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Alison Taunton-Rigby, PhD, OBE

In this issue, we are initiating a new feature, "Conversation with the Board," in which we discuss the role of our organization in the biomedical sciences with BSCP Board members.

ALISON TAUNTON-RIGBY, PHD, OBE, is a long-standing member of the BSCP Board of Directors and has been involved with the organization since its beginning. She recalls that in the early 1990s Joan Reede, MD, MPH, MBA, founder of BSCP, was recruiting advisors and role models from local biotechnology companies to become involved with the nascent organization and participate in the Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference. As a senior executive at Genzyme Corporation, one of BSCP's first sponsors, she says, "Guess what? I was there," along with then-president and CEO Henri Termeer.

Speaking from experience, Taunton-Rigby believes that BSCP is as important for the health care industry as it is for students. She has been CEO of a number of biotechnology companies, each of which has supported the group, and is currently on the board of Boston Children's Hospital, another long-term supporter. "Minorities bring a unique diversity of thought to our industry and make major contributions to our achievements," she says.

BSCP offers students assistance they may struggle to find elsewhere. "Minority students have challenges that others don't have, so they need some extra help," Taunton-Rigby continues. The graduate of University of Bristol (England) and Harvard Business School says, "There was never a question of whether I was going to go to college."

Her father was a scientist and her mother was a physiotherapist. "I had all the support in the world. Many minorities don't have that." Some minority students travel far from home to take advantage of academic opportunities. Or they may be the first in their families to attend college or graduate school, so their parents do not always understand what they are experiencing or know how to advise them.

When she mentored at the first BSCP Conference, Taunton-Rigby remembers that "none of the students [at her table] had the support I had. You want to be supportive, but also you have to nudge them, tell them 'you can do this.'"



ALISON TAUNTON-RIGBY, PHD, OBE

The program benefits hospitals because "you have patients of all races. It is helpful if you also have doctors and nurses of all races. It is vital to have diversity," she says.

At the industry level, "Sponsoring students is great for students and great for the companies," Taunton-Rigby says. For students, of course, internships and jobs at BSCP-affiliated companies offer

tremendous real-world experience as well as the chance to make valuable contacts. For companies, she explains, "There are always little extra projects you can't get done in the ordinary run of things. When you have a student there, it gets done."

Taunton-Rigby adds that the relationship between BSCP and companies is also important because no matter how hard businesses try, "You still don't solve the problem of getting enough diversity in your company, even between women and men. There are very few women in the upper ranks and even fewer minorities." Since BSCP was founded, she says she has seen progress, particularly at small companies. ■

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Internship Opportunities

Massachusetts Life Sciences Center Internship Challenge

STARTED IN 2009, THE MASSACHUSETTS Life Sciences Center's Internship Challenge is a workforce development program that helps students and recent graduates consider career opportunities in life sciences find paid internships throughout the state. The Center reimburses eligible companies (Massachusetts companies of 100 employees or fewer) for the interns' stipends.

The program's goal is to expand the pool of prospective employees who have practical experience, enhance mentoring opportunities, enable more students to explore career opportunities in the current difficult economic environment and give students interested in life sciences careers access to a peer network. Since the program was started, the Center has placed more than 900 interns at around 300 companies throughout Massachusetts.

Trevor Castor, PhD, president and CEO of Aphios Corporation, who has been a BSCP advisor since 1992, says the Internship Challenge "provides students and companies with tools to connect." His company

has been involved with the program since it was launched. "When I went through college, internships were very helpful to me, so we've always had interns at this company. We've had fantastic interns, diverse interns from different places," he says.

"There's a lot of value for interns beyond making some money," Castor continues. Aphios supervisors often give the former interns recommendations for graduate school or jobs. Castor cites one former intern who was accepted into all the major graduate schools he applied to, on full scholarship, and is now studying chemical engineering at Princeton.

To be eligible, students must attend or have attended a college or university in Massachusetts; or be a Massachusetts resident and able to provide proof of residency. Also, students must:

- attend(ed) a 4-year college or university and have or will have completed at least sophomore year the semester before the internship, or have graduated within the past year; or

- be currently enrolled in a 2-year community college *or* have completed associate's degree or certificate within the past year; or
- be a graduate student enrolled in a master's degree program or have received master's degree within the past year. (PhD and MD students are *not* eligible.)

To apply, students should complete an online application at: www.masslifesciences.com/grants/challenge.html, with their resume and a cover letter. They should outline their academic background and specify the industry subsector in which they would like to intern. Representatives from companies looking to host interns will review the applications and select candidates with the qualifications that are most suited to their needs. Internships can be part- or full-time and take place throughout the year. Stipends are usually about \$15 per hour, or a total of \$7,200 per internship. ■

Where Are They Now?

Juan J. Carmona, PhD, MPH



JUAN J. CARMONA, PHD, MPH

AN ALONZO SMYTHE YERBY POST-doctoral fellow in the Department of Environmental Health at the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), Juan J. Carmona, PhD, MPH, is hoping to transition into a full-time faculty position within the next two to four years. Carmona says his passion for academic research was kindled at a young age and has grown with time. He won a BSCP Hope Scholarship in 2008 as a PhD candidate in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences Program at Harvard University, earning his degree the following year. He followed that with a Master of Public Health

(MPH) in family and community health from Harvard in 2010.

"It is a tremendous privilege for me to be here," says the former BSCP student. He cites his department's interdisciplinary approach, combining environmental health, biostatistics, genetics and health outcomes as "a powerful way to synthesize and assess valuable scientific information. The environmental health field is moving in that direction, especially in my area of genetics and epigenetics." Carmona is focusing on cardiovascular disease and

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2012 Hope Scholars

AT THE EVENING OF HOPE FUND-raiser in April, the following students were awarded Hope Scholarships of \$7,500 each.

Jose Alfaro Quezada

Sponsored by The Fleming Family Foundation

Jose Alfaro Quezada, who was born and raised in Nicaragua, graduated from Tufts University in 2008 with a major in biology. In his senior year, he joined the laboratory of Honorine D. Ward, MD, at Tufts Medical Center. After graduation, he worked at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Jose attended the BSCP Conference in 2006, 2008 and 2012. He attended the BSCP New England Science Symposium (NESS) in 2011 and in 2012. In 2012, he received the Ruth and William Silen, MD, award. Jose began medical school at Boston University School of Medicine this fall.

Mikayla Rae Thompson

Sponsored by Genzyme, a Sanofi company

Mikayla Rae Thompson, of Boston, Massachusetts, is a PhD candidate at the University of Massachusetts Medical

School. She received a BS in biotechnology from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 2008. While in college, she participated in the Harvard School of Public Health Summer Internship for Minority Students and the Harvard Medical School Summer Honors Undergraduate Research Program. Mikayla attended the BSCP Skills Workshops in 2004, and the BSCP Conference in 2008 and 2012. She attended the NESS in 2011 and 2012.

Teresa Ramirez

Sponsored by Biogen Idec Foundation

Teresa Ramirez, born and raised in California, is a PhD candidate in the Molecular Pharmacology, Physiology and Biotechnology Program at Brown University. She is a first-generation Mexican American and the first from her family to attend college. Teresa received a BS in general biology from California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH). She completed her post-baccalaureate program at the National Cancer Institute. In 2009, she was awarded the Student Role Model Award from the Minority Access and a Ford

Foundation Pre-doctoral Fellowship. Teresa attended the BSCP Conference in 2006, 2010 and 2012. She presented a poster at the NESS in 2006, and attended both the 2011 and 2012 Symposia.

Theophilus B. Hill

Sponsored by Vertex Pharmaceuticals

Born and raised in Texas, Theophilus (Theo) B. Hill is a third-year student at Howard University College of Medicine. He was introduced to biomedical research while in a post-baccalaureate program at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. In the summer of 2011, he participated in the Visiting Research Internship Program at Harvard Medical School. Theo attended the BSCP Conference in 2004, 2008, 2010 and 2012. He received the Ruth and William Silen, MD, award for his poster presentation at the 2007 NESS and for his oral presentation at the 2008 Symposium. After graduating from medical school, Theo plans to pursue an MBA and focus his career on research, health equity and serving underrepresented populations. ■

CARMONA CONTINUED

cognitive decline. Working with people at MIT and across other Harvard institutes and hospitals, he and his mentor, Andrea Baccarelli, MD, PhD, MPH, are studying large populations in Boston, Beijing and Milan to gauge the effects of air pollution exposure on the human genome.

Carmona says that BSCP provided him with outstanding preparation for these endeavors. "BSCP works well at getting students into direct contact with scientists and physicians across the city, in a variety of settings, from academic and non-profit to corporate. They get students to think about science, medicine and public health in a collaborative manner — that's the research world today. I'm very thankful

that BSCP taught me to think about collaborative science early in my career," he says.

A native of Mexico who moved to the United States when he was a little over four years old, Carmona credits his success both in graduate school and after to "all the mentors and staff of the BSCP; they are some of the most kind, gifted, and dedicated individuals I have ever met." He learned of the organization when he arrived at Harvard and saw posters for BSCP events. He contacted Lise Kaye, "and the rest is history," he says. "BSCP holds a very special place in my heart. It was transformational for me. The Hope Scholarship was an honor and a tremendous help."

As he continues his postdoctoral work, Carmona looks forward to continuing to give back. "I feel called to reach out and mentor younger students," he says. "That is one of the real strengths of BSCP. Alumni often return because they want to reconnect and help make a difference. I think we do that because we see the quality of the program. ... BSCP works because it is about people investing in people to fully realize human potential — always mindful of inspiring, while developing leadership and excellence, both professional and personal. I am truly indebted to all the friends and colleagues I have made through this program. ... We're all part of the BSCP family." ■

SAVE THE DATES

Career Development Series: Federal Funding Opportunities

Harvard Medical School —
Gordon Hall Waterhouse Room
Thursday, October 18, 2012

Audience: Physicians in postdoctoral training, junior faculty and fellows (research and clinical)

Skills Workshops for College and High School Students

Harvard Medical School — Daniel C. Tosteson Medical Education Center
Saturday, November 17, 2012

Audience: College students and high school seniors, juniors and sophomores

New England Science Symposium

The Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School
Saturday, March 2, 2013

Audience: Postdoctoral fellows, medical/dental/graduate students, post-baccalaureates, college and community college students

Evening of Hope

The Westin Hotel Copley Place
Monday, April 22, 2013



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BSCP
Biomedical Science
Careers Program
c/o Minority Faculty Development Program
Harvard Medical School
164 Longwood Avenue, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02115-5818

2013 New England Science Symposium

THE 2013 NEW ENGLAND SCIENCE Symposium (NESS) will take place on Saturday, March 2, at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School. Established in 2002, the NESS provides a forum for underrepresented minority postdoctoral fellows; medical, dental and graduate students; post-baccalaureates; college and community college students to share their biomedical and health-related research activities through oral or poster presentations. It is also a time for them to discuss career development in the sciences and to expand their professional networks. A number of

awards will be given to outstanding presentations in various disciplines.

Participants interested in making biomedical or health-related scientific presentations should submit abstracts by **November 30, 2012** to www.NewEnglandScienceSymposium.org. Abstract requirements are included on the site.

All abstracts will be reviewed and applicants notified of their acceptance by January 15, 2013.

There is no conference fee, but pre-registration is required. Online

registration is available at the NESS website. For more information, contact Pinar Kilicci-Kret, program coordinator, Office for Diversity Inclusion and Community Partnership, Harvard Medical School, (617) 432-5580, Pinar_kilicci-kret@hms.harvard.edu.

