Career Development Presentations 2005-2006

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, coordinate this aspect of our program. They organized six events during the current reporting period. A member of the Career Development Office attended each event.

(a) Brunch with Evelyn Jabri
Sunday, October 16, 2005

Evelyn Jabri obtained her Ph.D. in chemistry from Cornell University and is currently an editor for the scientific journal, Nature. She spoke about her experiences as a woman in the field of chemistry, how she got into the editing/journalism field, and what exactly her work entails. About seven students attended and found the event very interesting and informative and said that they would now consider writing for a scientific journal as a possible career.

(b) Laural Boone Dinner/Discussion
Saturday, November 25, 2005

Laural Boone is a Barnard alumna who majored in chemistry and then went on to obtain her Ph.D. in chemistry. She later used her science background to attend law school and become a patent attorney. About 20 students, all of whom were interested in learning about various options that are available for science majors after graduation, attended. We had students from several different majors attend: chemistry, biology, political science and computer science. Laural enthusiastically answered all of the students’ questions and was able to offer them advice on how to pursue this career path. Laural also spoke about women in the field of law, patent law, and technology and law. Students that attended enjoyed the small, intimate atmosphere.

(c) Dinner/Discussion with Jo Handelsman
Thursday, February 9, 2006

Jo Handelsman is a professor in the Department of Plant Physiology at the University of Wisconsin. She co-authored a paper entitled “More Women in Science” which detailed the progress that women scientists have made and identified barriers and strategies to overcome these barriers. About 15 students attended this event and found it especially interesting since they are all “women in science” and were curious to learn about the biases that women still face. Jo spoke about the bias women face in getting hired, having recommendation letters written for them, and about various studies that have been conducted that prove that biases still exist. Students said that although they were now more aware of the biases they may face in the future, these difficulties do not dampen their desire to pursue a career in science.

(d) Discussion with Sahrena London
Wednesday, February 22, 2006
Sahrena London is a Barnard alumna who majored in Biology and then went on to obtain a degree in Biomedical Engineering. She currently works for Cordis, Johnson & Johnson, a cutting edge part of that large firm. Sahrena spoke about her experiences at Barnard, the choices she made after graduating and how she wound up at Cordis. She also talked about her graduate degree in biomedical engineering and her work on medical devices, stem cell research, and business development and marketing. The 7 students who attended this event found the discussion interesting as they were given a new perspective on possible careers, learned about what goes on in industry, and were made aware of some of the choices and paths Barnard graduates have taken. The speaker also offered advice on how to obtain internships in hers and other companies.

(e) Lunch/Discussion with Steve Mirsky
Friday, March 3, 2006

Steve Mirsky writes for the magazine Scientific American and is host of the magazine’s pod cast. He writes on current topics of interest in science in an entertaining way to explain complex concepts to the lay person with no background in science. Having obtained a degree in chemistry, Steve finds his background in science particularly helpful writing and editing science papers for the magazine. About 8 students attended, coming from very different majors: biology, chemistry, art history, and English. Students received advice on how to enter this field and how to obtain internships. They found him to be a very down to earth speaker.

(f) Discussion with Ken Leung from L’Oreal
Monday, April 3, 2006

Ken Leung graduated from Columbia with a degree in Chemical Engineering and currently works in the research and development division of L’Oreal. He spoke about his experiences at Columbia, the choices he made after graduating, and the career path he followed to obtain this position. He also talked about the various fields that are available within research and development at L’Oreal. About 12 students attended and found the event very helpful. Some students that attended were specifically interested in working for L’Oreal while others were chemistry majors looking for creative research opportunities.