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COMING IN 2007...

SEPTEMBER 2006 ■ VOL. 11 NO. 3

SAVE THE DATES

Career Development Series:
Federal Funding Opportunities
Thursday, October 12, 2006

Program: 3:00–5:30 p.m.
Networking Dinner: 5:30–6:30 p.m.
Harvard Medical School, Gordon Hall
(Waterhouse — Faculty Room)

Panel: Agency for Health Care Research and
Quality, National Institutes of Health:
Intramural and Extramural Programs,
National Science Foundation

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

Skills Workshops for College Students and
High School Seniors, Juniors, and Sophomores
Saturday, October 21, 2006

8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Harvard Medical School — Tosteson Medical
Education Center

Co-Sponsors: Biomedical Science Careers
Program and Minority Faculty Development
Program, Office of Diversity and Community
Partnership, Harvard Medical School

Topics: Application process for college, applica-
tion process for medical/graduate/professional
schools, interviewing skills, tips for resume and

■ ■ CONTINUED BELOW

IN TOUCH WITH

BSCP

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE
CAREERS PROGRAM

Mentor Profile

Michael Wayne Shannon, M.D., M.P.H.

MICHAEL SHANNON, M.D., M.P.H., CHIEF and chair, The Division of Emergency Medicine, and director, The Center for Biopreparedness at Children's Hospital Boston (Children's); professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School (HMS); and a dancer who still performs occasionally, has "never wanted to be anything but a doctor."

Shannon decided on pediatrics while in medical school at Duke University School of Medicine, because, he says, "I love being around and taking care of children. I was fortunate, in coming to Children's, to meet several people [who helped] me in my subspecialties." Those subspecialties are emergency medicine, medical toxicology, children's environmental health, terrorism, and disaster preparedness.

He initially became interested in the latter after the sarin gas attacks in the Tokyo subways in 1995. "At the time, we began to talk about the possibility of something similar happening in the U.S.," he says. "After 9/11, and the anthrax scare, we realized how unprepared we were."

Shannon attended meetings locally and in Washington, D.C. about preparation for future terrorist attacks, and noted that nobody at any of the meetings was talking about children. He began to work with the American Academy of Pediatrics to bring children's issues to light. The result of his work is the Center for Biopreparedness at Children's, whose goal is to teach and train those who might have to care for children after a terrorist attack. Though the Center was created to respond to terrorism, Shannon says that Hurricane Katrina highlighted the country's lack of preparedness for natural disasters. The Center now prepares clinicians and public health authorities to respond to those as well. He sees this focus as a natural outgrowth of his medical subspecialties — both toxicology and emergency medicine.

Dance is another natural interest for Shannon, and one he has pursued for most of his life, though

he admits it has gotten increasingly difficult to find time for it as his career and family have grown. Throughout college and medical school, Shannon danced whenever he could. He took classes, trained and performed. In fact, that is how he met his wife, who is also a dancer. He still takes classes — though he has shifted from modern dance and ballet to tango — and he performs only occasionally. Today he prioritizes his life by family — his wife and two teenage children — career, then dance.

In 2004, Shannon became the first black professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. At about the same time, he became chief of emergency medicine at Children's Hospital Boston, with an endowed chair. "I near completely attribute it to mentors I've had here," he says.

Though he feels he never faced any obstacles in his career, Shannon says, "There might have been if not for the people I had advising me."

Shannon has been a mentor with the BSCP, and involved with several of its programs since it was started. "Joan Reede is a visionary — a true leader who knows how important diversity is in creating a strong program and that development of a diverse faculty must occur from ground zero," he says. "You must identify and nurture teens. You excite them, bring them to this environment."

Shannon's advice to anyone interested in pursuing a career in the biomedical sciences is: "Find that mentor. Be sure you've found somebody who's a navigator, not a cheerleader — someone who's been the path and knows the obstacles and can teach you how to negotiate them, not someone who just pats you on the back and says you're doing a great job." Someone like him. ■



MICHAEL WAYNE SHANNON, M.D., M.P.H.

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

New England Science Symposium

Friday, March 2, 2007

The Conference Center at Harvard Medical
Deadline for abstract submission: December 4, 2006
All abstracts must be submitted online at
www.mfdp.med.harvard.edu/med_grad/ness.
For information, contact Lise D. Kaye at
(617) 423-0552 or lise_kaye@hms.harvard.edu.

Evening of Hope

Wednesday, April 11, 2007

The Boston Park Plaza Hotel
The 2007 Evening of Hope will be the 10th
anniversary of Evening of Hope, BSCP's annual
fundraising and award dinner.

SAVE THE DATES

Continued from above

personal statement, financial aid, transitioning
from two- to four-year college, summer and
internship opportunities

Informational session for parents and caregivers:
8:30–10:30 a.m.

Pre-registration required. To request an
application or for further information,
contact Lise D. Kaye at (617) 423-0552 or
lise_kaye@hms.harvard.edu.

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HOPE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2006–2008

Leslie L. Diaz
Cornell University College
of Veterinary Medicine
Sponsor:
AstraZeneca R&D Boston

Joseph F. Gilbert
Stony Brook School
of Medicine
Sponsor: Sepracor Inc.

Jasmine C. Howell
Boston Latin School
Sponsor: The Fleming Family
Foundation, Inc.

Shauna R. Hutchinson
Tufts University School
of Medicine
Sponsor: Genzyme Corporation

Yasmine Ndassa-Colday
Harvard University
Sponsor:
Boston Scientific Corporation

Jamil B. Scott
Harvard Medical School
Sponsor:
Biogen Idec Foundation

Navigating the Financial Aid Process

Betsy A. Groves, Director of Financial Aid, University of Massachusetts Medical School

ONE OF THE BIGGEST HURDLES THAT faces students interested in furthering their education beyond high school is securing the financial means to fund college. Like anything you do for the first time, the process can seem overwhelming. The trick is to break it down into steps that you can accomplish one at a time.

STEP ONE: SURF THE WEB.

The Internet is a valuable tool to help you learn about the process and help you find scholarship opportunities.

WWW.FINAID.ORG is a great resource to learn about financial aid in general. You can calculate loan interest and find out about the various Federal Loan and Grant programs. There is information about the paperwork involved in applying for financial aid, and even a place where you can e-mail your questions to a financial aid advisor.

WWW.FASTWEB.COM is a very extensive scholarship search engine. You need to enroll in this service (it is free). The enrollment form asks detailed questions to determine whether you might qualify for scholarships that require certain characteristics (for example, someone of Italian American origin, or someone who is majoring in nursing). The service will then e-mail you information about scholarships you might be eligible for as they become available.

In addition to searching on Fastweb, your current high school or college (if you are applying to graduate school) may have information on local scholarships.

STEP TWO: CONTACT THE SCHOOLS YOU ARE PLANNING TO APPLY TO.

Visit the college's website to see if the financial aid office has their own page. Often, the process and forms are available online. If not, call the office to see if they have information they can mail to you. **Find out about deadlines and get everything in as early as you can.** Many schools award aid on a first-come, first-served basis, so the earlier your application is complete, the better your chances are of receiving all that you are eligible for.

STEP THREE: PAPERWORK, PAPERWORK, PAPERWORK...

Once you have determined what you need to fill out, make a checklist of what needs to be completed, and check off each item as you submit it. As with most things that deal with money, *accuracy is key*. Check your work for math errors and missed signatures. Keep copies of everything you submit. If you have questions about a request, try to obtain the answers instead of guessing. WWW.FINAID.ORG has a section on the most common mistakes people make when filling out the Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA). Reading this before you file the FAFSA will be time well spent!

STEP FOUR: FOLLOW UP.

No one is going to care more about you receiving your aid than you. It is worth the effort to make sure you've completed all the necessary steps and that all the forms got where they needed to go. If the school does not have a way for you to check your status online, you might want to follow up by e-mail. Also, if you have been awarded outside scholarships, follow up to find out how you will receive the money. Additional steps might be required after you've been awarded a loan or scholarship (for example, you might need to sign a promissory note or write a thank-you letter to a donor). Read your award information carefully to make sure you've completed any additional steps.

STEP FIVE: GEAR UP FOR NEXT YEAR!

Financial aid application is an annual event. The FAFSA needs to be filled out each year, and your school might require the same forms again, or they might have an abbreviated process for returning students. Some scholarships are renewed each year, but you may need to submit something (e.g., a copy of your transcript, proof that you are still enrolled in college) in order to receive the money in subsequent years. Now that you have successfully navigated the process, make a file to refer to next year. And relax, you're now a seasoned veteran! ■

Student Profile

Joseph Gilbert

JOSEPH GILBERT JUST FINISHED HIS second year at Stony Brook School of Medicine and began his first rotation in pediatrics at Winthrop Hospital in Minneola, New York. "I always knew what I wanted to do," says the Brockton, Massachusetts native. "It was difficult to find a path to do it."

Gilbert was two years old when his father left his family. His mother raised Joseph and his two sisters alone, and the young man grew up with a tremendous sense of responsibility for his family. Which may explain why, as a full-time student at Bridgewater State College, from which he graduated in 1999, he also worked two full-time jobs — as an emergency medical technician (EMT) on an ambulance and as a lifeguard at a local hotel, clocking roughly 70 hours a week in addition to his studies.

In 1998, one of Gilbert's professors at Bridgewater State told him about the Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference. He attended and was paired with Dr. Michael Shannon, of Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School (see related story, page 1). That meeting led to a relationship that continues to this day — one that Gilbert credits with guiding his career and his education.

Following the BSCP conference, Gilbert scheduled regular appointments with Dr. Shannon to talk about what was happening in his life. "Everybody talks about this guy who does everything," Gilbert says. "But he was the most down-to-earth guy I could meet. Before I had a mentor I didn't realize the value of having someone who has gone through it, understands, and is willing to just listen."

After graduating from college, Gilbert felt he was ready for something more challenging than work as an EMT. With Dr. Shannon's encouragement, he got a job as a pulmonary function technician at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. Two years later, he felt ready for a new challenge. He told Dr. Shannon he wanted to apply to medical school and was

interested in pediatrics, but did not feel ready yet. Shannon offered him a position in the Children's Hospital Boston emergency room as a clinical assistant.

"While I was working for [Shannon], my energy was restored every day I went to work. I took on more and more responsibility. I was really getting pumped," Gilbert says. He worked at Children's for two years, and finally applied to medical school. He was accepted at Stony Brook with the condition that he first enroll in a post-baccalaureate program at the University of Buffalo. Gilbert was reluctant to leave Massachusetts and his family — not to mention his hospital "family" — but knew this was an opportunity he could not turn down.

The transition was made easier by the fact that his girlfriend moved to Buffalo with him. And he was in constant contact with Dr. Shannon, who Gilbert says, "was always encouraging, and helped keep me focused." Gilbert's first year of medical school, he says, was "bumpy, and there were lots of phone calls to Dr. Shannon," but things seem to be going more smoothly. He is currently an active member of the Student National Medical Association and sits on the executive boards of both the Pediatric Interest Group and the Emergency Medicine Interest Group. And he was a 2006 BSCP Hope Scholarship recipient.

Gilbert gives Dr. Shannon much of the credit for where he is today. "It was kind of cool that this guy actually took the time out to talk to me, knowing that he has many, many things he has to be doing. I feel like the heir to a throne." But he should not underestimate himself. All the support in the world would not get him anywhere without his own unremitting hard work and dedication. ■



JOSEPH GILBERT

COMING IN 2007...

UNDERSTANDING PATHWAYS TO BIOMEDICAL CAREERS

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded BSCP and its partners, Harvard Medical School and Abt Associates Inc., a grant to conduct a survey of current and former BSCP participants to learn about the educational and career pathways you have followed since you first participated in the BSCP. This important study will help BSCP, NIH, and other stakeholders learn how to provide better support and career development to minorities in the sciences. Please take a moment to help us by updating your contact information. Visit the BSCP website at www.bscp.org, click on "Update/Submit Your Information," and update or submit your information under "Student." We look forward to hearing from you soon. ■