



CSTEP Spotlight

Diversity Enables Discovery



Spring 2008 Volume 2

CSTEP Keys to Financial Success Workshop

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On Friday March 28, 2008, CSTEP sponsored the "Keys to Financial Success Workshop" to educate students on minimizing student debt and the importance of establishing a strong FICO score. The presentation was delivered by Olivia West, a UB alumna and former CSTEP student with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering. Ms. West began the workshop reminding students that they have already started on the road to making good financial investments: their education. However, while making this important investment students should be educated consumers. Students learned how to acquire their free credit report, how the FICO score is calculated, and utilizing scholarships and university resources to minimize college debt. For many students this was the first time they learned about the factors which can affect their FICO score. Many shared their experience of maxing out their credit cards and late payments. The majority of students mentioned they had no knowledge of the interest rates on their credit cards or their saving accounts. However, their responses were not surprising. Rather, it was an accurate reflection of many college students who unfortunately do not consider the results of their financial decisions.

Upcoming CSTEP Event:

Student Recognition Dinner
Friday April 25, 2008
4:00pm Pistachios
Student Union

Ms. West shared her personal experiences financing her college education. During the academic year she served as a Resident Assistant and a CSTEP Student Assistant. She urged students to develop good money management while in school, because the implications can have far reaching effects. For example, some employers conduct credit report checks on prospective employees, considering creditworthiness a reflection of character and integrity. Students left the workshop cognizant that when it comes to money matters "if they fail to prepare, then they are preparing to fail."

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What is AGEP?



AGEP, the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate, is a National Science Foundation sponsored program whose mission is to increase the number of underrepresented minority students pursuing doctoral degrees and subsequent academic careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. At UB, the services, activities and funds provided through the AGEP program are important means of support for underrepresented students who are interested in, or currently pursuing, graduate study in a STEM field and subsequent careers in the professoriate.

Eligible graduate students benefit from a range of funding opportunities to minimize the cost of graduate study. Funding opportunities include: stipend supplements, professional conference attendance reimbursements, reimbursement for degree-related books and supplies, a laptop lending program, business cards and reimbursement for student membership in professional organizations. AGEP also provides a variety of supportive programming for students, including research lunches, professional development workshops, trips and conferences and “community building” events. Each month AGEP hosts a research luncheon open to the University community where graduate students present their research. These occasions give AGEP students the opportunity to share their research across disciplines and build relationships with students from other STEM fields for future collaborative work. According to Elizabeth Colucci, (AGEP Director) “the luncheons serve as a unique venue for graduate students to share their research on complex, but important broad concepts of research” The research luncheons have served as a valuable forum for encouraging undergraduates to join the pipeline. The rich experience they encounter at the workshops is the impetus encouraging them to do research.

Although, AGEP is for eligible graduate students it works collaboratively with undergraduate programs including, CSTEP, LSAMP, and the McNair Scholars Program. Through these programs AGEP co-host events and workshops of relevance to underrepresented students in STEM disciplines. AGEP works with CSTEP and LSAMP to provide funds for undergraduates to undertake research with faculty during the academic year and underwrite the participate of undergraduates in the summer research internship program. Elizabeth Colucci believes working with these programs is fundamentally important to raising awareness among undergraduates about pursuing graduate school. CSTEP students continue to benefit from the resources offered by AGEP, including the monthly research luncheons, and research internship funding opportunities.

Our office appreciates the dedication Elizabeth Colucci, has shown in her commitment to increase the number of underrepresented minority students pursuing doctoral degrees and faculty careers in STEM. AGEP continues to increase interest in graduate study and enhance the recruitment of doctoral students through targeted activities to undergraduates. The program has increased the retention of doctoral students through targeted activities to undergraduates.

“The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack in will.”

Vince Lombardi

“It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed.”

Theodore Roosevelt

2008 CSTEP Recognition Dinner

On Wednesday April 25, 2008, the University at Buffalo's Collegiate Science & Technology Entry Program will celebrate our annual Student Recognition Dinner. The ceremony will recognize the outstanding achievements of graduating seniors and CSTEP research interns. Faculty research mentors will also be recognized for their outstanding contribution to training and mentoring CSTEP students pursuing STEM-related careers and the licensed professions. Our office appreciates the individuals and organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to mentoring students and increasing the participation of minorities and women in STEM-related fields. Although, the ceremony will recognize graduating seniors and research interns it is open to all CSTEP students and University community.

Please RSVP to Sandy Curtis, CSTEP Graduate Assistant at (Scurtis@buffalo.edu).

2008 CSTEP & STEP SHADOW DAY

On Monday February 11, 2008, CSTEP students continued the CSTEP tradition of community service and civic involvement with our Annual CSTEP/STEP Shadow Day. CSTEP undergraduates volunteered to have high school students shadow them in class for a half day. High school students in the STEP program had the unique opportunity to sit in a college class at UB. Students also received a tour of the North Campus. "Lifting while climbing," reflects the action of the enthusiastic CSTEP undergraduates who volunteered on this day. Our goal was to inspire high school students interested in pursuing STEM and the licensed professions to have a early glimpse of the reality of college life.

Students learned about the requirements of STEM majors and the licensed professions and how students balance a rigorous coursework. The students were definitely prepared and asked thought provoking questions to their shadow day mentors. Our office hopes the insight shared on this day will be beneficial to students as they begin their college application process.



CSTEP RESEARCH INTERNS

KOFI ASENSO-MENSAH



Kofi Asenso-Mensah is a junior majoring in Biomedical Sciences. Before starting his undergraduate career, he knew he wanted to pursue a career in the health professions. However, he was uncertain whether it should be in pharmacy, nursing, dentistry, or medicine. Therefore, he chose Biomedical Sciences because it allowed him to consolidate all the pre-requisites for the different health professions, and by his second semester he was focused on becoming a medical doctor.

Kofi was recently selected as a CSTEP Top Ten Scholar for exemplifying academic excellence by consistently maintaining a superior grade point average. He balances his rigorous course work while remaining an active student. In the summer of 2007, he conducted research in the Premedical Academic Enrichment Program Level II (SPAEP II) at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He attributes his continued success to utilizing CSTEP resources including, programs such as, "Beyond the Bachelors" the Bi-Annual Minority Graduate School Awareness Conference; Rx for Success; and the CSTEP Kaplan Scholarship. At the "Beyond the Bachelors" lecture Kofi was inspired by the keynote speaker Dr. Calvin Mackie who reminded him that persistence and motivation is key. Recently, he attended a national research conference funded through the (SPAEP II) program which further solidified his career goals.

How did your presence at the national research conference impact you?

"While at the conference, I presented my research poster entitled, Biocompatibility Evaluation of Pediatric Ventricular Assist Devices in Ovines to spectators and judges. I enjoyed the keynote address given by Tavis Smiley, a commentator. His message entitled "Enlighten, Encourage, and Empower," made me think deeper about why I want to enter the field of medicine. This was a poignant reminder of the true meaning of being a leader, which is based on how much you love people and are willing to serve them."

How has your research experience solidified your career aspirations?

"After my research experience in Pittsburgh, I decided to combine a career in research and medicine. Initially, I doubted that I would be a competitive candidate for the MD/PhD program, because I would compete against students who have 3 solid years of research as undergraduates. However, I learned many physicians are highly involved in research, and some medical schools allow MD candidates to transfer into MD/PhD programs. I came to the conclusion I will apply for the MD program and conduct research throughout my career."

JASMINE WORTHY



Jasmine Worthy, a native of Buffalo, is a senior majoring in Industrial & Systems Engineering. She chose engineering because of her interest in research and development and understanding how systems work efficiently and effectively. Her internship experience has positively impacted her academic pursuits. As an intern at the Universal Design Center she learned as an Industrial Engineer, she can combine the traditional roles of an engineer such as design, while focusing on human interaction with systems and machines. She is a member of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), because it is instrumental in educating the community about what engineers do and their contributions to society.

Jasmine attributes her continued support to a strong support network of family and friends. She believes the relentless efforts of mentors including: Mr. Drexel Gidney, Engineering Advisor; Shanna Crump-Owens, CSTEP Director; and Dr. Letitia Thomas-Rogers, Acker Scholar Advisor, cannot be understated. "These mentors have guided me on my path to becoming the epitome of an Industrial Engineer." Jasmine's commitment to excelling academically has paid off well, as she begins her career as an Industrial Engineer at a Fortune 500 Company this upcoming August 2008.

"Whenever you have a goal in mind to pursue something productive, not only for yourself, but for the future service of mankind, someone will always help you along the way."

Kofi
Asenso-Mensah

"My family has always told me I can achieve anything as long as I stay focused."

Jasmine
Worthy

CSTEP ALUMNI UPDATES:

RICHARD AIZAGA

Richard Aizaga is a graduate student in the Education program and a Arthur Schomberg fellow. He received his Bachelor of Sciences in Exercise Science and Nutrition in May 2007. He chose this major because he wanted to become a Physical Therapist or Chiropractor. For 3 years as an undergraduate he was a CSTEP Research Intern, who worked at the VA Hospital and Kaleida Health Facility through the CSTEP Research Program. He believes this experience helped him to get his foot in the door of the professional world. However, his internship experiences were life changing, and helped him to realize his true passion: teaching. After graduate school he hopes to return to a inner city public school in New York and teach science.

How did your internship experience help to solidify your career pursuit?

"After spending 3 years in the health setting, I honestly became tired of the same routine. Though injuries come in many different forms, the regimen for recovery is somewhat similar for each. Teaching is similar to health because you get to help people, so I feel that my energy and enthusiasm would be better suited for teaching. There is more latitude in education and I feel that the flexibility given to teachers, combined with the unique individuals in each classroom, make teaching a very rewarding, yet challenging profession."

What advice would you share with undergraduates who are interested in pursuing a similar career path?

"Get an internship and spend as much time there as possible. If you stay at an internship long enough, you will be able to experience all the aspects of the profession, good and bad. Internships are crucial, it is better to find out that you don't like a certain career before committing to an expensive graduate or professional program."

Do you have any mentors who advised you as an undergraduate?

"I received incredible support from my family and friends. They have been very supportive of my decision to teach and it would not have been an easy transition without them. I also owe a huge thanks to Shanna Crump-Owens, CSTEP staff, Dr. Radhika Suresh, Dr. Jennifer Lawrence and Dr. Xiufeng Liu for helping me in securing the Arthur A. Schomberg Fellowship."

OLAYEMI OLA



Olayemi Ola graduated in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences. Early in her undergraduate career she decided she wanted to dedicate her life to helping others, as a Medical Doctor. Today, she is a second year medical student at the University of Antigua, School of Medicine. Olayemi has found the coursework rigorous requiring a firm commitment and passion to excel. She hopes to return to New York to complete her residency. She first learned she could attend a medical school abroad from her sister, who was studying there a year before she started.

What was your first impression of the University of Antigua, School of Medicine?

"My first impression about the school is its commitment to giving students who are interested in the medical field an opportunity to learn and practice medicine. It has diligent professors who are willing to help and teach the students everything they need to know to do well and succeed in their medical career."

How is the education system abroad compared to education in the US?

"Education abroad is harder because you do not have all the resources to study, but it is also helpful because there are not as many distractions as in the US. The education styles, such as the hours of class time and course content are similar. Overall, it is a matter of pushing oneself to excelling in school whether close to home or away."

Would you encourage any CSTEP student to apply to medical school abroad?

"I would encourage them to research the particular school even before applying to the school. Work hard but it makes it a lot easier when you have a passion for medicine."

CSTEP DAY OF SERVICE



CSTEP will be conducting its Annual Day of Service by partnering with Buffalo Public Schools on **Wednesday April 9, 2008**. CSTEP students will be giving back to the Buffalo community by sharing information about their majors with students at Grover Cleveland High School. CSTEP is looking for volunteers.

Who: Students/faculty/alumni willing to give back to the students of Buffalo Public Schools (Grade 9-12).

What: Participate in activities to foster an interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields and licensed professions through “**CSTEP Day of Service**”.

When: **Wednesday April 9, 2008 9:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.**

Where: Shuttles will take CSTEP student volunteers to Grover Cleveland High School.

Why: To spark interest of Buffalo Public School students in the S.T.E.M fields and in the licensed professions.

Regents Professional Opportunity Scholarship Program

Scholarships funded by New York State with awards up to \$5,000 per year are available to historically underrepresented minority and/or economically disadvantaged students in NYS approved programs for the following professions:

- Accountancy (BA)
- Acupuncture (BA)
- Architecture (BA, MA)
- Athletic Training (BA)
- Chiropractic (DR)
- Dental Hygiene (AS)
- Engineering (BS)
- Interior Design (AS, BA)
- Landscape Architecture (MA)
- Law (JD)
- Massage Therapy (AS)
- Midwifery (BA)
- Nursing (BA)
- Occupational Therapy (BA, MA)
- Ophthalmic Dispensing (AS)
- Optometry (DR)
- Pharmacy (BA)
- Physical Therapy (BA, MA)
- Physician Assistant (AS, BS)
- Podiatry (DPM)
- Psychology (PhD)
- Respiratory Therapy (BA)
- Speech Language Pathology/ Audio logy (MA)
- Veterinary Medicine (DVM)
- Veterinary Technology (AS)

All applications must be postmarked no later than May 1, 2008. A limited number of applications will be available in the CSTEP Office. You may also request more information by writing to: New York State Education Department, Office of K-16 Initiatives and Access Programs Scholarship Processing Unit, Room 1078 EBA, Albany, New York 12234 or phone (518) 486-1319.

To download the application please visit: <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/scholarships/home.htm>

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CSTEP Mission Statement: *The Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) provides services and activities to enhance and increase underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students' entry into CSTEP targeted professions. CSTEP will meet these objectives by continuing to provide the following services and programs: a structured multi-year program with academic and career counseling components and an array of services, consisting of the following: academic advisement, individualized tutoring, cooperative study groups to supplement lectures, paid research/internship opportunities in CSTEP targeted professions, academic and career development workshops to provide information and maintain interest in CSTEP targeted professions, Kaplan scholarships and workshops to prepare for graduate and professional school, mentoring opportunities, monthly student meetings, bi-monthly newsletters, attendance to local and regional conferences, and other enrichment activities.*