

Pathways to Success in Biopharma Virtual Graduate Summit and Career Expo

SUMMARY



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Summit Introduction

In October 2021, PhRMA, the Center for Healthcare Innovation (CHI), and the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) organized the Pathways to Success in Biopharma Virtual Graduate Summit and Career Expo. The 2-day event was a unique opportunity for academic and industry leaders to convene and illuminate the innovation and impact within the industry, pathways for career success, and connect the next generation of diverse biopharmaceutical leaders with potential career opportunities. The Summit welcomed over 600 students from nearly 250 universities around the country and featured 5 expert panels, 13 company breakout rooms, and 15 virtual booths with industry experts.

Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Talent Recruitment, Acquisition and Retention for the BioPharma Industry - Member Companies

Description:

CHI and UNCF led a discussion on creating additional career opportunities for underrepresented graduate students and early careerists. The panel featured academics and university representatives from leading colleges and universities, including Historically Black Colleges (HBCUs) and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). Panelists discussed their views, best practices, and recommendations for creating internship, fellowship, and career opportunities for historically underrepresented and diverse graduate students. Finally, panelists explained how industry and academia could build deeper relationships to optimize the pipeline of diverse students.

Summary:

This panel focused on providing best practices for creating robust career pathways and highlighting successful programs that have yielded additional career opportunities for students. The panelists discussed having formal and informal champions at academic institutions. Academic champions lead and initiate conversations with life science companies.

The panelists also suggested how academia and industry can develop a deeper relationship to further develop a talent pipeline of diverse students into the industry. One recommendation is to hire more industry experts to lead courses and lectures to better equip students for success. Industry professionals have a comprehensive knowledge of the industry's nuances, including the markets, systems, and processes.

Next, the panelists discussed the challenges members of historically underrepresented groups face as they enter the industry. Experts also mentioned different strategies they have used to address those challenges. The panelists said that some students enter the industry with a lack of confidence and no formal direction. To combat this, the panelists agreed that students could be paired with industry mentors to help guide them and provide insight on what it looks like to be successful in the role. The experts said that support and development groups could help students transition from academia to the industry. Students can seek out mentors who have successfully made the transition.

Finally, the experts discussed specific biopharmaceutical programs that focused on recruiting diverse talent. According to mckinsey.com, African Americans in the U.S. account for about 13% of the population, but they comprise just 7% of the total biopharmaceutical industry workforce and 3% of its executive teams. Successful programs will aim to create actionable change within the biopharma industry by improving the recruitment and retention of diverse talent and enhancing the student educational experience at participating universities, including HBCUs, HSIs, and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs).

“Hire more industry experts to lead courses and lectures to better equip students for success. Industry professionals have a comprehensive knowledge of the industry's nuances, including the markets, systems, and processes.”

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Welcome & Chief Diversity Officer Roundtable

Description:

Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs) are often essential to a company's core operating model, helping to set direction, recruit, and enhance the experience of hundreds of thousands of employees in the industry. This panel featured some of the country's leaders who discussed how they are leading diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts at their companies.

Summary :

This panel focused on the role of CDOs in the biopharmaceutical industry and the paths that each panelist took that landed them in their CDO roles. The panelists recalled personal experiences that benefit individuals seeking entry into the biopharma DEI space.

Assessing an organization's prior commitment and historical efforts on diversity, equity, and inclusion is a crucial first step when deciding to work in biopharma. Additionally, individuals need commitment and passion in the biopharma DEI space because the work is challenging but incredibly rewarding.

The panel also discussed the lack of undergraduate or graduate programs tailored specifically for a career in DEI. However, degree fields such as human resources, communications, and data analytics have many applications to the DEI space within biopharma. Additionally, many universities are beginning to have certificate programs in DEI for individuals to learn more about the field and what a career in biopharma DEI entails.

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DEI work in the biopharma industry is shaped by lived experiences and must be an ongoing process within the industry. Panelists especially called on the students in attendance to lead and contribute from where they are. In addition, individuals can impact DEI work in academia through the organizations they join and their leadership positions.

Finally, the panel highlighted that the transition into the DEI space within the biopharmaceutical industry is unique because there are so many segues from various backgrounds. Therefore, leveraging one's network, assessing a company's culture, and asking about a company's DEI plan are essential to consider when entering the biopharma industry and navigating the multitude of opportunities.

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A Day in the Life Roundtable

Description:

Featuring professionals at different points in their biopharmaceutical careers, this panel showcased the diversity of the biopharma industry. The panelists discussed how they got into their jobs and what resources/experiences have helped them in their careers.

Summary:

This panel highlighted three individuals working in the biopharmaceutical industry in different fields and at different stages in their careers. The panelists began the discussion by outlining what a typical day looks like in their roles. A common theme was that no two days are the same because the industry is constantly evolving, making working in the industry exciting and rewarding. When discussing how they individually got to their current roles, panelists highlighted networking and fellowships as essential tools they used.

Next, the panel discussed how the perception of the biopharmaceutical industry changes with the COVID-19 pandemic and news coverage. That is the message that was not shared enough throughout the pandemic has been the importance of the patient. Biopharmaceutical companies research new and novel therapies to benefit patients, and patients are the most important stakeholder. The industry's goal is to best serve patients.

Finally, networking was a common theme in the panel and suggestions for early- and mid-stage careerists when entering the industry. Panelists stressed the importance of transferable skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving as skills from any background that will help an individual excel in the industry, particularly for those with non-scientific backgrounds. In addition to networking, being adaptable because the industry is constantly changing, leveraging professional associations, and exploring all areas of the industry before making a decision are crucial steps.

“Teamwork, communication, and problem-solving as skills from any background that will help an individual excel in the industry, particularly for those with non-scientific backgrounds.”

Getting Your Foot in the Door Roundtable

Description:

The panel discussion aimed to provide best practices and insightful ideas for creating career opportunities for historically underrepresented and diverse students in the pharmaceutical industry.

Summary:

This panel focused on programs, fellowships, and jobs that open the door to a job in the industry - and how to be competitive in applying. The panelists discussed encouraging academia and the biopharmaceutical industry to form strategic partnerships at HBCUs, HSIs, and MSIs. The panelists mentioned creating awareness earlier in a student's academic career. Students could be engaged as early as middle school and high school. They can be partnered with a role model or mentor to help guide them along the way.

Next, the panelists discussed the best practices for exposing students and early-age careerists with non-scientific backgrounds to the biopharmaceutical industry. The panelists asserted that students with non-scientific backgrounds could focus heavily on building a robust network. Networking helps you to advance your career and gives you access to more job opportunities. Expanding your contacts can open doors to new opportunities for career advancement and personal growth. The experts added that much of their career success is attributed to the strong networking channels they have created over time.

“Expanding your contacts can open doors to new opportunities for career advancement and personal growth.”

Finally, the panelists discussed career and internship pathways into the biopharmaceutical industry. The panelists said that academia and industry could partner to help bring more companies on campus to career fairs. Also, experts agreed that students could look for bridge programs. Bridge programs prepare graduates for careers in the biotechnology industry, including government, academic, laboratories, and private sector that serve as a pathway to advance training via online learning or in person.

Keynote & Fireside Chat

Description:

The Keynote and Fireside Chat featured Mr. Steve J. Ubl, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America Association of America (PhRMA) and Ms. Siddhi Shah, Director, Strategy & Analytics at MilliporeSigma. The keynote discussion focused on some of the exciting developments occurring in the biopharmaceutical industry, what makes the biopharmaceutical industry unique, and the importance of ensuring an industry aligns with one's personal core values. The session then wrapped up with a question-and-answer portion.

Summary:

Mr. Steve Ubl, CEO of PhRMA, began by discussing some of the exciting developments occurring in the biopharmaceutical industry. It is an exhilarating time for all students and early-stage careerists to consider entering the global biopharmaceutical industry. The biopharmaceutical industry has recently brought forth new, cutting-edge medicines and therapies for diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis C, and diabetes. There are many exciting and novel breakthrough drugs on the horizon for diseases such as Sickle Cell Disease and Hemophilia. For example, clinical trials for faster-acting insulins that dramatically reduce the number of shots required are underway, and curative therapies for diabetes are also under development. These exciting scientific breakthroughs further demonstrate that the industry is undergoing an incredibly exciting time. The professionals in the industry are excited to welcome passionate new thinkers and leaders to the biopharmaceutical industry to join an exciting mission.

As students and early-stage careerists begin launching and cultivating their careers, it is essential to know if industry and the organizations that comprise it align with one's personal goals and values. Students also may want to know what makes a particular industry unique and why it stands out from other industries. Learning about what makes the biopharmaceutical industry different can help students understand how the field of work aligns with their interests and passion. Ms. Siddhi Shah, Director, Strategy & Analytics at MilliporeSigma, began by outlining what made the biopharmaceutical industry the right choice for her when contemplating her career options.

Ms. Shah recalled her journey and why she found the biopharmaceutical industry to be the right fit. For example, the global biopharmaceutical industry has a long history and culture of treating all employees as vital and integral parts of the industry. Moreover, the biopharmaceutical industry has stood apart as an industry that has a long and storied history of creating a positive, inclusive workplace culture and environment for women professionals to thrive. For instance, according to Leanin.org and McKinsey's Women in the Workplace Study, the pharmaceutical industry has the highest number of women in the workplace at all career levels, from entry-level positions to C-suite executives. Additionally, the biopharmaceutical industry has shown an ongoing commitment to address fundamental societal needs. The leaders and workers in the biopharmaceutical industry have committed to a continuous process of listening and learning to drive the necessary changes that benefit all.

Next, Ms. Shah discussed the importance of finding potential employers that can offer students opportunities that align with their passions. Students may want to ask potential employers about the issues that matter most to them during interviewing and hiring processes. Aligning industry and organizational core values to students and early-stage careerists is an essential first step in beginning one's career journey.

Asking questions about the workplace culture at organizations is vital in ensuring a company and industry align with a prospect's personal core values. This can also help in identifying careers that the individual would find rewarding. For instance, asking potential employers how they are supporting employees' mental health during the pandemic or what actions are being taken to ensure inclusivity can be valuable questions that help a candidate ensure that a potential employer's priorities are synergistic with one's personal goals, values, and ambitions.

Students were encouraged to think about what industry best prepares them for future success in an industry they find rewarding. Looking at how an industry plans for the future in terms of profits and people can reveal if an industry aligns with a candidate's personal goals. When looking at the biopharmaceutical industry, one can easily see the industry has grown rapidly, but it has also invested those profits in its people. For instance, according to phrma.org, the global biopharmaceutical industry averages nearly \$1,500 per employee on learning and development, which is \$400 more than the U.S. average.

Additionally, learning opportunities abound in the industry, including working in different functional areas, from R&D to sales to corporate strategy. Formal career development programs, tuition reimbursement, and robust networking opportunities are just a few of the industry perks that make the biopharmaceutical industry stand out compared to other industries.

Additionally, the future of the industry is incredibly bright. According to Statista, the U.S. biopharmaceutical industry has tripled since 2001. Moreover, the biopharmaceutical industry is one of the global economy's most recession- and crisis-proof sectors.

The industry can facilitate students' expertise and passion and place students on a career path to success. It is never too late for students to begin thinking about their future career paths and potential Industries and organizations.

Question and Answer Session

What advice do you have for students seeking to cultivate and find mentors early in their careers?

It is essential to have a mentor you admire and connect with - in the way they approach their work, how they think, or the career path they have taken. Mentors do not need to be in the same role that a mentee may seek. Identifying a mentor based on their leadership style is more important. Mentorships also do not need to be overly formal. Any discussions around how individuals got to where they are today and how they approach their work can be beneficial for mentees in a mentoring relationship. Sometimes asking potential mentors about their career journey can open the door for a mentoring relationship.

"It is essential to have a mentor you admire and connect with - in the way they approach their work, how they think or the career path they have taken. Mentors do not need to be in the same role that a mentee may seek. "

As you reflect on your career journey, what advice do you have for your younger self?

Your unique voice, ideas, and perspectives are critical to an organization. It is vital to have the confidence to be able to share your unique contributions and voice to an organization.

"Inclusive boards composed of members that can share different opinions, perspectives, and styles. "

What advice can you give to leaders on how to build and cultivate a diverse and inclusive environment?

Diversity efforts start at the top of an organization, including the C-suite and board members, and these leaders must lead by example. It is essential to have diverse and inclusive boards composed of members that can share different opinions, perspectives, and styles.

This simple step is a great indicator of how an organization is prioritizing organizational DEI efforts. Next, leadership needs to provide the tools and tactics to support building an inclusive and safe workplace. Executives and leaders should participate in unconscious bias and DEI training. Leadership should organize listening sessions and town halls with employees to ensure DEI conversations are supporting a genuine cultural shift within an organization. Finally, leadership should measure organizational DEI efforts. It is vital to question employees on their feelings of diversity progress in the workplace to create a baseline moving forward.

“Leadership needs to provide the tools and tactics to support building an inclusive and safe workplace. Executives and leaders should participate in unconscious bias and DEI training. ”

How has covid-19 impacted your views on the biopharmaceutical industry, and how can students be a part of that change?

The biopharmaceutical industry has had a significant impact on overall societal well-being well before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has brought this to the front of mind for so many around the globe. The industry's drive, success, and openness. as it works toward novel modalities and exploring new and innovative ways to get therapies and vaccines to patients, are only going to increase.

“Speak up, network, and work for an industry that you genuinely believe in, both now and for your future prospects as well. ”

Do you have any other final advice for students?

Speak up, network, and work for an industry that you genuinely believe in, both now and for your future prospects as well.

Summary: Key Recommendations

- ⇒ Early careerists could assess an organization's prior commitment and historical efforts on diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is a crucial first step when deciding to work in biopharma.
- ⇒ It is essential for students to have a mentor that they admire and connect with - in the way they approach their work, how they think, or the career path they have taken. Mentors do not need to be in the same role that a mentee may seek.
- ⇒ Diversity efforts start at the top of an organization, including the C-suite and board members, and these leaders must lead by example. Companies should have diverse and inclusive boards composed of members that can share different opinions, perspectives, and styles.
- ⇒ Leadership could provide the tools and tactics to support building an inclusive and safe workplace. Executives and leaders should participate in unconscious bias and DEI training.
- ⇒ Leveraging one's network, assessing a company's culture, and asking about a company's DEI plan are essential to consider when entering the biopharma industry and navigating the multitude of opportunities.
- ⇒ Teamwork, communication, and problem-solving are skills from any background that will help an individual excel in the industry, particularly those with non-scientific backgrounds.
- ⇒ Institutions could hire more industry experts to lead courses and lectures to equip students for better success. Industry professionals have a comprehensive knowledge of the industry's nuances, including the markets, systems, and processes.
- ⇒ Successful programs will aim to create actionable change within the biopharma industry by improving the recruitment and retention of diverse talent and enhancing the student educational experience at participating universities, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs).
- ⇒ Students should expand their contacts. It can open doors to new opportunities for career advancement and personal growth.
- ⇒ Speak up, network, and work for an industry that you genuinely believe in, both now and for your future prospects as well.

PhRMA graduate summit and career expo

In October, undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral trainees, faculty, member companies and other community partners came together over two days for our first-ever graduate summit and career expo, **Pathways to Success in Biopharma.**



608
ATTENDEES



224
SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

367

RESUMES DISTRIBUTED TO MEMBER COMPANIES

from participants looking for opportunities in the biopharmaceutical industry across research, technology, legal, business, marketing and accounting.

5

EXPERT PANELS

13

**COMPANY
BREAKOUT ROOMS**

15

**VIRTUAL BOOTHS WITH
INDUSTRY EXPERTS**

125,962 SUMMIT VIDEO VIEWS
ON YOUTUBE

00:41
AVERAGE WATCH TIME



18,362
EVENT PAGE VISITS



Many talented students look forward to a career that can change lives within the biopharmaceutical industry. As part of PhRMA's Equity Initiative, we're excited to offer more events like this and continue the critical work of building a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the United States. Follow along for more updates and sign up for our newsletter at PhRMA.org/equity.

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About PhRMA:

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America is a professional membership organization representing innovative biopharmaceutical research companies. PhRMA advocates for explaining the increase complexity and risk of the research and development process and ensuring broad access to the appropriate use of medicines.

About the Center for Healthcare Innovation:

The Center for Healthcare Innovation, a leading non-profit research and educational institute dedicated to making healthcare more equitable.

About the United Negro College Fund:

UNCF's mission is to build a robust and nationally-recognized pipeline of under-represented students who, because of UNCF support, become highly-qualified college graduates and to ensure that our network of member institutions is a respected model of best practice in moving students to and through college.

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