefited from connecting

with motivating, influential colleagues and mentors at the 2016 and 2018 BSCP Student Conferences. Ayushi is currently an ambassador for the Harvard Women's Leadership course and has published seven journal articles promoting gender equality in medicine in the last year. She co-founded the #HerTimesNow media campaign in 2020, which gained international support from more than 3,000 doctors, scientists and medical students. Currently, she is organizing the #GiveHerAReasonToStay campaign, to be launched in September 2021. Ayushi hopes to connect her passions by pursuing a career in medical journalism.

Jaquantey Bowens
MD Candidate, Indiana University
School of Medicine

Scholarship sponsored by the Biogen Foundation

Indiana native Jacquantey R. Bowens is a third-year medical student at Indiana University School of Medicine, where he is vice president of the class of 2023. Since he was 18, Jacquantey has aspired to be a scientific researcher and a clinician focusing on cardiovascular care. He has trained in scientific research with the Brigham and Women's STARS Program, the NIH National Institute on Aging STAR Program at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, the Harvard Catalyst Visiting Research Internship Program and the Tennessee Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation at Tennessee State University. He published research entitled "Strategies to treat pulmonary hypertension using programmed cell death-inducing anti-cancer drugs without damaging the heart" in *InTech Open* as a member of Laboratory of Cardiovascular/Pulmonary Pharmacology at the Georgetown University Medical Center. Jacquantey also served as a legislative intern for Congresswoman Barbara Lee, working on healthy policy. He received his BS in biology and graduated *summa cum laude* from Tennessee State University, with the Academic Excellence Award for the Fall Class of 2017. He received his MS in pharmacology from Georgetown University, where he served as a senator for the Georgetown University Grad-Gov General Assembly. In 2021, Jacquantey attended the BSCP Student Conference. He served as a poster presenter at the BSCP New England Science Symposium in 2019, 2020 and 2021. ■

2021 VIRTUAL SKILLS WORKSHOPS FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Skills Workshops provides post-baccalaureates; college and community college students; and high school seniors, juniors and sophomores from underrepresented populations in medicine and science (particularly African Americans/Black, Hispanics/LatinX and Native Americans/Alaska Natives) with concrete information on skills needed for success in their academic career.

Webinar Series

Tuesday, October 5

5:00–6:30 PM — Getting into College and Succeeding (High School Students)

Good preparation before starting the college application process can make a difference in getting into the college of your choice. Knowing what to do once you are attending college will help insure you are succeeding and graduating on your terms.

This workshop includes topics such as:

- Preparing for college while in high school
- Assessing the academic and social environments of different colleges
- Finding the right college and financial aid package
- Building networks and support systems to help you stay in college
- Dealing with potential discrimination and harassment

Thursday, October 7

5:00–6:30 PM — Getting Into Health Professional School and Succeeding (College Students)

Health professional school promises to be an experience that is very different from college. Obtaining information about programs and funding early is very important. Learn how to choose the right school, secure financial aid and obtain good references. Your application (interviews, essays, recommendations, etc.) needs to reflect your accomplishments. This webinar will cover medical, dental and allied health programs.

This workshop includes topics such as:

- Deciding if health professional school is right for you
- Who can help you to make the right decision?

- What parts of the application process are most important and why?
- Why a good mentor is so important
- Creating a network that will respond when you need help

Thursday, October 14

5:00–6:30 PM — Finances and Your Education (All Students)

Understanding financial aid, scholarships and use of appropriate funding for your education will help you focus on your educational goals. Learning how to avoid fiscal traps (i.e., credit cards and inappropriate spending) will save you much anxiety and help you complete your field of study.

Saturday, October 16

9:00–10:30 AM — Session for Parents/Caregivers of High School Students

The aim of this session is to provide parents/caregivers with the information needed to better understand and help their students navigate the application and financial aid processes.

Tuesday, October 19

5:00–6:30 PM — Getting into Graduate School (College Students)

Graduate or professional school promises to be an experience that is very different from college. Obtaining information about programs and funding early is very important. Learn how to choose the right school, secure financial aid and obtain good references. Your application (interviews, essays, recommendations, etc.) needs to reflect your accomplishments.

This workshop includes topics such as:

- Deciding if graduate/professional school is right for you
- Who can help you to make the right decision?
- What parts of the application process are most important and why?
- Why a good mentor is so important
- Creating a network that will respond when you need help

Thursday, October 21

5:00–6:30 PM — Community College Pathways (High School and Community College Students)

You will learn what community college is all about, including the benefits of attending and information about how to transfer to a four-year college.

Tuesday, October 26

5:00–6:30 PM — Resume, Cover Letter and Interviewing Skills (All Students)

In most cases, your resume is the first impression you present to a school or employer. Having a professional and distinctive resume helps you begin the process on the right foot. Learn the importance of a strong personal statement. The challenge of interviewing effectively is to translate your strengths into a skill set that addresses the requirements of a school or business. There are many things evaluated in the interview that go beyond your application or resume.

The workshop will address topics such as:

- Preparation: Have you done your homework regarding the school, industry or company?
- What is appropriate interview etiquette?
- What questions will they ask?
- What is the importance of verbal and nonverbal behavior?

Saturday, October 30

9:00–10:30 AM — Internships and Summer Opportunities Panel (All Students)

10:45 AM–12:30 PM — Virtual Internship Career Fair (All Students) (NEW ADDITION TO SKILLS WORKSHOP!)

This virtual internship fair will provide you with an opportunity to meet the representatives from our industry partners, hospitals, institutions and universities and to receive first-hand information about available internships and summer programs.

For more information or to register for an event, visit the BSCP Skills Workshop web page at www.bscp.org/event/skills-workshops-for-college-and-high-school-students or contact Hollie DeSilva at hollie_desilva@hms.harvard.edu. ■