Career Development Presentations 2003-2004

The HSPP includes funding for career panels and presentations at which guest speakers provide information about science and science-related careers to our students. Jane Celwyn and Elayne Garrett, the Director and Associate Director of Barnard’s Office of Career Development, are responsible for this aspect of our program. They organized six events during the current reporting period. A member of the Career Development Office attended each event and distributed evaluation forms for students to complete; unfortunately, the return rate for evaluations is quite low. A brief summary of each presentation is included below.

(a) Public Health Alumnae Panel
Monday, October 20th, 7:00 pm in the North Tower, Sulzberger Hall
Co-Sponsored by the Office of Career Development and the HSPP

Panelists, all of whom had MPH or doctoral degrees, were: Nina Rothschild, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene whose work involves HIV prevention projects; Lori Hoepner, Senior Staff Associate, Gertrude H. Sergievsky Center, Columbia University who focuses primarily on child environmental health, asthma, mental health, HIV behavioral studies and substance abuse; Staci Abramsky, OAT Project Manager, VAMC of Manhattan who works on an NIH-funded international, multi-center clinical trial called OAT; and Leticia Colon, Coordinator at the Renal Data Institute who evaluates potential organ/tissue for donor suitability and distributes and allocates kidneys for NYC and Long Island.

Twenty-seven students attended. Evaluations indicated that students began to understand the breadth of the field of public health, learned about research options in the field and appreciated the prevalence of women in public health. They also expressed interest in having representation from institutions that are very well known such as the WHO and Pfizer.

(b) Pharmaceutical Advertising/Sales – Dinner and Discussion
Tuesday, October 28th, 6:30 pm in the North Tower, Sulzberger Hall
Co-Sponsored by the Office of Career Development and the HSPP

The guest speaker for this event was Leslie Reilly, Institutional Healthcare Representative from Alta Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer. Twenty-five students attended and learned about Ms. Reilly’s path from research to pharmaceutical sales. After the event, Ms. Reilly emailed a message to say how much she appreciated the opportunity to speak to our students and how shocked she was at the range of questions they asked. She remarked that the young women are very driven and “used to planning strategies that will allow them to attain their goals.”

Student evaluations mentioned that they learned one way to apply a background in science to the business world and would like to hear about other opportunities to do so. They were also interested in the policies that some companies have to promote female leaders.

(c) Writing Science: Creating a Best Seller
Monday, November 17th, the NYPL Science Industry and Business Library
Co-Sponsored by the Office of Career Development and the HSPP
Barnard alumna Kiryn Haslinger invited current students to a panel discussion organized by the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and the New York Public Library Science Industry and Business Library. We arranged for seven students to hear the following panelists: Bruce Alberts, President of the National Academy of Sciences and Author of *Molecular Biology of the Cell*; Robin Marantz Henig, Freelance Writer and Author of *Monk in the Garden, A Dancing Matrix* and others; Sylvia Nasar, CU Professor of Business Journalism and author of *A Beautiful Mind: The Life of Mathematical Genius and Nobel Laureate John Nash*; James D. Watson, President of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and author of *The Double Helix, Molecular Biology of the Gene, DNA: The Secret of Life* and others; and moderator, Bruce Lewenstein, Assoc. Professor of Science Communication, Cornell University.

(d) Dinner/Discussion with Alumna Kiryn Haslinger BC ’02
Monday, February 23rd, 6:30 pm, 119 McIntosh
Co-Sponsored by the Office of Career Development and the HSPP

Kiryn Haslinger (Hughes Research Intern, 2001-2002) was invited to speak about her work as a researcher with James Watson at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and about her studies in the PhD Program in Physical Chemistry at NYU. Six students and Prof. Sally Chapman had an informal discussion with Kiryn about both her research work at Cold Spring as well as her graduate school experience.

From the evaluations of the event we know that students learned about the process of selecting a graduate program that is the right fit for the individual; that it is important to find work that is interesting to you; and as one student stated, “being bold and true to yourself as a Barnard woman and to be confident and you will succeed.” Kiryn had given examples of how her challenging Dr. Watson had led to his confidence in her abilities and his giving her greater responsibilities. Students mentioned that this type of small event is “great for question and answer sessions.” Another mentioned that she “especially enjoyed the discussion with Prof. Chapman” who added valuable advice to that given by the speaker.

(e) Dinner/Discussion with Deborah McDermott, MS, CGC
Wednesday, March 31st, 7:00 pm, South Tower, Sulzberger Hall
Co-Sponsored by the Pre-Health Students Association, the Psychology Club, the Bio Club, the Office of Career Development and the HSPP

We were delighted that Deborah McDermott was able to speak with students about her work as a genetic counselor at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University. This event brought together students from psychology, biology and others seeking a career in some aspect of healthcare; twelve students signed up to attend. Ms. McDermott gave a very balanced overview of the field of genetic counseling and was clear about the extent of the science background required to be admitted to graduate programs in the field, a surprise to some students who attended.
Students mentioned in their evaluations that they learned the difference between gene therapy and genetic counseling, something that had not been understood before; that it opened their eyes to another career option; that it’s possible to do both clinical and research work in the same job.

(f) Career Panel: Physical and Occupational Therapy Options
Monday, April 19th 7:00 pm, South Tower, Sulzberger Hall
Co-Sponsored by the Office of Career Development and the HSPP

Amy Srebnik, Clinical Specialist, Physical Therapy, NYU Rusk Institute and Lori Zozzaro, Senior Occupational Therapist, New York State Psychiatric Institute spoke to a group of 10 students about their graduate school preparation and their work. The similarities and differences of the two fields were explored, and the pre-graduate school work experience was discussed with suggestions on how it is possible for students to acquire that experience. This event was organized by another staff member and unfortunately evaluations were not distributed, but anecdotally we know that the event was well received and extremely informative.