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WIS Career Seminar Series

By Janice Jones and Audrey Forrest

The first in a series of WIS seminars exploring career opportunities took place July 19, 2006, at the Alumni House on the MCV campus. Dr. Denise Pettit, a Senior Scientist with the Division of Consolidated Services for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and Dr. Sarah Elsea, an Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and Human Genetics at VCU, gave short presentations providing insight into government and academic career paths.

Dr. Pettit and Dr. Elsea answered many questions from seminar attendees and provided valuable advice on subjects ranging from job searches for two academic career households to landing an interview for a government position.

Dr. Jan Chlebowski, Associate Dean of Graduate Education, was also on hand to help field questions and provide information on employment and training resources available to the VCU community. A key "take home message" of the seminar was the need for those involved in a career search or contract negotiations to be proactive in researching the position and market

conditions in order to make informed decisions.

The second Women In Science seminar exploring career opportunities occurred on November 15th 2006. Dr. Sarah Helber, senior scientist with Commonwealth Biotechnologies Inc., and Dr. Margaret Saha, Professor in the Department of Biology at William and Mary, discussed the paths that lead them to their respective careers. Dr. Helber and Dr. Saha discussed such things as balancing a family with a career, when is best to have children, and salary in academics and industry. The main topics of interest were focused around teaching experience required in industry vs. academic professions and how to best plan for careers in each profession.

Please make plans to join us for the next WIS career opportunities seminar that will take place on Friday, December 1, 2006 at 2:00 p.m., in which Dr. Carleton J. Barbour, Ph. D. Senior Principal Scientist, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Schering-Plough Research Institute will be discussing a career path in "big pharma."

Committee Member Biographies

By Janice Jones

Lynn Hull, *President* (hulllc@vcu.edu)

Lynn is a third year PhD student in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at VCU. Her research interest is drugs of abuse and their mechanisms of action. She has several presentations to her credit and a publication for her work with *C. elegans*. In addition to her work with WIS, Lynn served as Secretary for the Pharmacology and Toxicology Student Association last year.

Emily Boice, *Treasurer* (boiceen@vcu.edu)

Emily is a second year PhD student in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at VCU. Her research interest is the characterization of proteases in the opportunistic pathogen *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Emily has received several scholarships for academic achievement and has served as Survivorship Chair for Relay for Life at St. Louis University.

Aimee Hollander, *Secretary* (Hollanderam@vcu.edu)

Aimee is a PhD student in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.



WIS Executive board 2005-2006, from left to right: Aditi Pandya, Audrey Forrest, Aimee Hollander, Lynn Hull, Kristen Wells, Jamie Sturgill, Emily Boice.

Audrey Forrest, *Chair, Newsletter Committee* (forrestad@vcu.edu)

Audrey is a third year PhD student in the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology at VCU. Her research interests are the mechanisms of oligodendrocyte development. Audrey is a graduate of the Post-Baccalaureate Premedical Certificate Program at VCU and has served as a teaching assistant for several VCU medical school courses.

Aditi Pandya, *Chair, Programming Committee* (pandyaa@vcu.edu)

Aditi is a second year PhD student in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at VCU. Aditi has worked with student organizations throughout her academic career and was cofounder and Director of Public Relations for the International Students Association at Michigan State University.

Jamie Sturgill, *Chair, VCU Community Outreach Committee* (sturgilljl@vcu.edu)

Jamie is a third year PhD student in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at VCU. Her research interests are in human allergy and neuroimmunology. Jamie has extensive research experience with several presentations and publications to her credit. Her most recent publication is for her work with the low affinity IgE receptor CD23. In addition to her work with WIS, Jamie is a founding member, Vice President and Treasurer for the Gift of Hope Overseas organization.

Jennifer Fettweis, *Chair, Development Committee* (fettweisjm@vcu.edu)

Jennifer is a third year PhD student in the Molecular Biology and Genetics Program, Department of Microbiology and Immunology at VCU. Her research interest is the characterization of a host cytoplasmic surveillance pathway (CSP) by intracellular bacteria. Jennifer has served as a graduate teaching assistant in Molecular Genetics at VCU and was a founding member and Vice President of Recruitment of Alpha Phi at the University of Virginia.

WIS upcoming events:

If you are interested in plugging in to the Women In Science feel free to contact the head of each committee. Here are some upcoming events for the new semester:

Community Outreach Committee:

Toys for Tots Drive going on now through Christmas Break.
Girl Scout Science Fun Day in April.

Intercampus Relations Committee:

Organizational meeting- Monroe Park Campus- Tentatively scheduled for
Wednesday, January 17th in the Student Commons

Programming Committee:

Upcoming Seminars:

- Friday, December 1 at 12 noon Dr. Barbour, a PhD level scientist at Schering-Plough
- Spring 2007 seminar on "Issues regarding postdocs"
- Topic for the second seminar of Spring 2007 is currently open for member's opinions.

Fund Raising Committee:

We will be making Business Cards for professional students next semester.

Elections will be held Spring of 2007

If you are interested in chairing one of these committees in the future, or in leading the organization, contact one of the officers listed above for more information.

Women in Science Mission Statement

The mission of Women in Science is to support and promote the career development of women scientists at Virginia Commonwealth University by increasing the representation, participation, and leadership of women in scientific disciplines and by promoting the leadership skills, visibility, and academic policies required for success at Virginia Commonwealth University and in the sciences. Women in Science serves to facilitate communication and networking among its members and to provide support to all women students and trainees in science in order to build a supportive community of women scientists that will nurture the professional development of current and future women in science.

The WIS newsletter is produced by Audrey Forrest, Newsletter Committee chair, Dawn Carter, Janice Jones, Amy Shaw, and Kate Shows, committee members.