



Women In Science Scholars Program Annual Meeting - Monday, October 1, 2018

Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club

Marilyn Foote-Hudson, executive director of the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, welcomed approximately 95 attendees to the Women in Science Scholars Program annual meeting. She expressed concern and condolences for any of the attendees or their friends and family affected by the hurricane.

Marilyn talked about the Women in Science Scholars Program, and the growth of the program, which provides scholarships to students studying science and provides volunteer mentors to help guide them. She reported that the Foundation's annual report was released earlier this year highlighting the accomplishments of the Foundation in 2017. Her highlights included the awarding of Traditional Grants, Ribbon of Hope Grants and the continued strong support for the Child Health Recognition Awards program which has been postponed until December. The child health awards recognize public health professionals for bettering the lives of children. The annual report is available online at ncgskfoundation.org.

Marilyn recognized the mentors and faculty advisors present, and congratulated the scholars. She introduced the keynote speaker, Betsey Cuervo Tilson, MD, MPH highlighting how very busy she has been dealing with the hurricane and its aftermath. Dr. Tilson, our state health director and chief medical officer, worked in the Child Health Clinic at Wake County Human Services and served as medical director for Community Care of Wake and Johnson counties in North Carolina and chief network medical director for Community Care of North Carolina before assuming the helm of the state's health agency.

She noted that Dr. Tilson has also been an assistant consulting professor and cancer control specialist with Duke University Medical Center and clinical pediatric fellow at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Tilson earned her medical degree at Johns Hopkins University, where she also completed her pediatric residency, and a preventive medicine residency at UNC-Chapel Hill. Dr. Tilson holds a Master of Public Health from UNC-Chapel Hill and a bachelor's degree in biology from Dartmouth College.

Betsey Cuervo Tilson, MD, MPH "My Path and Lessons Learned Along the Way"

Dr. Tilson highlighted her plan B path, after plan A took a turn. She shared her career path and how adapting to a new plan played a large role in her educational endeavors. She traced her educational path that included an undergraduate degree in Biology, and the influence of her father when she went on to seek an MD degree. She attended UNC, obtaining her MPH in Maternal and Child Health, and her residency in Preventive

Medicine, and her post-doc in Cancer Control, noting many choices were her plan B options, but turned out to be the right one.

She spent much of her career at Community Care of North Carolina in the roles of Medical Director, Community Care of Wake and Johnston Counties, and then Chief Network Medical Director, before taking the position at NC DHHS as State Health Director and Chief Medical Officer. Dr. Tilson highlighted the benefits of networking, volunteering, serving on committees, and memberships in professional societies. She shared the value of leadership skills that can be attained with informal and formal training.

She shared her passion for making a difference in our state with her current role. She noted the four priority areas for the Department of Health and Human services: the Opioid Crisis, Early Childhood Health and Development, Medicaid Transformation, and Opportunities for Health.

The state Opioid Action Plan includes a multi-faceted and cross-sector approach to addressing the crisis.

- *Create a coordinated infrastructure*
- *Reduce oversupply of prescription opioids*
- *Reduce diversion of prescription drugs and flow of illicit drugs*
- *Increase community awareness and prevention*
- *Make naloxone widely available and link overdose survivors to care*
- *Expand access to treatment and recovery-oriented systems of care*
- *Measure our impact and revise strategies based on results*

Creating an Early Childhood Action Plan is another where the state is focused, and the guiding principles include:

- Brain and developmental science serve as the foundation for the Action Plan
- Children and families are at the center of our work
- Builds upon existing strengths and partnerships
- Goals are ambitious and achievable
- Focus is on all of North Carolina's children reaching their full potential, intentional about eliminating disparities
- Reflects the values of transparency, good stewardship, and accountability

The third is Medicaid Transformation and the guiding principles highlighted:

- 1) *Build on existing infrastructure in NC and learn from best practices from other states*
- 2) *Focus on whole person health*
- 3) *Support providers and patients*
- 4) *Promote quality and value*
- 5) *Promote access to care*

Working to ensure all North Carolinians have the opportunity for health is another priority. Access to high quality medical care is critical to a person's health, but only accounts for approximately 20% of a person's health. Understanding and addressing the other 80% of drivers of health is an important component in improving the health of our population and decreasing health care costs across the state. The underlying drivers of health include food security, housing stability, transportation, interpersonal violence, and employment.



Dr. Tilson shared lots of excellent advice and one was to be the change you want to see. Along this theme she reinforced the concept of recognizing someone's multi-faceted humanity as core and warned against the dehumanizing harm and stigma that can come from a unidimensional label. She used the example of when talking about a person struggling with a substance use disorder or an addiction and the dehumanizing aspect of labelling that person purely as an addict.

She stressed the importance of being transparent, truthful and trusting. She encouraged the audience to be self-aware and discover and know their strengths and weaknesses and allow that knowledge to help them build the right team and increase the effectiveness of that team.

Self-Awareness – Know your strengths and weaknesses

People Map Task-Leader

- Planning, organization are key
- Dependable, Timely
- What's the next step? What is not done yet?

Opportunities for improvement

- Listen and be open to others
- Praise efforts and successes
- Delegate
- Relax, play, share more of myself

ELIZABETH TILSON

Your Top 5 Themes

- Achiever
- Learner
- Relator
- Context
- Connectedness

Dr. Tilson noted the value of listening to others, as you cannot help or find a solution, until you identify the real underlying problem, need or goal. She used the quote from Lou Holtz, "I never learned anything by talking."

Several times, she encouraged students to take opportunities in college that can be life-changing, such as research or lab work. She emphasized that they should not put off opportunities until everything is right.

Scholars enjoyed their time at lunch getting to know the mentors at their tables, while faculty advisors talked with their colleagues.

After lunch, Marilyn introduced the afternoon sessions. First highlighting **Renu Jain**, a Scientific Director in Respiratory Medical Affairs in RTP at GSK. Renu earned a PhD in Biochemistry from East Carolina School of Medicine and she has been doing clinical research for over 15 years and has been in large, small and very small pharmaceutical companies. She has extensive experience in all phases of clinical trials across many different therapeutic areas and in many different regions of the world. Additionally, Renu is one of our volunteer mentors in the Women in Science Scholars program.

Continuing the introduction for the last afternoon session, Marilyn noted that **Tamara Poles** is the Community Engagement Specialist at the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center.

Marilyn highlighted that Tamara graduated from Roanoke College with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a minor in Environmental Sciences. She earned her Master of Education from Averett University. During undergrad, she noticed a disconnect between science and the public and wanted to figure out how to bridge the communication gap. After undergrad, she worked at the Virginia Museum of Natural History and then the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and was selected by the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center to develop and run IMPACTS, a new NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation funded science communication program. Tamara now trains scientists around the state how to communicate better with public audiences and coordinates community events that help citizens learn from scientists about research being done locally in our state.

Renu Jain, PhD, RAC “Personal Reflections”

Renu Jain shared her childhood experiences, including learning a new language to communicate with her grandmother and large family when she moved with her family back to India. This move had lots of new experiences that pushed Renu outside her comfort zone at the age of 10. The theme of embracing new opportunities and pushing yourself outside your comfort zone continued throughout her presentation.

Returning to the US to complete her PhD she encouraged the scholars to look for funding as the need for STEM PhD's is high. She shared her “paid” PhD experience at East Carolina University and her “Go Pirates” enthusiasm lives on today. Encouraging the audience that while pursuing your education, don't put your life on hold. She shared the

experiences as a wife, mother, and PhD student were hard, but very rewarding and encouraged the scholars to go for it if they wanted a PhD.

Her education included a Post Doc at GSK, which she felt was a very important stepping stone in her career path. Her desire to work with pediatric trials started when she was hired to manage two pediatric HIV trials. Renu shared a memory when she used a Venn Diagram with her manager, highlighting her desire to move into a new role when she wanted to work with adult clinical trials. But the door remained closed until she made a lateral move to the respiratory focused area.

Renu's passion for life, and giving back was seen when she highlighted her work with Habitat for Humanity, and a Honduras trip project that she participated in, and her current work on a GSK Pulse Assignment with the East Durham Children's Initiative. She shared that her Pulse working title there is "Organization Efficiency Consultant." She sees firsthand that one of our community weaknesses (across the US) is that people don't know their neighbors. Renu ended her highlights with her valuable advice below:

7 VALUABLE ADVICE FROM OLDER WOMEN TO ALL YOUNGER WOMEN

1. Don't waste too much time on people who don't cherish you. Learn to love yourself. Flowers are perishable but self-love is not.
2. No is a complete sentence. You don't have to justify every decision you make and ask for others' approval.
3. Read and travel more to feed your soul. Keep in mind that beauty will fade but wisdom will stay.
4. Celebrate all your achievements and failures. It is the ups and downs that prove you've truly lived.
5. Stop comparing yourself with other girls. There will always be someone smarter or prettier than you. But your value doesn't decrease just because someone is unable to see your uniqueness.
6. Think long and hard before you say "I do".
7. Stop to admire the little things in life no matter how busy you're. Always work to live, not live to work.

Tamara Poles, "Press Play"

The afternoon presentation centered on the classic Super Mario Bros Game platform. She shared her education and career path, along with skills and her career expectations set to the Mario Game theme highlighting players, game elements, and levels of play. Her game included education, softball and leadership skills, along with excellent mentoring and terrible mentoring examples that she experienced. Her creativity was seen along the way with her development and work with programs at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. Working virtual science into educational programs has helped build her career path.

She highlighted the great work she is doing with the North Carolina Science Festival and its reach across the state was noted. Her work with Inspiring Meaningful Programs and Communication Through Science (IMPACTS) Program is a state-wide public science communication training and outreach initiative funded by the NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation that she implements. She noted that IMPACTS provides selected applicants with the opportunity to receive public science communication training for free and she is currently recruiting new IMPACTS participants.

IMPACTS is designed to train scientists in public communication using a nationally acclaimed curriculum along with enabling them to practice and hone their science communication skills. Applicants can be researchers, undergraduate/graduate students, doctoral students, post-doctoral students, or industry scientists in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics. The audience was encouraged to seek out the website <https://www.ncsciencefestival.org/aboutimpacts> if interested.

Tamara's final words included her encouragement to the audience to follow their passion, to seek out a mentor, and become a mentor.



Photo celebrating the “North Carolina Science Festival”

Marilyn Foote-Hudson concluded the annual meeting by thanking all the speakers and wishing the scholars well as they pursue their education. **SAVE THE DATE** for the Women in Science Spring Conference on **Monday, March 1, 2019**. Details will be sent closer to the date. For more information contact Dawn Lloyd at Dawn.L.Lloyd@gsk.com.