

B I N T O U C H W I T H B S C P

B I O M E D I C A L S C I E N C E C A R E E R S P R O G R A M

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Biomedical Science Careers Program Student Conference Wrap-up

A record-breaking 480 high school, college, graduate, and medical students filled the grand ballroom at Boston's Park Plaza Hotel in February for the biennial Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference.

"It was our most successful conference to date," according to Joan Y. Reede, M.D., M.P.H., M.S., President of the Biomedical Science Careers Program (BSCP) and Associate Dean of the Minority Faculty Development Program at Harvard Medical School. "We had more advisors and students this year than any other."

Students at the conference had the opportunity to network with more than 170 advisors and speakers from various fields in biomedicine, including physicians, scientists, educators, and leaders in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries.

There were 14 panel discussions, with topics ranging from "How to Get Into College and Succeed" to "Business Opportunities in Health and Science" and "How to Network and Interview for a Job."

For the first time, a Resource Room was made available where students could obtain information on schools, internships, and job opportunities. Thirty tables were staffed by representatives of medical schools, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, HMOs, the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Massachusetts Medical

Society, and the New England Board of Higher Education.

"Colleges and universities must strive to develop more programs of this nature nationwide," said Pedro J. Greer, Jr., M.D., Assistant Dean for Poverty and Homeless Affairs at the University of Miami School of Medicine, who was one of the keynote speakers. "The networking opportunity for the students was a phenomenal experience — one that they will be able to tap for years to come."

Other keynote speakers included N. Anthony Coles, M.D., Vice President of Cardiovascular Franchise Management at Bristol Myers Squibb (see related article on page 2), and Howard Kyongju Koh, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Public Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

"I think it's wonderful to see what's happened to this program and how it's grown," said Coles, who has been involved with the BSCP since it was founded in 1991. "It's another aspect of having a vision of touching so many lives."

The highlight of the conference was the announcement of the H. Richard Nesson, M.D., Award, named in honor of Dr. Nesson, a professor of medicine at the Harvard Medical School who served as President of Brigham and Women's Hospital until 1997. He is currently a Senior Consultant to Partners Healthcare System, Inc. The award was presented to Dr. Nesson for his commitment to "excellence through
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Mentor Profile: N. Anthony Coles, M.D.

By the age of nine, N. Anthony Coles, M.D., knew he wanted to practice medicine and help as many people as he could. "I fell in love with the idea of giving back to others and that became a passion for me," says Coles, who has been involved with the Biomedical Science Careers Program since its founding in 1991, and was a keynote speaker at the BSCP conference in February.

Today, as Vice President of Cardiovascular Franchise Management at the Bristol Myers Squibb Company, Coles is able to use his current administrative position and background as a physician to reach out to thousands of patients and physicians around the world by educating them about the new cardiovascular drugs his company manufactures.

After earning an M.D. from Duke University, Coles began his career as a cardiologist. He loved the day-to-day care of his patients, but he wanted the opportunity to reach out to more people. "My desire was to see another side of medicine and think of medicine as a population of people, rather than just one person at a time," he says.

After receiving a master's degree in Public Health from the Harvard School of Public Health, Coles decided that a career in the

pharmaceutical industry would enable him to use his medical background to reach a broader, worldwide population. He says the decision to stop practicing medicine and go into industry was not easy, but he was sure it was the right one. "The most difficult thing I gave up was being able to touch a patient's life. But as I thought about who I was and how I could serve medicine best, the decision became easier. I believed I would be able to do more good for more lives than I could have if I continued to practice medicine."

Last year in Barcelona, Spain, Coles met with 200 physicians from all over Europe to talk about a new anti-hypertension drug his company was about to make available. "It was so nice to be able to talk to the physicians about how the drug could be utilized by their patients," he says. "Knowledge of the drug generated a lot of interest and excitement because it was very safe and there were no

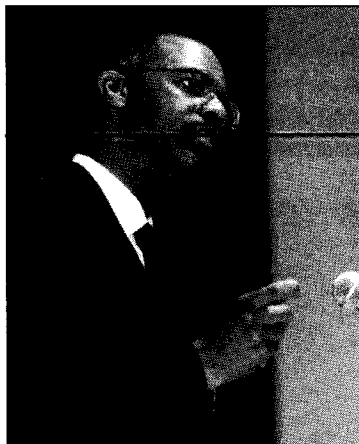
side effects, which is unusual for this type of drug."

On another occasion, Coles traveled to Stockholm, Sweden, to meet with 500 physicians from around the world to talk about the same drug. "When you can sit and interact with 200 or 500 physicians

at one time, it's compelling. There's a ripple effect. The 200 becomes 1,000, and those 1,000 touch many patients' lives," he says.

Coles encourages students who are considering medical careers to realize that there are many more opportunities for physicians than medical practice and research. "In-

dustry is looking for very motivated, focused physicians who can help other physicians understand the features of the new drugs they produce. The best advice I can give is don't be afraid to do something different. Don't rule out other possibilities. You want to keep all doors open because you never know where you will find your greatest opportunity to impact a life." ♦



N. Anthony Coles, M.D.

Mentor Profile: Lori Arviso Alvord, M.D.

Growing up on a Navajo reservation in a remote part of New Mexico, Lori Arviso Alvord, M.D., never dreamed she could go to medical school and become a doctor. She knew of no Navajo physicians, and even though she was an honors student at the reservation high school she attended, she was encouraged to take classes to prepare for a secretarial career.

"It was a problem reaching what I thought my potential was and expanding my dreams," Alvord says. "I hadn't ever allowed myself to think about being a doctor. I didn't have anyone to tell me that's what I could do."

While working in a pharmacy during high school, Alvord became interested in training as a pharmacist. She attended a health care

conference and met a Navajo student who was attending Princeton University. "I asked him how many Navajo students were at Princeton and he said five. I couldn't imagine myself in a place where there were only five of my tribe. He told me there were 50 Navajo students at Dartmouth, so I applied there and got in."

Lori Alvord, M.D.

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When Alvord arrived at Dartmouth, she discovered there were no courses in pharmacy training and switched her major to premed. "I didn't do well in the first round and switched to the social sciences," she recalls. "The reservation high school I attended did not adequately prepare me for college math and science courses. It was hard to recruit good teachers on the reservation. The reservation schools and towns are so far from the cities and the culture is so different."

After graduating from Dartmouth, Alvord got a job as a research assistant in a neurobiology laboratory. The physician she worked with suggested that she might do well in medical school. Today Alvord is Associate Dean of Student and Minority Affairs at

Dartmouth Medical School and a successful surgeon with an M.D. from Stanford Medical School. "Believe you can do anything and never stop trying," was the message she passed along to students at the Biomedical Science Careers Conference.

Though students may not always have a choice of where they go to high school, or the type of education they will receive there, Alvord suggests that students whose high schools may not have prepared them adequately for college should consider attending junior colleges to shore up college math, science, and English skills before entering a four-year program. "There are also college preparatory courses offered in math and English at universities," she adds. "That's one way of getting used to taking college courses."

In addition to her medical practice and her responsibilities at Dartmouth, Alvord has been writ-

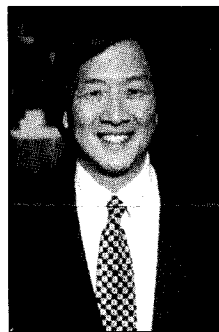
ing a book about her life with a *New York Times* reporter. *Scalpel and Silver Bear* will be published by Bantam next year. "It's about my coming from a reservation and becoming a surgeon," she explains. "It also has a lot to do with working with Navajo people in New Mexico."

Alvord has started to incorporate Native American healing philosophies into her own medical practice. "Healers in the Native American community lived with their own patients in the community for decades," she says. "They knew their patients and their patients' families very well. I've tried to get to know my patients better. The better the relationship I have with my patients before an operation, the better the outcome." ♦

Mentors and Speakers at the BSCP Student Conference



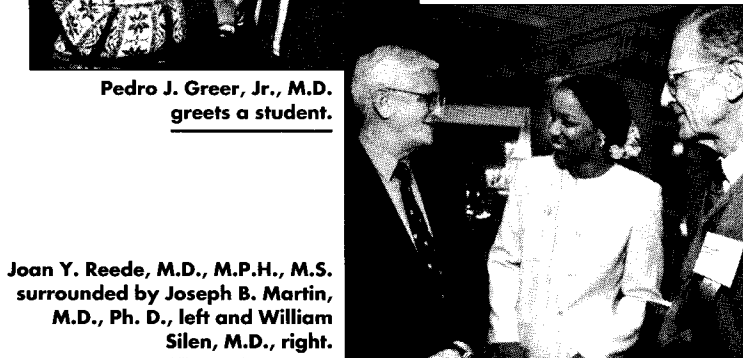
Pedro J. Greer, Jr., M.D. greets a student.



Howard K. Koh, M.D., M.P.H.



Joan Y. Reede, M.D., M.P.H., M.S. and H. Richard Nesson, M.D. display his award.



Joan Y. Reede, M.D., M.P.H., M.S. surrounded by Joseph B. Martin, M.D., Ph. D., left and William Silen, M.D., right.

Students, mentors, and speakers mingled at this year's conference, the most successful to date.

Perspectives on the BSCP Conference

Katherine Hall, Ph.D. Panelist and Presenter

For Katherine Hall, Ph.D., attending the 1998 Biomedical Science Careers Conference in February was like "coming home." She ran into an old high school acquaintance, a cousin, and several people who have served as official or unofficial mentors over the years.

Hall, a staff scientist in the genomics group at Genetics Institute in Massachusetts, first attended a BSCP conference in 1994, when she was a graduate student at Harvard University's Division of Medical Sciences. She returned two years later, when she was doing postdoctoral work at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. This year she served as a panelist at a forum on post-doctoral programs and fellowships, along with Gordon Wong, who is Senior Director of her group at Genetics Institute. "Sitting as a co-panelist with the director of my group was very interesting," she notes. "It gave me a different perspective."

Hall has been committed to the BSCP since her first conference in 1994. It was there that she met Laura Brown, a pediatric gynecologist at Children's Hospital in Boston. "We have kept in touch over the years," she says. "She's been a sort of ad lib mentor to me." Brown also introduced Hall to many of her friends. "I now have lots of friends in the minority medical community in Boston, which has been really good."

This year, Hall says she enjoyed seeing people she hadn't seen in years — particularly those who have always been a support for her. "But it was also really good to talk to the people who came up to me after the panel. Some of the postdoctoral students told me they thought it was great that I took time out of

1998 Evening of Hope to benefit the Biomedical Science Careers Program

WHERE: The Westin Hotel, Boston

WHEN: Thursday, April 30, 1998

Cocktail Reception: 6:00 P.M.

Dinner and Awards: 7:00 P.M.

MISTRESS

OF CEREMONIES: Liz Walker

Co-Anchor

WBZ-TV's Eyewitness News

SCHOLARSHIP SPONSORS: Biogen, Inc., Genzyme Corporation, Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Inc., The Fleming Family Foundation, Whitehead Institute and The Rowland Institute for Science.

This is the BSCP's first fundraiser. For more information, contact Lise Kaye at (617) 432-0552.

my busy schedule to come talk to them. They were all so grateful to be able to talk to somebody who had been where they are," she says. "But I made them all promise that when they are through with school they will come back to a BSCP conference to talk to others. It's kind of a passing on of the tradition." ♦

Kenneth Arrington, Student

Kenneth Arrington, an undergraduate at Kutztown University in Kutztown, PA, had to travel a little farther than Katherine Hall to attend this year's Biomedical Science Careers Conference. But he felt it was well worth the trip.

Arrington, who will graduate next month with a B.S. in chemistry, was alerted to the conference by Dr. Jerry Bryant at the UNCF. Last summer Arrington was one of 15 students from around the country to be selected for the Merck Pharmaceuticals UNCF Science Program fellowship. Through the fellowship, students work at Merck in Rahway, N.J., for two consecutive summers. During his first sum-

mer, Arrington worked in a group that was developing compounds to alleviate the symptoms of Type II diabetes. He is hoping to be offered a permanent job with the company after he graduates.

At the conference Arrington took advantage of the opportunity to make contacts in his field of interest. "It was good to see what my peers from different areas are doing or are trying to do," he notes. Arrington has also kept in touch with his mentor, an organic chemistry professor at Tufts University. "I'm hoping to be able to get a job in the greater Philadelphia area, so I can stay near home," he says, "but I have given my resume to several people I met at the conference and wouldn't rule anything out." ♦

Conference Wrap-Up

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diversity and leadership in expanding academic and career opportunities for all." The award will be presented at each New England Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference. ♦