

B S C P

IN TOUCH WITH

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 Student Conference

The sixth biennial Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference will take place Friday and Saturday, March 1 and 2, at The Boston Park Plaza Hotel. This year, for the first time, the conference will be preceded by the New England Science Symposium, cosponsored by the Harvard Medical School Minority Faculty Development Program and the Biomedical Science Careers Program (BSCP).

The aim of the symposium, which is open to post-doctoral, medical, graduate, and undergraduate students, is to encourage fellows and students involved in biomedical health and health-related research – particularly those from underrepresented minorities – to share their work and exchange ideas to further their career and development.

The symposium will run from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 1. James L. Sherley, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Bioengineering and Environmental Health at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Griffin P. Rodgers, M.D., chief of the Molecular and Clinical Hematology Branch and deputy director of the National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will host two plenary sessions. There will also be oral presentations of scientific research, and a poster session.

The Student Careers Conference will begin with a dinner Friday night for post-doctoral, medical, graduate and undergraduate students. Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., director of the National Human Genome Research Institute at the NIH, will

be the keynote speaker at the dinner. Evening sessions will cover options after graduate school, and approaching residency selection and interviews, among other topics.

The Saturday sessions will be open to high school juniors and seniors, as well as students mentioned above. Shirley Ann Jackson, Ph.D., president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, will be the opening plenary keynote speaker. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., senior vice president and director of the Health Care Group at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will be the luncheon keynote speaker.

Afternoon sessions will cover topics from “Constructing Your Career Agenda” to “Getting into College and Succeeding,” “Funding and Research Opportunities,” “Transitioning from the University to the Workplace” and “Interviewing Skills for College or Your First Job.”

Ruth L. Kirschstein, M.D., acting director, NIH, will receive the H. Richard Nesson, M.D., Award. The award was established in 1998 to recognize commitment to excellence through diversity and leadership in expanding academic and career opportunities for all.

The BSCP is expecting 550 to 600 students from the six New England states at the conference. There is no cost to attend the conference, but students must preregister. You can request an application by calling Lise Kaye at (617) 432-0552 or emailing her at lise_kaye@hms.harvard.edu. For more information about the conference and symposium, log on to www.bsccp.org. ♦

Mentor Profile: Boake L. Plessy, Ph.D.

From his post as assistant dean for Health Career Opportunity Programs at the University of Connecticut Health Center, Boake Plessy, Ph.D., has been involved in nearly every BSCP Student Careers Conference since 1992 — so long, in fact, that he says he doesn't even remember how he came to BSCP in the first



Boake L. Plessy, Ph.D.

place. But he does know why he continues to come.

Plessy is dedicated to helping underrepresented minority students find their way to careers in the biomedical sciences, and his department's mission is

similar to that of the BSCP. Plessy spends the bulk of his time working on the Health Center's outreach programs, which run throughout the academic year and during summers. The programs, open to high school through postgraduate students, offer just the kind of extra enrichment many BSCP students seek.

When he is not working on outreach programs, Plessy is an active member of the admissions committees for the university's School of Medicine and School of Dental Medicine — expertise he has shared repeatedly with BSCP conference attendees, hosting "How to Get Into Medical School" workshops and serving as a mentor/advisor assigned to groups of students at the conferences.

Graduating from Dillard University in New Orleans in 1959, Plessy, a New Orleans native, went on to Adelphi University, where he received a Ph.D. in physical chemistry in 1974. He spent 11 years as a research chemist at Pfizer, Inc., in Brooklyn, N.Y., then returned to academia — and to his home town. From 1973 to 1988, Plessy was a chemistry professor at his alma mater. In 1988 he headed back north, joining the University of Connecticut Health Center staff. He has been instrumental in developing the center's comprehensive collection of enrichment programs. Programs include:

- **Bulkeley High School Health Professions Center of Excellence and Weaver High School Allied Health Professions & Nursing Center of Excellence** — year-long programs for Connecticut high school students.
- **High School Mini-Medical/Dental School Program** for 11th and 12th grade students — a series of eight weekly lectures and demonstrations by faculty from the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and School of Dental Medicine.
- **Pre-College Enrichment Program** for college pre-freshmen — a six-week summer program that enhances high school seniors' preparation for college.
- **College Enrichment Program** for college freshmen and sophomores — a six-week summer program designed to provide sound development of scientific and mathematical skills.
- **Medical/Dental Preparatory Program** for college sophomores, juniors and seniors — a six-week summer program intended to improve student performance on standardized admissions tests and to increase the retention of students at professional schools through early exposure to professional education.
- **Summer Research Fellowship Program** for college juniors and seniors — a 10-week program designed to provide a research enrichment experience and some exposure to clinical medicine or dental medicine.
- **Post-Baccalaureate Program** for college graduates — offered through the University of Connecticut School of Medicine in cooperation with the university's School of Arts & Sciences, this program is for capable college graduates who want to attend medical school but who have had little or no science preparation. Participants will be able to complete medical school science prerequisites.

According to Plessy, these enrichment programs are of particular

value to underrepresented minority students for a number of reasons. First, many of these students tend not to perform well on medical and dental school admissions tests, possibly because their elementary, middle and high schools did not prepare them adequately in mathematics and the sciences. Many also have less exposure to the biomedical field than non-minority students. Finally, Plessy notes, many minority students applying to medical and dental school have to work to support themselves in college. The extra stress and demands on their time can leave these students less prepared for the rigors of applying to and performing successfully in these schools.

When he works with students who aspire to a biomedical science career — either through the University of Connecticut or the BSCP — Plessy advises them, above all, to maintain a very strong academic record. "Often, students are under the impression that volunteer or other outside activities can offset academic preparation," he says. "But when it comes to the admission process, these things are secondary to the academic record. I emphasize to students that they don't have the luxury of being able to 'slip' in their academic performance." He adds that undergraduate research and clinical exposure are always a good idea, but reiterates, "Students must keep up their grades." ♦

University of Connecticut Health Center Enrichment Programs

If you would like more information on the enrichment programs offered by the University of Connecticut Health Center, visit <http://medweb.uhc.edu/depts/hcop>.

Applications for summer programs are due in mid-March.

BSCP Student Profile: Jason Badrinarain

Jason Badrinarain is a busy guy — and he has been for several years. The 2001 graduate of Boston College and former Project Success student is currently working toward his M.S. in computer science at the University of Massachusetts Boston. After he receives his degree, in the spring of 2003, he plans to enter medical school.

Badrinarain, a native of Guyana, moved to the United States in 1993, when he was 12. During his junior year at Concord-Carlisle High School in Massachusetts, he came home from school one day to find a letter, with an application, from Project Success, a Harvard Medical School summer program for high school students with an interest in and facility for the sciences. “I had never heard of the program,” he recalls, “but I filled out the application, and I was accepted.”

Participation in Project Success was the beginning of a new direction in Badrinarain’s life. “I had always had a minor interest in medicine, but

through the program I discovered an interest in research,” he says. During his Project Success summer, Badrinarain worked in the Molecular and Cellular Biology lab at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, in a lab focused on gastroenterology. He enjoyed working there so much that he asked the supervising physician whether he could continue working there through the next year.

One year turned to five. Badrinarain has worked at the lab ever since that first summer, and has had three abstracts published and presented at the annual Digestive Disease Week conference.

Through Project Success Badrinarain also became involved with BSCP, attending his first Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference in 1998. “The first conference was

particularly helpful because I spoke to a lot of doctors, people from biomedical companies, and from the NIH,” he says. “Talking to all those people expanded my ideas for a possible career path.”

Badrinarain, whose other love is computers, says that through his BSCP contacts and his lab work, he began to see the exciting possibilities available in integrating computers and medicine. For example, he says, “The integration of computers and surgery is already beginning to be explored. At Brigham

and Women’s Hospital, they are looking into having robots perform minor surgery.”

Right now, Badrinarain thinks he would like to pursue a career in surgery or pediatrics. With his background and drive, the possibilities really are endless. ♦



Jason Badrinarain

Summer Programs: Minority Medical Education Program

For the fourth year, the Minority Medical Education Program (MMEP) will offer summer educational experiences to help promising, highly motivated students gain admission to medical schools. MMEP gives students a critical edge in the intense competition for medical school.

Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, MMEP is a free (full tuition, room, and board), six-week summer medical school preparatory program offering eligi-

ble students intensive and personalized medical school preparation. An established and well-respected national academic enrichment program, MMEP is located at 11 medical school sites around the U.S.:

- University of Alabama
- University of Washington School of Medicine & University of Arizona School of Medicine
- Baylor College of Medicine
- The Chicago Consortium

- Columbia University
- Case Western Reserve
- Duke University School of Medicine
- UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School
- UNCF Fisk University/Vanderbilt University SOM
- University of Virginia
- Yale University

Applications are due by March 1, 2002. For more information and to apply online, go to www.aamc.org/mmep, or call the office in Washington, D.C., at (202) 828-0400. MMEP says, “Make your summers count!” ♦

For events, careers, and resources,
check out:

www.bscp.org

Career Development Series

Every year the BSCP, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Medical Society, Harvard Medical School, Tufts University School of Medicine, the University of Massachusetts Medical School and Boston University School of Medicine, hosts a series of workshops focusing on issues of importance to physicians in post-doctoral training, junior faculty and residents — particularly those from underrepresented minority groups. The most recent session, held on October 2, 2001, focused on “Establishing a Career and Succeeding in Academic Medicine.”

“Prepare yourself for the journey,” advised featured speaker Kenneth Bridges, M.D., associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School (HMS) and director of the Joint Center for Sickle Cell and Thalassemic Disorders at Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH), as he opened the program. Bridges said that one way to do that is to balance the humane and business aspects of medicine. He also recommended setting a five-year plan of objectives.

Augustus White, III, M.D., Ph.D., professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, master of the Oliver Wendell Holmes Society at HMS and orthopedic surgeon-in-chief emeritus at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, shared his thoughts in support of an academic career in surgery. In a well-received speech, he advised those in attendance to “maintain the three H’s – humility, humor and humanness.” He also advised developing resiliency, maximizing interpersonal skills, networking, and making sure to “have some fun with your work every day.”

The panel, along with moderator Joan Reede, M.D., M.P.H., M.S., dean for Diversity and Community Partnership at HMS and assistant professor of Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), spoke of the successes, strategies and challenges they have experienced during their academic careers.

Carol Nadelson, M.D., clinical professor of psychiatry at HMS and director of the Partners Office

for Women’s Careers at BWH, highlighted the number of female faculty at HMS and some of the challenges involved in recruitment and retention. Marshall Wolf, M.D., professor of Medicine at HMS and vice chairman for Medical Education at BWH, discussed the importance of making sure to choose in life what brings you joy. And Joanne Ingwall, Ph.D., professor of Medicine (Physiology) at HMS and director of the NMR Laboratory for Physiological Chemistry at BWH, stressed the importance of quality mentoring relationships to successful career development in basic/clinical medicine. ♦

ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS

Please send us your e-mail address and any new permanent or campus addresses:

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Development Program
Harvard Medical School
164 Longwood Avenue
2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02115-5818

Fax: 617-432-3834

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lise_kaye@hms.harvard.edu
or go to: www.bscop.org

Test Dates

MCAT: Medical College Admission Test

Test dates

April 20, 2002
August 17, 2002

Registration deadlines

March 15, 2002
July 12, 2002

For more information, contact: MCAT Program Office P.O. Box 4056, Iowa City, IA 52245, (519) 337-1557 or visit <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm>.

GRE: Graduate Record Exam

The general GRE is a computerized exam and does not have particular test dates. After registering, students will pick their own test dates, most probably based on graduate school deadlines.

For the subject GRE, test dates can be found on the GRE website, <http://www.gre.org>. Or contact GRE-ETS P.O. Box 6000, Princeton, NJ 08541-6000, (609) 771-7670.

SAT I and SAT II: Scholastic Aptitude Testing I and II

Test Dates

May 4, 2002
June 1, 2002
October 12, 2002
November 2, 2002
December 7, 2002

Registration Deadline

March 29, 2002
April 26, 2002
September 10, 2002
September 27, 2002
November 1, 2002

For more information, visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/testing> or call (609) 771-7070.

ACT: American College Testing

Test Dates

June 8, 2002
October 26, 2002
December 14, 2002

Registration Deadlines

May 3, 2002
September 20, 2002
November 8, 2002

For more information, visit <http://www.act.org> or call (519) 337-1000.