APRIL 2012 VOL. 17 NO. 2

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BSCP
BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE CAREERS PROGRAM

Keynote Speaker

David P. Meeker, MD

DAVID P. MEEKER, MD, PRESIDENT and CEO of Genzyme, a Sanofi company, and a new BSCP Board member (see related story, page 3), delivered a keynote address at the Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference on March 31. A physician who transitioned from a practice in pulmonary critical care medicine, combined with an academic appointment, to a celebrated career with one of the world's earliest and most successful biotech companies, he shared his belief that "this field opens more doors than anything else."

Growing up in Vermont, Meeker was a high school athlete whose life revolved around sports. Though his father was an obstetrician/gynecologist, he found another job much more alluring — that of the athletic trainer for the University of Vermont. During his post-graduate year, which was largely dedicated to playing basketball, Meeker's path turned toward his future career. In a physiology course, his "love of science kicked in," he said. Still, during medical school and throughout several rotations, the physician in training "thought I'd be a doctor for a sports team."

"Taking care of people is incredibly rewarding," Meeker noted. He spent several years at the Cleveland Clinic, a large tertiary care center that, he said, has "absolutely the latest technology." Spending most of his time in the intensive care unit, he said, despite the fact that he loved what he was doing, "I wasn't going to make it to 65."

In 1994, a friend went to Genzyme to check out a job opportunity. He came away telling Meeker he thought it would be perfect for him. "It was the only industry job I ever applied for," the company's CEO recalled. At the time, "Genzyme was a start-up trying to find a cure for cystic fibrosis. It was going to be the first application of gene therapy. I was drawn to the excitement [of that] and by the role of industry in solving these problems."

"Life is about risks," he continued. Going to Genzyme meant leaving a position where he was comfortable and uprooting his family — a wife and two toddler daughters. At least Meeker was familiar with the Boston area, having completed an internal medicine residency at Beth Israel Hospital and a pulmonary/critical care fellowship at Boston University School of Medicine.

Meeker joined Genzyme's research team as medical director working on the Cystic Fibrosis Gene Therapy program. Later, as vice president, Medical Affairs, he was responsible for the development of therapeutic products, including

DAVID P. MEEKER, MD

treatments in the company's current rare disease portfolio.

In 2000, Meeker attended Harvard University's Advanced Management Program and moved over to Genzyme's business side which, he noted, was "very much a leap of faith." He uprooted his family again, moving them to Paris for three years to run the company's European Rare Disease Business. When he returned to the U.S. in 2003, he was named president of Genzyme's Global Rare Disease Business. In that role, he oversaw the launches of

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SPECIAL THANKS TO
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.
and the Massachusetts Medical Society
for their support of this newsletter

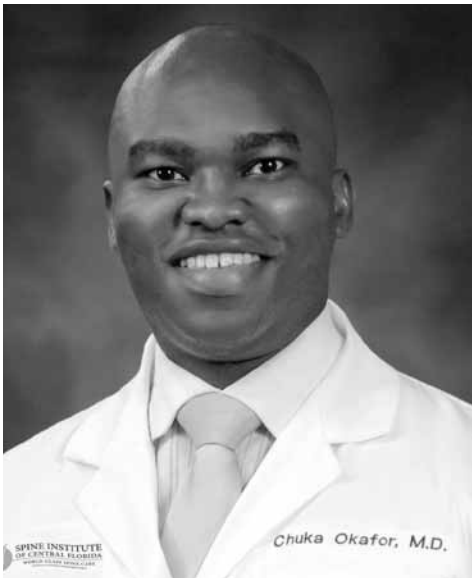
Where Are They Now?

Nilton D. Medina, MD, and Chukwuka C. Okafor, MD, MBA

A RECURRING THEME OF THE Biomedical Science Careers Program (BSCP) is the value students find in the connections they make — most frequently through conference attendance — that sustain them through their studies, internships and, ultimately, their careers. This has certainly been the case for Nilton Medina, MD, and Chukwuka Okafor, MD, MBA, who both attended their first Biomedical Student Careers Conference in 1996, when they were freshmen at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass). But the experience for these two former BSCP students has been slightly different than that of their peers, because they met and became friends at UMass and have attended nearly every BSCP event since 1996 together — first as students, later as speakers/panelists, and most recently as student advisors.

Today Okafor is an orthopaedic spine surgeon at the Spine Institute of Central Florida and an affiliate assistant professor of orthopaedic surgery in the department of Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine at the University of South Florida College of Medicine. Medina is a plastic surgeon at Boston Medical Center and an assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Boston University School of Medicine.

NILTON MEDINA, MD



CHUKWUKA OKAFOR, MD, MBA

Both doctors credit BSCP with playing an instrumental role in their careers. Okafor says that attending the conferences with a friend "definitely helped a lot. We were in the same boat. We were getting interested in the medical field, but I wasn't 100 percent sure I wanted to do medicine." With Medina, he "had a friend to talk to." In addition, they each had an influential mentor from the first conference they attended.

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2012 New England Science Symposium

THE 11TH ANNUAL NEW ENGLAND Science Symposium took place on Sunday, April 1, at The Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School. Merit Cudkowicz, MD, MSc, director, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Clinic and Neurology Clinical Trials Unit, and co-director, Neuromuscular Division at Massachusetts General Hospital and Julieanne Dorn Professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School, delivered the keynote address. Established in 2002, the symposium provides a forum for postdoctoral fellows; medical, dental and graduate students; post-baccalaureates; and college and community college students (particularly underrepresented minorities) to share their biomedical and health-related research activities, exchange ideas and expand their professional networks.

Sponsors and supporters of this year's symposium included the Harvard Medical School Minority Faculty Development Program; the Biomedical Science Careers Program; Harvard Catalyst: The Harvard Clinical and Translational Science Center; the Sanofi/Genzyme R&D Center; the Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research; the Harvard FAS Center for Systems Biology and the NIGMS Center for Modular Biology, Grant No. GM68763; and the Harvard Medical School Department of Systems Biology and Cell Decision Process Center, Grant No. GM68762.

From the hundreds of abstracts submitted, 198 oral, poster and alternate presentations were chosen to be delivered by students from 101 institutions in 22 states, Puerto Rico, Canada and Pakistan. Prestigious Ruth and William Silen, MD, Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Department of Neonatology Neonatal and Perinatal Research, the Parcell Laboratories Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine Research, and Novartis Institute for BioMedical Postdoctoral Research awards were given for the best presentations in several categories. ■

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

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For Okafor, it was Judith Gwathney, VMD, PhD. Medina's mentor was William Silen, MD. The plastic surgeon says if he hadn't gone to the first conference, "Basically, I don't think I would be here as a doctor. [Dr. Silen] really, really believed in me. He put me in a position where I could succeed." Medina received a Hope Scholarship when he was an undergraduate.

After they graduated from college, Okafor went to Boston University School of Medicine, and Medina to Dartmouth Medical School. Okafor won a Hope Scholarship in 2000 while attending medical school and was involved in research projects at the National Institutes of Health, Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Brigham and Women's Hospital. While serving a fellowship in Washington, D.C., he received his MBA from the American University Kogod School of Business. He felt this was important because, "I look at processes and ask how can that process be improved upon, make things more efficient?" Now he says he uses the skills acquired in business school to help run his busy practice.

For Medina, medical school "let me combine health and science." Plastic surgery, in particular, provided the recreational painter and calligrapher an opportunity to "combine art and science." For him, whether he is helping cancer survivors regain functionality, correct traumatic or congenital defects or perform aesthetic surgery, his practice "allows [me] to help a lot of people in a lot of ways."

Returning to BSCP conferences — where they were student advisors in March — allows both men to give back to the organization they feel has done so much for them. And they continue to give to each other. In January 2011, Okafor was the best man at Medina's wedding. When Okafor and his fiancé get married, his friend will return the favor. ■

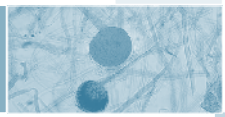
BSCP Welcomes New Board Members

DAVID P. MEEKER, MD, IS PRESIDENT and chief executive officer of Genzyme, a Sanofi company. He oversees and provides vision for the company's Rare Diseases and Multiple Sclerosis business units, and played a key role in the company's integration with Sanofi. Dr. Meeker joined Genzyme in 1994 as medical director to work on the Cystic Fibrosis Gene Therapy program. Later, he was responsible for the development of therapeutic products, including treatments in the current rare disease portfolio. As president of the Global Rare Disease Business, he oversaw the global launches of Aldurazyme®, Fabrazyme®, and Myozyme®. Before his current appointment, he served as chief operating officer.

Prior to joining Genzyme, Dr. Meeker was the director of the Pulmonary Critical Care Fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic and an assistant professor of medicine at Ohio State University. Dr. Meeker is a Board member of BIO, the Biotechnology Industry Organization. He is also a Board member of Prize4Life, an organization dedicated to accelerating the discovery of treatments for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, as well as a Board member of the California Institute of Healthcare, an independent organization devoted to researching and advocating policy to further the interests of California's biomedical community. Dr. Meeker received his MD from the University of Vermont Medical School. He completed an internal medicine residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston and a pulmonary/critical care fellowship at Boston University. He also completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School in 2000.

George A. Scangos, PhD, is chief executive officer and a member of the board of directors of Biogen Idec. Dr. Scangos was born into a family of Greek immigrants and did not learn to speak English until he started school in Lynn, Massachusetts. His family moved to Connecticut when he was still in elementary school. An excellent student in high school, he won scholarships to Cornell University. It was there that he became interested in biology, earning a B.A. in the subject. He went on to earn a PhD in microbiology from the University of Massachusetts and was a Jane Coffin Childs postdoctoral fellow at Yale University.

Before joining Biogen Idec in 2010, Dr. Scangos was president, CEO and a director at Exelixis, Inc. From September 1993 to October 1996, he served as president of Bayer Biotechnology, where he was responsible for research and development, business development, process development, manufacturing, engineering and quality assurance of Bayer's biological products. Before joining Bayer in 1987, he was a professor of biology at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Scangos is a member of the Board of Visitors of the University of California San Francisco School of Pharmacy and the National Board of Visitors of the University of California Davis School of Medicine. He is currently an adjunct professor of biology at Johns Hopkins University. ■



REMINDER

Please remember to update your contact information and post your resume at www.bscp.org. Click on "Update/ Submit Your Information," then enter your information under "Current and Former BSCP Participants."

For more information, contact Lise D. Kaye at (617) 432-0552 or lise_kaye@hms.harvard.edu.

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DAVID P. MEEKER, MD

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Aldurazyme, Fabrazyme and Myozyme. The first treats Mucopolysaccharidosis I (MPS I); the second treats Fabry disease; and the last one treats Pompe disease — all relatively rare genetic diseases. He was appointed president and CEO in October 2011.

Meeker's career is testimony to the vast opportunities open to those in the biomedical sciences — and the fact that the paths between them are always open. ■

2012 Evening of Hope

THE 15TH ANNUAL EVENING OF Hope fundraiser of the Biomedical Science Careers Program (BSCP) took place on April 25 at The Westin Copley Place Boston. The event raises money for BSCP programs and celebrates the organization's successes. Chris Gabrieli, partner, Bessemer Venture Partners, and chair, National Center on Time and Learning, was the Evening of Hope honoree. The co-chairs were Robert J. Perez, executive vice president and chief operating officer, Cubist Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and George A. Scangos, PhD, chief executive officer, Biogen Idec (see related story, page 3).

Four individuals who have devoted their energies to the BSCP over the years were named to the 2012 Honor Roll: Juan Alvarez, PhD, Alkermes; Michael J. Cahalane, MD, FACS, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center; Carmon Davis, MD, MPH, MBA, Children's Hospital Boston; and Andrea Pyenson, CorPublications. ■