

Lean In, Women in Science

Tashni-Ann Dubroy is the 17th President of the “Mother of all Historically Black Universities in the South”, Shaw University. Dr. Dubroy’s administration has positioned Shaw as a resource to the City of Raleigh through entrepreneurial innovation, civic presence and support for students and surrounding communities.



Her path to the presidency has been unconventional, but her leadership has been categorized as a fresh and needed vision for the sustainability of higher education in metropolitan settings. Dr. Dubroy began her career as a Research Scientist at BASF, the world’s largest chemical company. She quickly ascended to the position of Global Technology Analyst, and after two years, was appointed to serve Chemical Procurement Manager, where she managed a budget of \$35 million.

Prior to joining Shaw University, she co-founded Tea and Honey Blends, a hair care company that manufactured and retailed natural hair care products, and co-owned downtown Raleigh’s Element Beauty Bar. Her entrepreneurial success has landed her on the pages of Money Magazine and Bloomberg’s BusinessWeek.

A nationally-recognized advocate for female participation in the sciences, Dr. Dubroy was recognized by Cosmopolitan Magazine, as a “Fun, Fearless Female” who is making waves in the science community as founder of the Brilliant & Beautiful Foundation. Dr. Dubroy also serves on the Executive Board of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Raleigh Alliance and the Carolina Business Development Fund. Dr. Dubroy earned her Ph.D. in Physical Organic Chemistry from North Carolina State University in 2007, and holds a Masters of Business Administration from Rutgers University in New Jersey

Ashalla Freeman is the Director of Diversity Affairs and of the Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity (IMSD) in the Office of Graduate Education at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine. In this position, she manages diversity recruitment and monitors underrepresented student admissions to biomedical PhD programs; aids the development and implementation of diversity awareness/education programming for faculty, staff, and students; and administers and coordinates the NIH-funded UNC-IMSD program that aims to enhance the graduate training and career success of underrepresented biomedical PhD students. Dr. Freeman has always had a passion for biomedical research, science education, and increasing diversity in the biomedical workforce, and is a 2016 recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Inspiring Women in STEM Award.



Originally from Jackson, Mississippi, Dr. Freeman has a BS in Chemistry from Tougaloo College and Ph.D. in Microbiology/Immunology (bacterial pathogenesis) from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She received her postdoctoral training in Microbiology (bacterial protein biochemistry) at UNC-Chapel Hill, and as a SPIRE Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, she taught for a year in the Department of Biological Sciences at Winston Salem State University. Upon completion of her postdoctoral training in 2009, Dr. Freeman began her career in science higher education administration.

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Karyn Hede has fashioned a career that combines her love of science with a passion for writing. Trained as a molecular geneticist, she transitioned to a career in science writing early in her career. Over the years, she has worked in biomedical journalism, technical medical writing, and public affairs both for universities and for biomedical philanthropy.



She has written about science and medicine for a variety of national and international publications, including Science, Nature, Technology Review, Scientific American and Journal of the National Cancer Institute, where she was a contributing writer for many years. Currently, Ms. Hede is news editor at the journal Genetics in Medicine and teaches scientific writing to first-year graduate students in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences Program at UNC-Chapel Hill. She is also a biomedical communications consultant to a number of biotechnology companies, universities, non-profit organizations and biomedical philanthropies. She loves to talk about career skills for scientists and has been a frequent writer and speaker on the topic. When not geeking out talking about science, she loves running, cycling, gardening and birding.

Patricia Phelps is the Director of the Professional Development and Career Office at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Her office provides professional development and career services to 3,500 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the School of Medicine, the Bloomberg School of Public Health and the School of nursing. Dr. Phelps was tasked with re-envisioning the office to align services with the recommendations of the NIH Biomedical Workforce Task Force and transform how biomedical researchers are trained. Dr. Phelps leverages resources through partnerships across Johns Hopkins University, Maryland based organizations focused on work force development and innovation and the biotech and pharmaceutical industry. Her office focuses on experiential learning and welcomes partnerships where trainees can develop career specific skills.



Prior to working at Johns Hopkins, Dr. Phelps served as Education Specialist for the Smithsonian Institution, Museum of Natural History; Deputy Director for Graduate Partnerships at the National Institutes of Health; and Director for Science, Training, and Diversity at UNC – Chapel Hill. Dr. Phelps earned her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Physiology from NC State University and her BS in Food Science and Technology from NCSU.

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Laura Rowley is trained as a molecular biologist, but is now focused on promoting life science research through entrepreneurship and technology based economic development. Laura currently serves as Associate Director, Technology & Talent at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. In this capacity, she is responsible for leading efforts to create, manage, and measure programs leveraging North Carolina's technology based assets to attract and retain life science jobs and investments.



A native of Pennsylvania, Dr. Rowley first came to the Carolinas to attend Furman University in Greenville, SC, where she earned her bachelor's degree in biology. She then went on to complete her PhD in genetics and molecular biology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Laura became involved in the North Carolina innovation community through a series of training opportunities including serving as the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Fellow at the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, and internships at the North Carolina Office of Science, Technology & Innovation, and the Business Technology Development group at the Biotech Center.

Meg Shea is an experimental physicist and quantum computing researcher working towards her PhD at Duke University. Her research focuses on understanding and exploiting the quantum mechanics of a single atom's interaction with light. She's an experimentalist who has built her system from the ground up. The instrumentation and technical work she has done led her to complete a M.S. in Electrical and Computer Engineering while enrolled as a candidate for her PhD in Physics. Upon joining Duke, Ms. Shea was selected as a University Scholar, a competitive fellowship that brings together interdisciplinary individuals from the undergraduate, graduate, and professional school populations. Ms. Shea is also passionate about science education and communication. Before coming to Duke she was a high school teacher of physics and math at a boarding school in England. At Duke she has participated in many outreach activities with the physics department, the Duke Fitzpatrick Institute of Photonics, and on her own. She has visited local schools and spoken about her research to the wider Duke community, partly through her position as a University Scholar. She attended the Optical Society of America's Student Leadership Conference in 2016. Outside of the lab, Ms. Shea can often be found on a Frisbee field chasing discs of plastic.

