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### Robert Perez

“I GOT VERY LUCKY FALLING INTO this business,” Robert Perez says of his nearly three-decade-long career in the pharmaceuticals industry. The California native, who is now president and chief operating officer of Cubist Pharmaceuticals, became involved with BSCP after moving to Massachusetts to work at Biogen (now Biogen Idec). He continued his involvement when he joined Cubist in 2003 and later joined the board in 2010. He believes that if he had had access to an organization like BSCP when he was a student, he would have been able to plan his future more deliberately, rather than happening on an opportunity, then working to make the most of it.

After receiving a BS in marketing from California State University Los Angeles in 1987, Perez accepted a sales job that he knew almost immediately was a mistake. Within months, he saw a posting for a sales rep position in South Central LA at what was then Zeneca Pharmaceuticals. “All I knew was that it offered \$27,000 and a car,” recalls Perez. “I’m not sure I even knew what pharmaceuticals was.” During the application process, which involved multiple screenings, Perez says he “studied like I never had before.” He got the job and “fell in love with science, the positive impact we have on patients and this business.” He stayed with the company for nine years,

moving through sales to marketing and sales leadership roles, before joining Biogen. Then, after earning his MBA from the Anderson School at UCLA, he headed east to work in Biogen’s home office in Cambridge.

When he was at Biogen, Perez says he sought out BSCP founder, Joan Reede, MD, MPH, MBA. Biogen and BSCP have always had a close relationship and he thought there could be an opportunity for the organization to help young people who, like him, are not scientists but have an interest in biomedical science careers and could learn about the many options available to them on the business side.

Speaking of BSCP, he says, for students, “The content in what Joan is able to put together is incredible. Joan and Lise [Kaye, executive director] have put together an organization that shows young people what is possible. Mentorship for young people is invaluable. . . . They can see people like them, who have developed remarkable careers in the biomedical sciences.”



ROBERT PEREZ

For businesses, Perez feels BSCP offers, above all, the benefits of new and diverse ideas. “We are in the business of new ideas,” he says. “Innovation comes from new ways of looking at things. BSCP students are some of the most talented people I’ve met anywhere. What differentiates [the organization] is people coming from different backgrounds than many of our existing employees, which allows for better insight and creativity for the company.”

During the summer, one BSCP student was working in Cubist’s Internship and Co-op program, which exposes students to

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## SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAMS

### For College and Medical Students

Sponsored by Harvard Catalyst Program for Faculty Development and Diversity Inclusion

- **VISITING RESEARCH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (VRIP)** is an eight-week mentored summer research program, open to first- and second-year U.S. medical students, particularly underrepresented minority and/or disadvantaged individuals from accredited U.S. medical schools.
- **SUMMER CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM (SCTRP)** is a 10-week mentored summer research program designed to enrich students' understanding of and interest in pursuing clinical and/or translational research, as well as to increase underrepresented minority and disadvantaged students' exposure to clinical/translational research. College sophomores, juniors and seniors are eligible to apply, particularly those attending Minority Biomedical Research Support (MBRS) and Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) NIH-funded institutions, historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and/or Tribal Colleges with baccalaureate degree programs, alumni of the Harvard Medical School Minority Faculty Development Program and/or the Biomedical Science Careers Program.
- **VRIP AND SCTRP** offer students housing as well as a salary and transportation reimbursement for travel to and from Boston. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or U.S. non-citizen nationals, or permanent residents of the U.S.

For more information, visit [www.mfddp.med.harvard.edu/pfdd](http://www.mfddp.med.harvard.edu/pfdd) or email [pfdd\\_dcp@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:pfdd_dcp@hms.harvard.edu).

## Hope Scholarships 2014–2015

**Lauren R. Powell, PhD Candidate**  
**University of Massachusetts Medical School, Sponsored by Genzyme, a Sanofi company**

Lauren R. Powell, born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, is a PhD candidate in the Clinical and Population Health Research program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Her research focuses on minority health disparities. In 2006, Lauren graduated from Xavier University of Louisiana, where she majored in biochemistry, with a double minor in biology and mathematics. After graduation, she coordinated clinical research studies in several medical institutions, including the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health. She attended the Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference in 2010, 2012 and 2014 and the New England Science Symposium (NESS) in 2010 and 2013. In 2014, she presented a poster entitled "Trust Me, I'm a Doctor: The Association between Health Literacy and Provider Trust in Latinos." Lauren hopes to work with a federal government agency toward eliminating health inequities.

**Lesley M. Chapman, PhD Candidate**  
**University of Rochester Medical Center, Sponsored by the Biogen Idec Foundation**

Lesley M. Chapman is originally from rural North Carolina. In 2008, she received a bachelor's degree in biology from Duke University. Shortly after starting college, she joined a molecular genetics lab in the Institute of Genome Science and Policy and was involved in the discovery of the protective role of erythrocytic microRNAs in malaria. Lesley is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Rochester Medical Center, studying the role of microRNA-451 in mediating the host immune response during malaria infection. She is also a fellow in the Teaching as Research Program. Lesley attended the

BSCP Student Conference and the New England Science Symposium in 2010 and 2014. She received the Ruth and William Silen, MD, award in 2014 for her oral presentation on her thesis. After graduation, Lesley will continue to investigate the role of non-coding RNAs in malaria in an academic post-doctoral fellowship.

**Ria S. Roberts, MD Candidate**  
**The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Sponsored by AstraZeneca**

Ria S. Roberts, a native of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, migrated to the United States with her family in 2004, when she was 16. In 2010, she received her bachelor's degree in biology from Brandeis University. Ria is currently an MD candidate at the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. She is researching biomedical literature to evaluate the impact of low levels of blood vitamin D on the health of African Americans. Ria attended the Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014. She served as a panelist at the 2014 BSCP Student Conference, and she presented a poster entitled "Generating *Francisella tularensis* LPS Mutants" at the 2012 NESS. Ria is passionate about serving underprivileged populations and aspires to be an interventional gastroenterologist.

**Sharé-Leigh Arneaud-Bernard, College Student**  
**Boston University, Sponsored by The Fleming Family**

Sharé-Leigh Arneaud-Bernard was born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago. She is currently an undergraduate at Boston University, where she transferred from Roxbury Community College. In 2013 she was awarded the "29 Who Shine" award by Gov. Deval Patrick. Sharé-Leigh attended the Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference in 2012 and 2014 and the BSCP Skills Workshops for College and

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## Where Are They Now?

### Dorkina Myrick, MD, PhD

DORKINA MYRICK, MD, PHD, ATTENDED her first BSCP conference in the late 1990s during the PhD portion of her MD/PhD program at Brown University. “It was much smaller than it is today,” recalls the senior health policy advisor for the Senate Special Committee on Aging, chaired by U.S. Senator Bill Nelson.

Since both of her parents were educators, Myrick was exposed to science at an early age while growing up in California, Arizona and Texas. Being naturally curious, she entered her high school science fair and won first place; later, she successfully competed in the Dallas County Science Fair. Ultimately, frequent hospital visits with her sister, who had Crohn’s disease, motivated her to pursue medicine.

Having amassed nearly two years of college credit during high school, Myrick then graduated magna cum laude and earned a degree in biology on full academic scholarship under the mentorship of Dr. George Brown and Dr. Verlie Tisdale at Prairie View A&M University. She first conducted biomedical research during two college summers at Brown. Supported by an NIH grant, Myrick’s Brown PhD dissertation research on leukemia therapeutics won several awards — including one from the American Association for Cancer Research — and resulted in at least one patent.

Myrick returned to BSCP in 2000 during her third year of medical school. Alfred C. Johnson, PhD, from the NIH, was a conference speaker and student advisor (and he continues to be involved with the organization). Previously, Johnson judged a non-BSCP conference poster competition at which Myrick was a winner. When she informed him of her interest in pathology, Johnson requested Myrick’s CV. Myrick was subsequently invited for a pathology residency interview at NIH before completing her application, which turned into

an offer of admission. “I was the first person in my medical school class to obtain a residency slot,” she says.

After residency, Myrick managed the daily scientific and administrative aspects of biomedical research grants at NIH. “I got a lot of experience, but I wanted answers to a lot of the questions we were getting, particularly with regard to policy formulation and funding,” she says. She took professional development courses at the Brookings Institution, earning a certificate in Public Leadership in 2008 and a Legis Congressional Fellowship in 2012. She worked on health care issues in the House of Representatives and at the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs under Committee Chair Senator Patty Murray. When her fellowship ended, Myrick had fallen in love with policy development. “You really feel you’re making an impact on a larger scale,” she says. After taking a year off, during which she worked on campaigns for Senators Ed Markey and Cory Booker, Myrick secured her current job in 2013.

Myrick is committed to remaining involved with BSCP, having served as a mentor and advisor for two recent BSCP conferences. To this day she believes BSCP has had an integral part in her career. Myrick says, “I’m very thankful to Dr. Joan Reede for inviting me to be a part of BSCP all those years ago. It [BSCP] set me on the path. If I hadn’t attended BSCP that year I don’t think I would have run into Dr. Johnson and ended up at NIH, then later on Capitol Hill. It underscores the importance of going back again and again because you never know who you’ll meet.” ■



DORKINA MYRICK

## 14TH ANNUAL NEW ENGLAND SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

### DATE/LOCATION

**Saturday, April 11, 2015**

The Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School

### PURPOSE

The New England Science Symposium (NESS), established in 2002, promotes careers in biomedical sciences. NESS provides a forum for postdocs; research fellows; medical, dental and graduate students; post-baccalaureates; pharmacy students; college and community college students (particularly African-American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American/Alaska Native individuals) to share their biomedical and health-related research activities through oral or poster presentations, to engage in discussions related to career development in the sciences, to exchange ideas and to expand their professional networks.

### DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

**January 15, 2015**

All abstracts will be reviewed and applicants will be notified of their acceptance by the end of February 2015.

*Abstracts can be submitted online at [www.NewEnglandScienceSymposium.org](http://www.NewEnglandScienceSymposium.org).*

### AWARDS

A number of awards will be given for outstanding oral and poster presentations in various disciplines.

### REGISTRATION

There is no registration fee, but pre-registration is required. Please register as early as possible as seating is limited. For online registration, go to [www.NewEnglandScienceSymposium.org](http://www.NewEnglandScienceSymposium.org).

*For more information please email [NESS\\_MFDP@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:NESS_MFDP@hms.harvard.edu).*



## SAVE THE DATES

**Skills Workshops for College Students and High School Seniors, Juniors and Sophomores**

Saturday, November 15, 2014  
Harvard Medical School

To request application, please contact Lise Kaye at:  
lise\_kaye@hms.harvard.edu.

**New England Science Symposium**

Saturday, April 11, 2015  
Harvard Medical School

**Evening of Hope**

Thursday, April 30, 2015  
The Westin Copley Place

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## SCHOLARSHIPS

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High School Students in 2012. At the 2013 NESS, she presented a poster entitled "Re-Classification of Hodgkin's Lymphoma to Increase Treatment Efficacy," for which she was awarded the first prize for the Ruth and William Silen, MD, award. At Boston University, she is an active member of the Premedical Society and a senator on the university's student government. Sharé-Leigh is a biology major who hopes to pursue an MD/PhD in pathology. ■

## ROBERT PEREZ

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a range of experiences in the life sciences industry. Key pieces of advice Perez offers students interested both in his company's program and in joining the industry are:

- Really manage your network and ask for help.
- Be yourself.
- Have a growth mindset.

"I know it can be truly daunting to call someone, but there's a lot of willing people on the other side who want to help," he promises. ■

