Career Development Presentations 2009-2010

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 five events during the current reporting period. A member of the Career Development Office attended each event.

A Barnard Anthropology major, Amanda Sutphin is an Urban Archeologist specializing in New York City. She has worked for 15 years at New York City Landmarks Preservation Committee (LPC), a city agency responsible for protecting the city’s historic resources and now is their Director of Archeology. She has done fieldwork in New York City, Greece and Israel. Her area of interest involves burial customs in New York and their evolution through time. She received her Masters in Anthropology from the Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA. Twelve Barnard students joined her for a light dinner and discussion about her career in urban archeology.

(b) October 29, 2009. Summer Science Internship Panel
Barnard students who had the opportunity to intern during the summer of 2009 participated in a panel discussion and shared their internship experiences with a group of thirty students. The panelists included one junior and four seniors having a wide range of internships. The plethora of internships included interning at the Biochemistry department at Barnard College, research in Neurobiology at Rockefeller University, clinical documentation in Uganda on HIV/AIDS, research in Neuroscience as an Amgen scholar at Columbia, and conducting research in traditional medicine in Tanzania. A handout having a range of online resources for science internships was also given out to the students. The students found the event highly informative with some of them staying back after the event to have a one-on-one interaction with the panelists. Robert Earl, the Director of Career Development also attended the event. A light dinner was provided to the attendees.

(c) November 16, 2009. Egg Donation Panel
The Hughes Science Pipeline Project in collaboration with Barnard Career Development organized a forum on the topic, Egg Donation: A blessing or a business, in the James Room, Barnard Hall to discuss the benefits and repercussions of human oocyte donation. The esteemed lists of panelists included President Debora Spar, Kitty Kolbert, Director, Athena Center for Leadership Development, Valerie Estess BC’81, co-founder and Director of Research, Project A.L.S and Dr. Nicole Noyes, MD, NYU Fertility Center. We also had Rachel Danis BC’10, a Psychology major who served as a student panelist representing the voice of her peers and colleagues. She also did her summer internship in 2009 at the Cornell Center for Reproductive Medicine and Infertility. The panel was conceived, developed and moderated by Aditi Shankar BC ’11. The event was attended by more than a hundred attendees including students, faculty, staff and parents. It was covered by the Barnard Magazine and as a lead story by the Columbia Spectator. The panel was followed by a brief question and answer session with the audience. Hors d’oeuvres were also served at the event.
Three Barnard students (along with the HSPP Student Coordinator) did a tour of the Project A.L.S./Jenifer Estess Laboratory for Stem Cell Research, the world’s first and only privately funded lab to focus on stem cell research. A joint venture with Project A.L.S. and Columbia University, the lab has done groundbreaking research work in understanding, treating and finding cures for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Project A.L.S. was co-founded in 1998 by Valerie Estess (BC ’81), Director of Research for Project A.L.S. The mission of Project A.L.S. is to recruit the world’s best research scientists and clinicians to work together towards an understanding of and the first effective treatments for A.L.S. Project A.L.S. has raised over $42 million, directing 81% to research programs. The lab tour was conducted by Valerie Estess. A thirty minute presentation on A.L.S and the lab’s research work was also provided by Christopher Henderson, leading researcher for the disease pathways team and co-director of Project A.L.S, followed by questions from the students. Information was also provided on potential internship opportunities.

Jessica Wilkinson was joined by ten Barnard students for light snacks and discussion about her career as the Director, State Biodiversity and Wetlands Program at the Environmental Law Institute (ELI), Washington D.C. ELI has done tremendous work in advancing environment protection through environmental law, policy and management since 1969. Ms. Wilkinson completed her Bachelors in Environmental Science cum laude, graduating with Anne Davidson Fellowship for Graduate Study for demonstrating excellence in the study of conservation. She received her Master’s degree in Environmental Management from the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University in 1994.