Career Development Presentations 2008-2009

The HSPP includes funding for career panels and presentations at which guest speakers provide information about science and science-related careers to our students. Robert Earl, the Director of Barnard’s Office of Career Development (OCD), coordinates this aspect of our program. The OCD organized seven events during the current reporting period. A member of the Career Development Office attended each event.

(a) October 20, 2008. Research Administration – Ms. Anda Cytroen, BC’83

A Barnard economics major, Ms Cytroen, currently works as a research administrator at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey at the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ). She completed her MPH in health administration from Columbia University. She led a discussion with about eight Barnard students on career opportunities in public health and public policy, research work taking place at the institute, her past experiences as the department administrator at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, UMDNJ and the division administrator at Columbia University Medical Center. She also gave out brochures of the institute to the students and for the career library for any future correspondence.

(b) November 12, 2008. Summer Internship Career Panel - A panel of students

Current Barnard students who had the opportunity to intern during the summer of 2008 participated in a panel discussion and shared their science internship experiences with a group of about twenty students. The panelists included three juniors and three seniors having a wide range of internships. They had done internships at the following places: NYS Psychiatric Institute, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, summer research in Spain, Columbia University REU (Physics), Mailman School of Public Health and tropical field biology in Costa Rica - study abroad through Duke University. A handout having a range of online resources for science internships was also given out to the students.

(c) December 2, 2008. Pharmaceutical Research & Development – Dr. Patricia Andrade-Gordon, BC’79

A Barnard chemistry and Spanish literature major, Dr.Gordon, obtained her Ph.D. degree in Molecular Pharmacology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook where she was a recipient of a pre-doctoral NIH award. She talked about her ground-breaking work as the Vice President of drug discover at Johnson & Johnson in the field of antithrombotic research. Dr.Gordon is also an Assistant Professor at Yale University, School of Medicine. A few specific issues that students were made aware of were the different jobs available in the pharmaceutical industry, in vivo and in vitro pharmacology, entry-level positions at pharmaceutical companies, drug testing and development.

(d) February 9, 2009. Health Education and Clinical Psychology on HIV & HIV Treatment – Dr. Michele Kofman
Dr. Kofman graduated from Barnard College as a Psychology major. She completed her MPH in Health Policy & Management from Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, a Masters in Psychology and PhD in Clinical Psychology – Health Emphasis from Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, Yeshiva University. She discussed her career as a Health Education & Outreach Manager at the HIV Comprehensive Care Centre, St. Luke’s Hospital, NY, a clinical psychologist in private practice and on staff at Rockefeller University and a consultant to pharmaceutical companies with twelve students. We had a great turn out from students particularly interested in the field of public health and psychology.

(e) March 9, 2009. Career Panel

Held in conjunction with the Barnard Chemical Society (BCS), the third annual career panel sought to invite individuals having a chemistry background but were not necessarily involved in the traditional roles defined for chemistry majors (at least at the undergraduate level) such as medicine or academia. This year, the event included two panelists from the NYPD Crime Lab, another from DEP Hazmat, and a panelist from Columbia University's Pathology Dept. Unfortunately, due to the current economy, all of these groups were experiencing hiring freezes and so were not able to promote any job opportunities. However, they did offer information about unpaid internships which had many students interested. The representatives from the NYPD Crime Lab and DEP had the students highly engaged, so BCS hopes to have them back in the future. The feedback was extremely positive. Approximately 25 students attended the event. Students highly benefited from the additional time provided for one-on-one questions and networking with the panelists. BCS hopes to make this feature part of future career panels as well.

(f) March 25, 2009. Clinical Research - Research & Early Development, Pulmonary, Immunology, Imaging; Clinical Medicine – Dr. Alise S. Reicin

Dr. Alise S. Reicin, a BC ’82 biochemistry graduate joined us for a light dinner and discussion about her career as the current Vice President of Research & Early Development and formerly of Clinical Immunology & Analgesia, Clinical Imaging at Merck & Co. She has also been the Senior Director of Pulmonary/Immunology at the pharmaceutical company and an assistant professor of clinical medicine at Columbia University. Dr. Reicin received her M.D with cum laude from Harvard Medical School. She has been the recipient of numerous awards during college and her career such as the Eleanor Elliott prize, Kauderer Chemistry, AmFAR Scholar award and the Merck Award for Excellence. We had a highly informal interaction with a small group of students discussing about her life on both personal and the professional front. Some of the issues covered were switching from clinical medicine to pharmaceuticals, drug development and career opportunities in the pharmaceutical sector, her life at college and possible career paths for students.

(g) April 23, 2009. Non-Profit/Scientific research- genetics, drug discovery, stem cells and identification of disease pathways – Ms. Valerie Estess

Ms. Valerie Estess, a BC ’81 graduate in English for led a discussion about her career as the co-founder and director of research for Project A.L.S, a highly reputed non-profit working towards
understanding, treating and curing ALS and related brain diseases. She works with research scientists and clinicians in diverse areas of scientific research such as drug discovery, stem cells and genetics. Under her direction, Project A.L.S opened the world’s first and only privately-funded laboratory in collaboration with Columbia University focusing on stem cells and ALS. In 2008, Project A.L.S launched Women and the Brain, a forum that unites women experts in brain health. She has frequently appeared on many news and television shows. She along with her sister was named Women of Vision by the Weizmann Institute of Science in 2004. She shared experiences of her sister Jennifer Estess’ battle with Lou Gehrig’s disease and the inception of Project A.L.S, the commendable work being carried out at the organization particularly in stem cell research and promoted summer internships available at the lab near Columbia University Medical Center. She got copies of the national bestseller, Tales from the Bed, the memoir of her Jennifer Estess which she co-authored and DVDs of the HBO documentary Three Sisters: Searching for a Cure about Project A.L.S for the students.