



Women In Science Scholars Program Annual Meeting Highlights October 7, 2024 *Rizzo Center, Chapel Hill*



Marilyn Foote-Hudson, Executive Director of the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, welcomed everyone and shared the agenda for the day.

Marilyn highlighted the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Women in Science Scholars program was developed to mentor scholars, specifically to support their academic growth and development while plotting a successful STEM career.

Marilyn requested the audience to be inquisitive, to meet their colleagues in the room, and “Think of yourselves as the exciting news of the day”.

Marilyn conveyed her compassion for the disaster victims in the western part of the state, and noted the amazing capacity of neighbors helping neighbors, and how that is encouraging and heartwarming.



NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Women in Science Scholar Participants Oct 7, 2025

Marilyn gave a special welcome to Dr. Margaret Dardess, PhD, JD, Chair of the NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation before introducing the keynote, Wanda Hill, RPh, JD.

Wanda Hill, RPh, JD presented “*Embracing Challenges as Growth Opportunities in Your Career Journey*”. Wanda shared her experience growing up in a rural area of New Jersey, and her STEM origin story. Howard University College of Pharmacy is where she obtained her Registered Pharmacist certification, and University of Maryland, School of Law is where she attained her Juris Doctor degree. She shared how you must advocate for yourself. When your role models, guidance counselors, and advisors try to steer you down a comfortable path, know that you don’t have to take that path, you have the option to change into the avenue that you want to pursue.



Highlighting the “Platinum Rule” not the “Golden Rule” as part of her values and personal mission sharing how she is changing outcomes for others in many ways. She encouraged all the attendees to develop and stay true to their personal mission. Excellent examples of “leaning in” were shared, and how it came with extra work, but allowed her greater experience and exposure. A key takeaway: Have the confidence to lead when needed.



Being published in the *Lancet Journal* was a great example where she volunteered to take on additional work but was rewarded with a whirlwind of accolades. Key takeaway: Step-in where you can be a solution to a problem.

Wanda shared her career path in the pharmaceutical industry, starting as a sales representative with Merck. Her path to regulatory and legal affairs were options due to her passion to make a difference. Today she is leading an initiative to help further embed inclusion and diversity within the R&D organization for GSK, a global biopharma company. As well as her many personal endeavors to make a difference.

Her passion for doing the right thing, mentoring and leadership coaching, creating opportunities and supporting STEM was a common theme throughout the keynote.

Marilyn thanked Wanda and invited everyone to lunch.

The afternoon included two sessions, one on graduate programs at East Carolina University and one on networking.



Debra L. Jackson, PhD, Professor and Dean of the Graduate School, ECU presented “*East Carolina University Graduate Programs*”. Dr. Jackson’s passion for education and enthusiasm for learning was a key theme throughout the session. She highlighted her personal interest in geology, math, psychology, philosophy and anthropology as reasons for her second senior year as an undergrad. She secured her B.A. in philosophy from Middle Tennessee State University, and her doctoral degree in philosophy from Purdue University.

As a first generation student, she conveyed the feelings some students have with “imposter syndrome”. It often includes both pride for your accomplishments and self-doubt. If you have ever wondered if you really belong in the room, the answer is yes. The reality of how you think about yourself, about the attitude you have toward yourself is important. Make the attitude you have toward others you respect and admire, the attitude you have for yourself.

She shared graduate school application tips including:

- Write about what motivates you – tell that story and your application will stand out.
- Your CV or resume is not a comprehensive catalogue of what you have done. When you list the ordinary you don’t stand out.
- Submit your application early or on-time.

- After you submit your application, follow up with a phone call or email asking whether you need to submit additional documents.
- Email the faculty of the program you are interested in to convey your interest.
- GRE – take it at least two times, your score will improve the second time.

ECU's graduate programs were highlighted, and questions answered. ECU has a medical school, a dental school, a college of engineering and technology, and a broad array of online certifications, master's programs, and doctoral programs. Visit gradschool.ecu.edu/information-request-form for more information.

Laurel Foote-Hudson, PhD, Director of Learning and Programs at Fidelity Investments presented "*Networking: Build Your Strategy*" with a unique theme that "you don't have to be the best kept secret". Dr. Foote-Hudson received a B.A. in Spanish Language and Literature, Japanese Language and Literature and her PhD in English and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She shared personal experiences and unique situations that allowed her to connect with the audience. A few of her insights and perspectives included:

- Have you set your brand? What is your brand? Do your colleagues know what you value and are you conveying what really matters to you?
- Who are you a brand ambassador for? Who are you helping build their brand? Your mentors are your brand ambassadors, and your brand ambassadors become your sponsors.
- "Super Connectors" are valuable and you will benefit from building these relationships.
- Attending multiple networking events is a great way to get to know others.



Dr. Foote-Hudson encouraged the audience to set three SMART goals this year. One of the goals could be to add five new people to your network. Use LinkedIn to help build these connections.

Dr. Foote-Hudson used the term "comparatist" to describe herself, and

clearly, she is a comparatist, an advocate and mentor to helping others enhance their learning experiences, development and career vitality.

Marilyn encouraged everyone to “Save the Date” March 28, 2025 for the NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Women in Science Scholar Spring Conference. Please contact Dawn.L.Lloyd@gsk.com with any questions.