

# BSCCP

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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**James Gavin, III, M.D., Ph.D.  
with a student**

## Wrap-up: Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference

**BY CAROLE TEPEROW  
MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS AND  
ACADEMIC CAREER PROGRAMS  
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL**

A record-breaking 575 high school, college, graduate, medical and post-doctoral students filled the grand ballroom of The Boston Park Plaza Hotel in March for the fifth biennial Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference.

Noting the growing success of this conference Joan Y. Reede, MD, MPH, MS, President and Chair of the Biomedical Science Careers Program (BSCP) and Associate Dean of Faculty Development and Diversity at Harvard Medical School, credited the commitment of nearly 200 superlative advisors, panelists and speakers. She pointed to the contagious energy of our talented students, many of whom were repeat attendees. "Seize the opportunity, make connections, and make change happen," she advised them. Keynote speaker James Gavin III, M.D., Ph.D., Senior Scientific Officer at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute,

suggested that there are not enough minorities in the health sciences field to address the needs for research and health care within our communities. He said we must make a collaborative effort to remedy the situation.

At the conference, students had the opportunity to network with leading representatives from various disciplines within the

biomedical field, including physicians, scientists, educators and leaders in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. Students chose from more than 20 enriching workshops. Topics included "Constructing your Career Agenda," "Getting into College, Medical School, Graduate School, Health Profession School, or Residency Training — and Succeeding" and "Alternative Career Paths." Students also were given personalized "business cards" upon registration and could submit their C.V.s for internships. Designated advisors offered hands-on assistance and feedback for C.V. preparation.



**Students applauding**

## "Hold Fast to your Dreams"

David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D., Surgeon General, Assistant Secretary of Health, United States Department of Health and Human Services, addressed the filled-to-capacity ballroom by video. Advising the students to "hold fast to your dreams," he praised the energy of this prototype conference and its unparalleled success, calling it a paradigm for other conferences throughout this country.

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## **Mentor Profile: Susan Long, Ph.D.**

A molecular biologist now involved in business development at Genzyme Corporation in Cambridge, MA, Susan Long has been a mentor for the Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference since 1994. "It's a contribution that I'm happy to make to the community," she says of her involvement with the program.

In her current position Long, a native of South Africa, identifies technologies Genzyme needs to support its tissue repair development projects. She also helps to negotiate technology licenses and commercial partnerships that help

the company fulfill its mission. She sees herself as a bridge between the science and the business.

Long first came to the United States in 1985 to do post-doctoral work in molecular biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "When I was finishing graduate work [at the University of Cape Town], there was an international microbiology conference, with several people from schools in the U.S. in attendance," she recalls. "Because South Africa is relatively isolated, I seized the opportunity to get some international experience. I chose M.I.T. because the research

position was in line with my scientific interest at that time."

One of the things that has distressed Long about students she meets at the BSCP conferences is the number who say they were discouraged from pursuing a career in sciences. "I'm always shocked by that," she says. "I think everybody should have an opportunity to pursue a career dream. At the conference, I think it is invaluable for students to link up with an advisor or mentor who will provide the support and encouragement the student needs to pursue his or her interest in the biomedical field." ♦

## **Mentor Profile: Juan Alvarez, Ph.D.**

March 2000 marked Juan Alvarez's first Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference, but it won't be his last. Alvarez, Associate Director of Computational Chemistry at Wyeth Research in Cambridge, MA, was a mentor this year and enjoyed the experience so much that he said he would "absolutely do it again" and would be "happy to expand [his] role."

As is typical, Alvarez, a molecular modeler by training, was as-

signed four students to mentor during the conference. But through a series of unforeseen events, he ended up with 10 students, covering the spectrum from high school through graduate school — and he loved it. He has already been in touch with a few of the students by e-mail and says he encouraged all of them to contact him after the conference.

"I can provide a lot of help," Alvarez says of his role as a mentor.

"I've been through every educational stage they [the students] have been through and can give my point of view as to why I made the choices I made. Being a minority myself, I can serve as a first-hand role model of someone who has faced some of the issues minorities face and, having contacts in several areas, I can point them in appropriate directions." ♦

## **Mentor Profile: Michael Parr, Ph.D.**

Michael Parr, a scientist in the Gene Therapy Department at Biogen, Inc. in Cambridge, MA, also attended his first Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference in March. Parr recently completed three years of post-doctoral study in brain tumor research at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. He says he feels he was in a good position to talk to students at the conference, "because I had so recently been where they are now."

Parr also confesses that the conference was "a lot more fun than I thought it would be." Since the conference he has kept in touch not only with the students assigned to

him, but with others who sought him out based on his profile in the conference program guide. "I invited everyone I met to come visit Biogen, and a couple of people took me up on my offer," he says. "They have come by for a tour and applied for summer internships here."

Without hesitation, Parr says he would be happy to participate in the next Conference. "I only wish I had something like this when I was at that stage. [As a student]... you have so many questions but don't even know where to begin to get them answered. This was a really good,

professionally run program with very inspirational speakers." ♦

### **ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS**

Please send us your e-mail addresses, new permanent and new campus addresses:

**Biomedical Science Careers Program  
c/o Minority Faculty Development  
Program, Harvard Medical School,  
164 Longwood Avenue, 2nd Floor,  
Boston, MA 02115-5815**

**Fax: (617) 432-3834**

**Email: lise\_kaye@hms.harvard.edu**

## Conference Wrap-up:

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Joseph Henry, DDS, Ph.D.

H. Richard Nesson, M.D.

### Award Winner

One of the highlights of the conference was the presentation of the H. Richard Nesson, M.D. Award to Joseph Henry, DDS, and Ph.D. This award was established in 1998



Joseph Henry, DDS, Ph.D. &  
Joan Y. Reede, M.D., M.P.H., M.S.

in recognition of Dr. Nesson's "commitment to excellence through diversity and leadership in expanding academic and career opportunities for all." In bestowing the award to Dr. Henry, Dr. Reede noted that he has carried out the late Dr. Nesson's precious legacy. Dr. Henry's accomplishments are spectacularly impressive, but his contributions to the students he taught and mentored over decades eclipse even these achievements. He has been actively involved with BSCP since its inception and has sponsored programs and held workshops on mentoring throughout his career. He is still in touch with many of his BSCP students, whom he expects to carry on his mentoring tradition.

### "Listen to your Heart"

Reed V. Tuckson, M.D., Senior Vice President of Professional Standards, American Medical Association and luncheon keynote speaker, asked his enthralled audi-

ence, "In the splendor of this ballroom, can you hear the screams?" He was referring to poor white, black, brown or red children and adults dying prematurely. "We need you and we will be there for you," he said, offering advice and anecdotes from his own life and quoting from sources from the Old Testament to James Baldwin. Some of Dr. Tuckson's "imperatives" included:

- Remain alive enough to care, nourish that flame, stay connected to the pain, listen to your heart
- Love yourself, need yourself and don't be a baby-maker
- Be curious, learn everything, do everything, do not be afraid to take risks or fail
- You are a genius, you have the ability to master the pain of solitude of study, you have the ability to endure a challenging curriculum



Reed V. Tuckson, M.D.

- Be your own role model but remember that there are a lots of us who will help
- Don't let anyone tell you that you can't
- Compassion and pain mean nothing unless they result in change
- Without you, we are nothing, wherever you go we will go we will be there for you. ♦

## Our students are saying...

"Dr. Reed V. Tuckson of the American Medical Association... reminds me to believe in myself even if at times no one else may. If the passion for science is there, and hard work is applied, then the future will unfold from its progressions. He speaks honestly of his struggle through medical school. This allows me to recognize that although he is very successful, he is still mortal. He still started out from the same place many of the students were starting from..."

*Marisa Alina Villarroel  
Student, University of Vermont*

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

"The Student Conference left a profound impression on me... I was moved by the diversity of scientific careers that were represented. One of my penchants since college has been to encourage young people, particularly minorities, to explore science as both a discipline and a career. The spectrum of biomedical professionals at the conference was indicative of the broad range of opportunity for one considering a career in science."

*Carl Reid  
Senior Graduate Student, Microbiology  
Tufts University School of Medicine*

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

"[The] Biomedical Science Careers Program is an invaluable source for aspiring minority students, like myself, in search of a higher education... Since becoming an active BSCP participant in 1998 I have used the New England Resource Directory to its maximum potential. Hard work, motivation, perseverance, and of course the Directory led to my recent participation in a pre-medical enrichment program at the University of California Los Angeles School of Medicine. I have also been named the recipient of the Ronald E. McNair Visiting Scholar/Fellow at Michigan State University for the summer 2000."

*Khoi D. Pham  
Student, University of Rhode Island*

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

"I just wanted to say thank you for all the planning and effort that went into providing such a valuable, memorable experience... At the University of Vermont, I am one of few Non-Caucasian people in my classes and it was a thrill to be surrounded by an entire group of talented individuals who are trying to accomplish or have accomplished what I am also trying to do."

*Nina Michail  
Student, University of Vermont*

For more in-depth student comments, visit [www.bscp.org](http://www.bscp.org) ♦

## Academic Opportunities

### Health Services Research Education and Career Development

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) sponsors and conducts research that provides evidence-based information on health care outcomes; quality; and cost, use and access. AHRQ offers a series of fellowships and awards, including:

#### *Pre-doctoral Fellowship Awards For Minority Students (F31)*

This fellowship provides up to five years of support for research training leading to the Ph.D. or equivalent research degree; the combined M.D./Ph.D. degree; or other combined professional and research doctoral degrees. Application receipt dates are May 1 and November 15 annually. For more information, visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-00-069.html>

#### *AHRQ Individual Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards (F32)*

The individual Postdoctoral Fellowship program provides opportunities for one or more years of academic training and supervised experience in applying research methods to the systematic evaluation of health services. Application receipt dates are April 5, August 5 and December 5 annually. For more information, visit <http://www.ahrq.gov/fund/99005.htm>

#### *Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Awards (K08)*

AHRQ's Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Awards provide support for the development of outstanding clinician research scientists who are committed to a career in health services research. The grant may provide three to five years of funding. Applications are accepted February 1, June 1 and October 1 annually. For more information, visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/pa-00-010.html>

## New College on the Block

Thanks to a \$300 million grant from the F.W. Olin Foundation of New York, the Franklin-Olin College of Engineering will open for the 2000-2001 academic year in Needham, MA, 12 miles west of Boston. The college will offer B.S. degrees in electrical and computer engineering, mechanical engineering, and engineering and applied science. The latter will encourage options in aerospace, biomedical, environmental and systems engineering science. Programs will meet prerequisites for graduate and professional programs in business, law and medicine. All students at this highly selective college will receive a full, four-year scholarship covering tuition and room. Applications will be available in summer 2000. For information, visit the college's Web site at

[www.olin.edu](http://www.olin.edu) or call (781) 292-2222.

## INSTITUTE FOR RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS (IRT)

Founded in 1990, the IRT identifies and recruits gifted future educators from all over the country. Each year the program's staff and faculty fund and recruit outstanding African-American, Latino and Native American college students from across the country and provide them with extensive counseling and individual support to help them attain advanced degrees in preparation for teaching careers. Every summer, from an annual pool, 30 students are accepted into a four-week summer workshop held at Phillips Academy in Andover, MA that helps prepare them for admittance to graduate school. Another 55 students are admitted each year into the IRT Associate Program, where they receive the same level of counseling and assistance with their applications as interns.

If you are interested in pursuing these opportunities, contact Keith White, Coordinator of the Associate Program and Admissions, (978) 749-4116, or e-mail: [irt@andover.edu](mailto:irt@andover.edu).

#### *Independent Scientist Awards (ISA) (K02)*

Independent Scientist Awards in health services research, provided for a period of three to five years, support newly independent scientists who can demonstrate a need for a period of intensive research focus. Application receipt dates are February 1, June 1 and October 1 annually. For more information, visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/par-99-164.html>

#### *Health Services Research Dissertation Awards (R05)*

AHRQ supports research undertaken as part of an academic program to earn a doctoral degree

through its Health Services Research Dissertation Grants. The dissertation must examine some aspect of the health care system, and all requirements for the doctoral degree (other than the dissertation) must be completed by the time the application is submitted. Application receipt dates are May 15, September 15 and January 15 annually. For more information, visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/par-00-076.html>

Application materials can be requested through the AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 8547, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8547, or by calling (800) 358-9295. ♦