

Marilyn Foote-Hudson, Executive Director of the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation welcomed everyone and shared her excitement to be in person with them.

Marilyn highlighted the agenda and noted the presenters and facilitators have a passion for helping people around the world - changing the world we live in – and for mentoring. Currently 30 volunteer mentors are participating in the program and the ones in the room were recognized. New scholars were recognized and encouraged to see the program as an extension of family that support them. Marilyn continued thanking the faculty advisors for their support of the program and the students.

Marilyn continued highlighting the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation has committed more than \$88 million to nonprofits in NC over the years. She noted the passion of the grantees and their visions and goals allow change to occur across the state.

Marilyn introduced Cindy Vavro, a long-time volunteer mentor in the Women In Science Scholars program. She shared Cindy’s dedication as a mentor in this program and her impact on many scholars. She shared that in her role leading Clinical Development at ViiV Healthcare, Cindy continues to impact the world through her work. Marilyn turned the podium over to Cindy.



Cindy Vavro, Clinical Development, ViiV Healthcare

highlighted that the scholars were about to receive a special gift – the gift of inspiration. She noted the faculty and mentors in the room would receive the gift of encouragement with the keynote message Dr. Smith would deliver.

Cindy highlighted Dr. Smith’s graduation from the University of Michigan School of Medicine and that she holds an MPH degree from the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Dr. Smith completed her internship, residency, and Infectious Disease fellowship at Rush University Medical Centre in Chicago. She shared her work as an Attending Physician at Stroger (formerly Cook County) Hospital and the CORE Center in Chicago.

Cindy continued that Dr. Smith spent twenty years as an HIV clinician and researcher, where she served as the Principal Investigator of the Rush University Medical Center Clinical Research Site of the AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG). Dr. Smith also served on the ACTG Executive Committee, as the chair of the ACTG Underrepresented Populations committee and chair of multiple ACTG clinical trials.

Cindy shared that Dr. Smith has published over 150 articles, abstracts and manuscripts and she co-edited one of the few books, “HIV/AIDS in U.S. Communities of Color”, which addressed the HIV epidemic among minorities in the US. The impressive bio and admiration for Dr. Smith was evident in Cindy’s introduction.



Kimberly Smith, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President, Head Research and Development, at ViiV Healthcare thanked Cindy as she greeted the audience. The keynote “Ambitious for Patients Living With And Impacted By HIV” included lots of memorable events including the formation of Dr. Smith’s career to her current developments at ViiV Healthcare. She noted the impact of teachers and shared a heartwarming example where her first-grade teacher kept a notebook of her early stories and explored her writing career in first grade. The impact of teachers and professors was noted along with her educational journey and her parents that encouraged her. She shared that she likes to tell stories.

Dr. Smith noted she has always felt confident to stand up and do the right thing. Her example as a role model for current students came in many ways, including her impact during her college days when she was advocating for Martin Luther King Day to be observed and students not to attend class on that day. She noted the quote from John Lewis “I was making good trouble”.

A few highlights included:

- Listening to the stories and how she saw patients being mistreated gave her the heart and passion to create change and that people need more empathy for others. Helping AIDS patients fight the stigma was as vital as the cure/treatment.
- The value of activists and people speaking up is at the core of why today there are programs like Early Access to Medication.
- Some teachers will stay with you forever - her first grade teacher saved little 'books' and sent them to her several decades later.

- No matter how successful you get - being a guest on OPRAH will be what your parents tell everyone about.
- The evolution of HIV drugs now has the ability for people living with HIV (PLWH) to take medicines every other month vs daily; there are drugs to help prevent HIV in vulnerable populations.
- Dr Smith and ViiV Healthcare are moving ahead - expanding the science, the offerings, the staff working on AIDS: until there is a cure!
- The value of communication and the change that can happen through a good communicator.
- The millions of lives being saved annually due to the evolving ViiV pipeline of products over the last decade for the treatment and prevention of HIV disease.
- Organic chemistry was a love of hers – find what you like to do. Passion makes all the difference – do the work that you are interested in doing.
- The reoccurring theme of relationships, empathy, action and Dr. Smith’s role as a healer.



Marilyn thanked Dr. Smith for the awesome inspirational and motivating message and outlined the afternoon sessions and networking opportunities available at lunch.

Daniella Graham, PhD, Assistant Professor and Interim Department Chair,



Dr. Danielle Graham

 B.S. in Biology (2011)	 Ph.D. in Microbiology (2015)	 Postdoc in Microbiology (2017)
Assistant Professor & Interim Department Chair, Biological and Forensic Science		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Traditional Grant Recipient (\$1.3 Million) • NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation WIS Faculty Mentor (2018-present) • National Science Foundation HBCU-UP Grant Recipient (\$179,175) • Department of Biological & Forensic Science Teacher of the Year (2020-2021) • Named one of 1,000 Inspiring Black Scientists in America by Cell Mentor 		
✉ dgraham@unfcsu.edu 🔗 linkedin.com/in/daniellagrahamphd/ 🐦 @Doctor_Gram		

Biological and Forensic Science, Fayetteville State University shared her

educational background and her current work at Fayetteville State University. She continued highlighting a recent grant from the NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation that is a partnership between East Carolina University and Fayetteville State University. The \$1.3 million grant will support scholarships and funding

summer research opportunities for students. The “Growing a Diverse Public Health

Workforce for Rural North Carolina through Graduate School Pathways” will provide a unique Summer Immersion Program and provide

Graduate Pathways Summer Program



[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)



Graduate Student Scholarships. Dr. Graham encouraged the students in the audience to reach out to hear how to learn more about the program, and to understand the many components to the grant and future expansions.



Leading the faculty and staff Networking Session, **Samantha Warren, Director, DEI, GSK**, noted her background and education with a strong emphasis on her love of all things NCSU and the Wolfpack family. Her current work at GSK includes supporting employee resource groups, HBCU engagement, diverse talent development and community partnership relationships. Sam also highlighted the diverse reverse mentoring at GSK and noted that it is a Best in Class practice in diversity by Diversity Best Practices. The session continued with faculty attendees sharing current happenings on their campus.

The scholar and mentor Networking Sessions provided opportunities for the mentors to lead discussions around developing a 30 or 60 second elevator speech, how to network via LinkedIn connections, and general meet and greet conversations.

Marilyn convened the group for a final wrap-up and thanked everyone for attending. She encouraged everyone to save the date Friday, March 31, 2023, for the Spring Conference.

