



## Women In Science Scholars Program Spring Conference Highlights

*Friday, March 1, 2019*

Marilyn Foote-Hudson, executive director of the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, welcomed attendees to the Women in Science Scholars Program spring conference. She recognized the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation senior Women In Science scholars who will graduate at the end of the semester, and also recognized and thanked the volunteer mentors and faculty advisers for their contributions to the program's success.

She reported that the Foundation's annual report would be released later this month and will highlight the accomplishments of 2018, including the awarding of new Traditional Grants and Ribbon of Hope Grants. The Foundation continued its strong support for the Child Health Recognition Awards program, which recognizes public health professionals for bettering the lives of children, and the Women in Science Scholars Program, which provides scholarships to students studying science and provides mentors to help guide them. The annual report will be available online at [ncgskfoundation.org](http://ncgskfoundation.org).

She introduced the keynote speaker, Emily Kiser, MPH, the program manager for the Triangle Global Health Consortium, which was awarded a grant from the NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation to help fund a pilot mentorship program for graduate and undergraduate students at four area universities. Emily has ten years of experience in public health and nonprofit management in a variety of areas including reproductive, pediatric and global health. She also has focused on migrant health, working on a project identifying labor trafficking in North Carolina and completing her master's thesis on mental health in migrant farmworkers. Emily holds a BA in Spanish from UNC-Chapel Hill, a certificate in nonprofit management from Duke University, and an MPH from UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.

Emily Kiser, MPH, keynote was titled "The Path is Made by Walking". Emily shared her career path thus far and urged the scholars to gain experience by taking opportunities that arise and pursuing one's passion. She said that by maintaining flexibility and being open-minded, career paths will unfold that are challenging and interesting. She encouraged the audience to think about their "background" as including more than just their educational/professional background, and she referenced the book "Becoming" as a great read written by Michelle Obama. She reminded the scholars that they won't likely follow one career path upon graduation, that instead they probably will have many different roles and jobs as part of their career paths. Our careers don't have a starting point and ending point. She shared a poem by

Antonio Machado that says, “There is no path. The path is made by walking.” That, she said, “perfectly captures the way many of our career paths actually unfold.”

She shared some tips, especially about networking and connections. They include:

1. At times, opportunity is present in rejection, and is often only seen in hindsight.
2. Take advantage of all your opportunities, like study abroad programs.
3. Look for programs that fit your background, make the most of opportunities, and don't be afraid to apply for internships, and jobs where you don't have every skill or experience listed in the job description. It's okay not to be an expert when you enter the new role, you will become one.
4. Learn another language. This will help get your foot in the door to so many opportunities.
5. Start volunteering now with places where you might like to work. This gives you the opportunity to learn more about the organization, make connections and demonstrate your commitment to the work they are doing.
6. Connections are everything. Do not to be afraid to tap into any connections that you have, and use them as much as you can.
7. It's okay not to have a major at first in your undergraduate studies, take classes and figure out what you really enjoy.
8. Remember people hire people, not just a skill set.
9. Always remember everyone is a person outside of work and beyond their job title. This can make networking feel less intimidating.
10. Stop the Imposter Syndrome!
11. Don't tell yourself NO. There are people less qualified than you that are doing what you want to do because they believe in themselves and take action.

Emily highlighted that she returned to graduate school after working for several years, and she advocates for that path, to make sure that is the field of study is where you want to work. Emily's career path has been unique to her, and she talked about her work in global public health and urged the scholars to get involved through several upcoming events and programs with the Triangle Global Health Consortium, including participating in “Mentor Monday” webinars in which global health professionals share their experience and lessons learned. She also shared an opportunity for scholars to submit a poster for the Consortium's fall annual conference, if their poster has relevance to “global health” issues.

## What is Global Health?

We define global health as an area for study, research and practice that places a priority on improving health and achieving health equity for all people worldwide.

Global health issues transcend boundaries and require collective solutions that emphasize improving health, reducing disparities, and protecting against global threats.

North Carolina organizations work in over 185 countries - including our own - to address these complex issues.





Emily can be reached at the Triangle Global Health Consortium, [emilykiser@triangleglobalhealth.org](mailto:emilykiser@triangleglobalhealth.org) or at [linkedin.com/in/emilykiser](https://www.linkedin.com/in/emilykiser).

Following lunch, Professor Kelly Hogan, PhD and Women In Science Scholar Korene Gbozah presented a session titled “Including All Learners in introductory STEM Courses”. Dr. Hogan talked about how to better support students in STEM courses. Professor Hogan, who teaches biology at UNC-Chapel Hill, led the discussion, explaining that colleges admit diverse student bodies and that faculty should play a major role in ensuring that more students thrive and graduate. Almost ten years ago, she saw data from her own course that indicated she was failing to educate all students. She learned there were significant disparities in grades, with a much larger percentage of underrepresented students receiving D/F grades than their white/Asian counterparts. She decided it was time to change her approach to teaching. By adding more practice, problem solving, and collaboration, achievement gaps disappeared for first generation college students and narrowed for underrepresented students. Hogan talked about how students shouldn’t have to change to fit into a classroom-- that it was time for course designs and classrooms to change. For example, polling and interactive technology gives introverts or students in a minority group a way to participate without speaking up. She gave other examples of ways more learners might be included in classrooms, and thus lead to more students thriving in STEM.

Scholar Korene Gbozah highlighted that she found the large classes of 400 students to be daunting and stressful, and that Professor Hogan’s teaching method is helpful. She said learning that other minority STEM students were as stressed as she was, led her to found Xcel. Xcel is an advising/mentoring program that offers support, monthly events including networking, mental health workshops and opportunities to meet faculty members, and generally a way to connect. It has made a difference to her and many other students.

Dr. Hogan is a professor of biology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she serves as Associate Dean of Instructional Innovation for the College of Arts and Sciences and also is the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan Director. Since 2004, she has taught 400-seat classes on campus using interactive teaching methods and technologies. By demonstrating the effectiveness of her methods in large lecture classes, her work has received national attention in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Dr. Hogan believes that with the right practice, everyone is capable of learning.

Korene Gbozah is a 20-year-old student and NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Women In Science Scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill. Originally from Charlotte, Korene comes from a large Liberian family who taught her to embrace her culture. From a young age, she knew she wanted to become a doctor and hopes to become an OB/GYN working with socio-economically disadvantaged communities. She is interested in integrating public health and medicine to combat health inequities. She has recently completed an internship with Atrium Health, conducting medical research and shadowing surgeons. She also has founded an organization at UNC called Xcel: Advising Program for Minorities in STEM, which is aimed at mentoring and supporting minority students in STEM programs.

Qaleelah Smith, Women in Science Scholar at Bennett College, talked about her global health field experiences in West Africa in a session titled “My Global Health Field Experience in The Gambia, West Africa”. She was there for three weeks, gaining first-hand knowledge and experience with community health issues in poverty-stricken areas. She appreciates the health care system and practices here in the US, compared to what she experienced in West Africa. During her time there she administered immunizations to children, shadowed midwives, volunteered at local health clinics and trained local health care providers in the “Helping Babies Breathe” program. She even helped deliver a baby girl, who has been named after her!

Qaleelah’s experience demonstrated her passion for helping others, and her desire to become a surgeon. She is someone who deeply believes that knowledge should be shared and used to be of service to others, to advocate for those who are less fortunate and to pursue solutions to important world issues.

Marilyn Foote-Hudson wrapped up the spring conference by thanking all of the speakers and wishing the scholars well in finishing up the school year. **SAVE THE DATE** for the Women in Science Annual Meeting on **Monday, October 7, 2019**. Details will be sent closer to the date.