



2024

BIOSCIENCE CAREERS FORUM

FORGING NEW FRONTIERS IN THE LIFE SCIENCES INDUSTRY

SEPTEMBER 20, 2024



The Jackson
Laboratory



About BioPath's and the Jackson Laboratory's Bioscience Careers Forum (BCF)

As a top destination for the Life Sciences industry, Connecticut is home to a thriving life sciences community that is anchored by a robust ecosystem of cutting-edge research, highly educated workforce, and innovative companies.

The Bioscience academic and career pathway initiative (BioPath) is an industry driven and grant-funded initiative within the Southern Connecticut State University Innovation Hub. Our team is committed to providing high impact programs leveraging experiential learning opportunities, using research and fostering innovation to positively impact outcomes for students, industry and the local community. We focus on helping students gain the awareness experiences skills, and access necessary to be successful while in college and beyond, especially those who are traditionally underserved and underrepresented in STEM and STEM-inspired fields.

Since 2017, SCSU BioPath has had the pleasure of partnering with The Jackson Laboratory and Connecticut State Colleges & Universities to host the annual BCF--a collaboration with industry partners at BioCT and companies throughout Connecticut. We are pleased to help foster awareness and access among students, educators, industry professionals, legislators, and community members in terms of exciting career and educational opportunities in Bioscience.

The BCF which historically took place in the spring semester has had a tremendous impact on students' lives. Days after graduation, student attendees of the BCF were able to begin full-time positions. Year after year, students from varied backgrounds have described their experiences at the forum as "life-changing;" never before experienced the diversity of roles available in our state's bioscience industries.

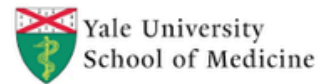
The planning team curated an engaging agenda with speeches from distinguished guests, and interactive panel discussion, thought-provoking skill building activities, and opportunities to explore the latest trends and advancements in bioscience. We hope that all attendees have benefited from this unique convergence.

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Partners



Sponsors



101 College St. (Photo by Dan Renzetti)



Objectives



Get perspectives on future trends from industry leaders.



Learn about exciting career and educational opportunities in bioscience, technology, and related business ventures.



Develop tools for landing a job and networking skills for professional development.

"I was able to meet some amazing scholars and directly connect them to my network. I know they followed through because I'm now connected with the scholars as well."

- Industry Guest



Impact

165

Attendees

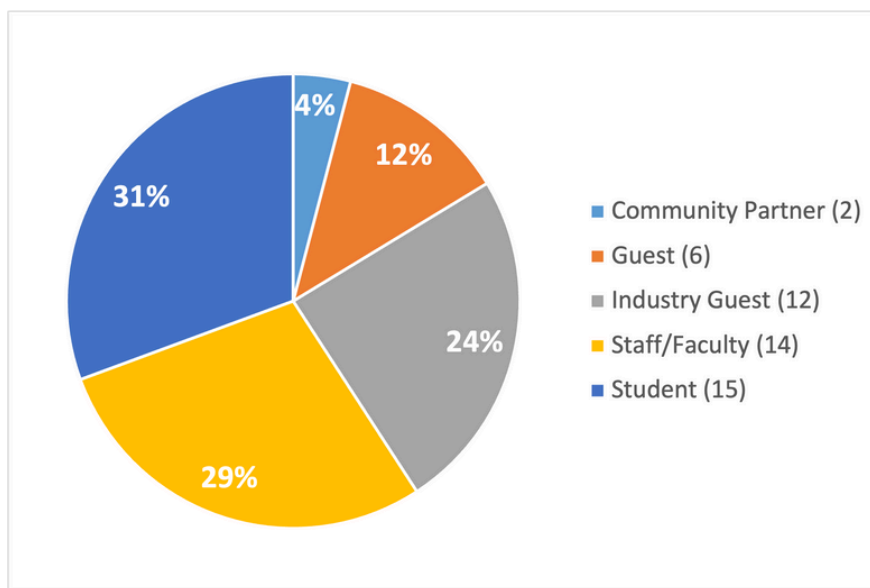
30

Industry reps

80

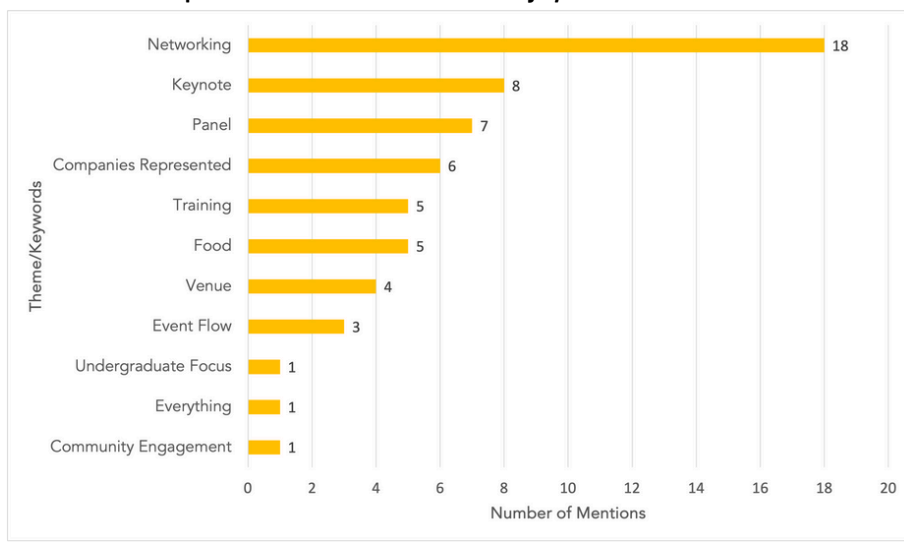
Students

Graph 1.2: How Did Attendees Identify?



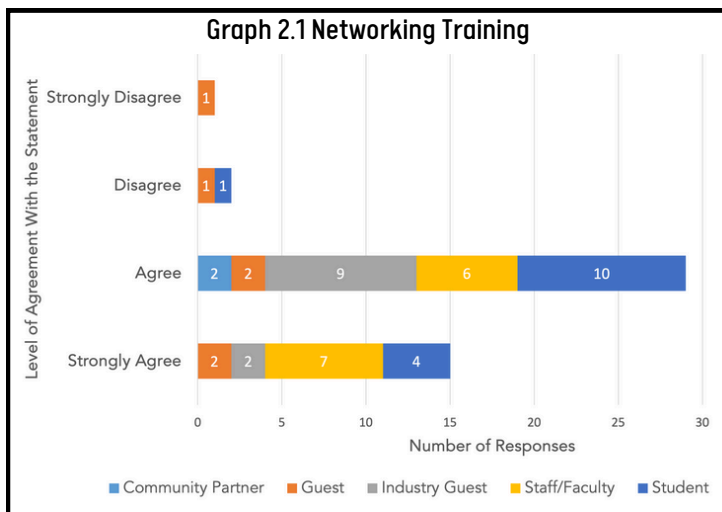
Attendees were encouraged to complete a brief survey during the event and in communications after the event. The total number of responses received was 49 with the majority identifying as students, staff/faculty, and industry [Graph 1.2]. Microsoft Forms was used to collect the survey data.

Graph 1.1: What Did Attendees Enjoy About the Event?

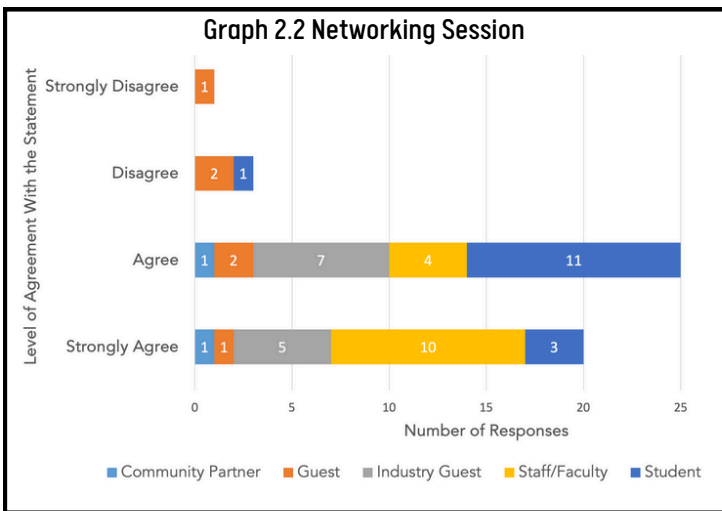


Graph 1.1 represents all respondents not controlled for identity. Respondents were able to submit multiple answers. Short answer responses were coded for the keywords listed on the Y Axis. **Networking** was the most cited theme overall and amongst each identity except for Community Partner.

Evaluation & Feedback



Within the event feedback survey, specific content of the event was graded using a four point Likert Scale. A neutral option was excluded and these questions were initially mandatory unlike the short answer questions. Note that the question from Graph 2.1 was intended for students but received answers from non-student respondents--2 responses were left blank.

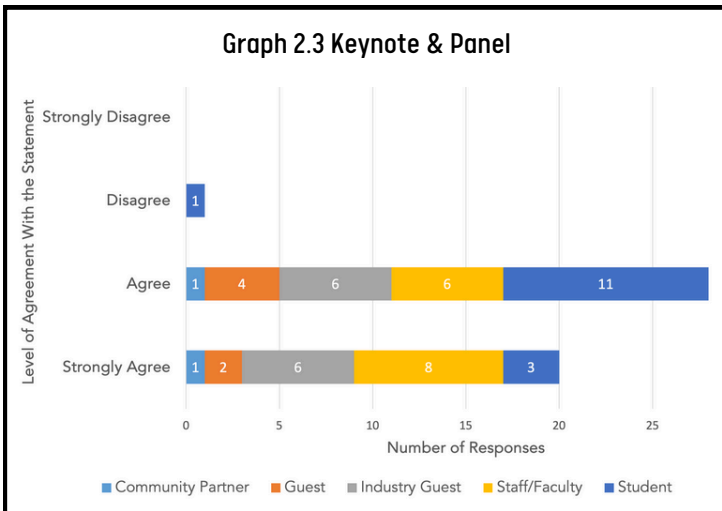


Respondents were asked: "Please indicate if you agree with the following statement..."

Graph 2.1 - "... (For students) I learned useful and actionable suggestions from the networking training."

Graph 2.2 - "... The facilitated networking was effective."

Graph 2.3 "... The keynote and panel discussion was well moderated and meaningful."



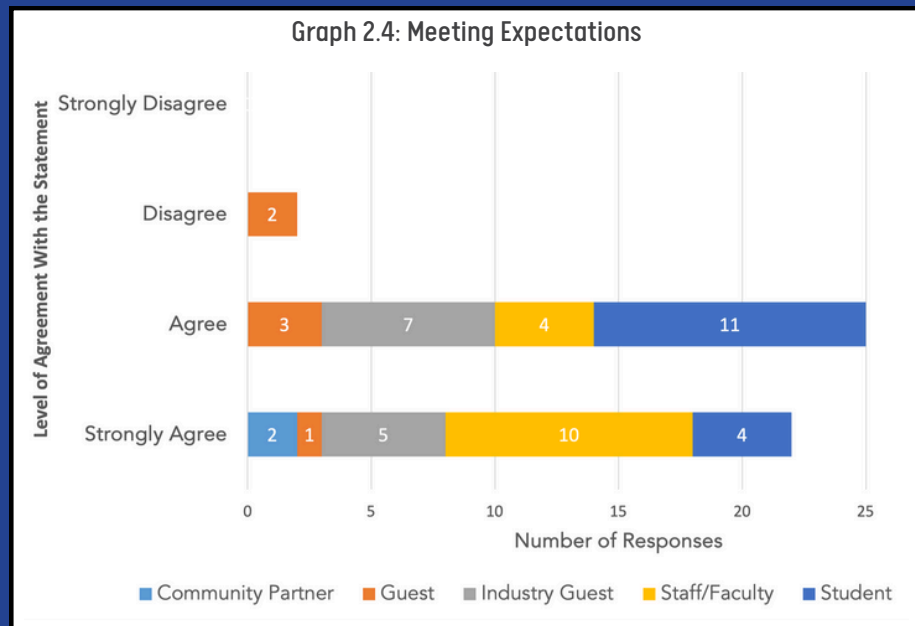
Evaluation & Feedback contd.

Overall, the number of negative responses (*Strongly Disagree* or *Disagree*) from the Likert Scale portion of the survey totaled only 12 compared to **231 positive responses** (*Agree* or *Strongly Agree*). Notably, there was only 3 negative responses from the Student identity, an important target audience of this event; the vast majority of students selected the *Agree* response for all five questions.

Respondents were asked: "Please indicate if you agree with the following statement..."

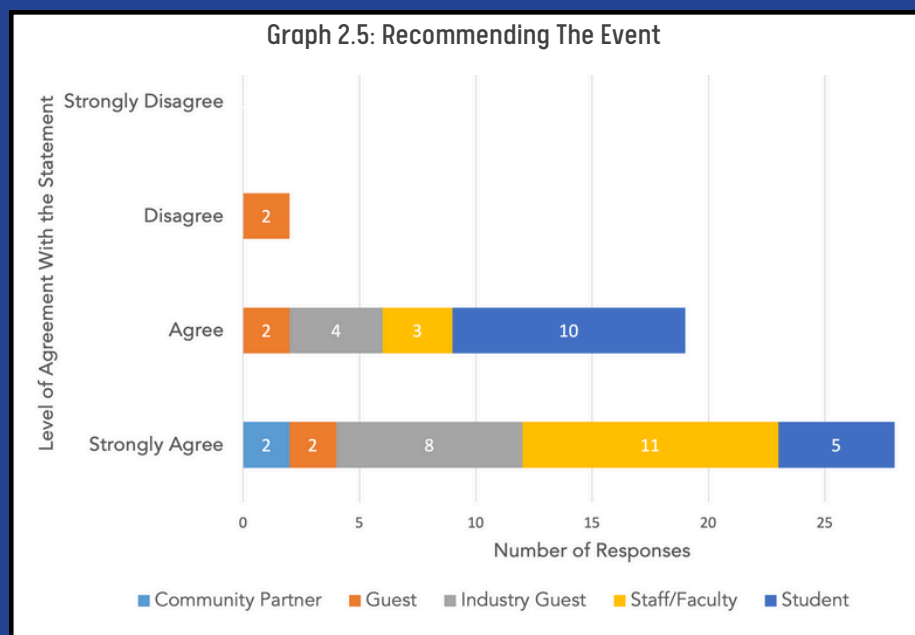
Graph 2.4 - "... Overall the 2024 Bioscience Careers Forum met my expectations."

Graph 2.5 - "... You would recommend this event to a friend or colleague next year."



"I liked the keynote speech, and I appreciated the opportunity to talk with students from across the state alongside current professionals." - Student Attendee

"I liked that there was always opportunities for questions during the panels. The food was great and was a starting point for talking to peers or guests. Learning about networking before going out into the hallway to network was beneficial for my experience at the event" - Student Attendee



Feedback Highlights

"As an academic advisor at CT State I loved the keynote speakers story. He showed how student's interests may shift and the natural evolution of a career in Biology."

- Staff/Faculty Member

"I enjoyed the practical opportunity to network with real-life professionals, with opportunity to follow up with them and even pursue career opportunities." - Staff/Faculty Member

"I am glad I came. I often go to vendor shows which are a bit different but I had three different students/post docs/graduates reach out to me to thank me for the tips I gave them. That almost never happens!" - Industry Guest



"I truly experienced a full circle moment this past Friday....

... I remember coming to this forum as a biotechnology student at Middlesex Community College. It was very intimidating to share space with such intelligent minds. If I can go back and tell my 24 year old self that we would be standing on stage with Terrence Cheng and O. John Maduko, M.D., sharing our experiences I don't think she would believe me.

It truly is an honor to represent Hartford HealthCare as well as the minority in this field. If I can help lessen the burden and struggle for those who come after me, I've lived a full life.

I had an amazing time meeting with peers, students and faculty."

- Ashley Gonzalez, Panelist

Laboratory Research Assistant II, Hartford Healthcare Center for Anti-Infective Research & Dev.

Thank You

Many thanks to our co-chairs Dr. Sarah Wojiski and Dr. Christine Broadbridge, as well as the numerous members of our planning team including Dr. Lesley Mara, Lisa Roy, Dr. Rachel Jeffery, Dr. Frank Stellabotte, Dr. Barbara Murdoch, Dr. Megan DeLivron, Helen Keegan, Derek Faulkner, Heather Stearns, Imani Smith, Allison Kross, Sana Bebe Muneer, Arianna Ruiz, Rick Mingione, and Peter Dimoulas.

Special thanks to our sponsors, including CTNext and the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Jackson Laboratory, Southern Connecticut State University, and Connecticut State Colleges and Universities.

Final thanks to all of the students, industry representatives, and community partners who not only made BCF possible but a wonderful experience for all!

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