

# The growing power of women, millennials in STEM

## BioNJ panels discuss impact of multigenerational teams, handling power positions

BY MEG FRY

BioNJ, the state's pre-eminent advocate organization for the biotech and life sciences industries, hosted its second annual "Inspiring Women in STEM" conference earlier this month at the Sanofi U.S. headquarters in Bridgewater.

"Today is about bringing together professionals of all levels for an empowering and memorable program designed to encourage and support women involved in all aspects of (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) — from biotech, pharmaceutical, chemistry, medical device and technology companies, as well as universities, medical and research institutions," **Debbie Hart**, CEO and president of BioNJ, said.

Hart worked with **Vicki Gaddy**, vice president of talent services at BioNJ; **Jennifer Kmiec**, founder of Inspiring Women; and **Christopher Kaplan**, North America head of the diabetes and cardiovascular business unit and chair of the U.S. Country Council at Sanofi U.S., to plan a full-day program that would provide the more than 100 leaders and executives in attendance with valuable insights and actionable ideas to apply to their own careers and organizations.

Here are the highlights:

### "BUILDING A CULTURE OF EMPOWERMENT IN A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKPLACE"

Moderated by **Nicole Schaeffer**, senior vice president of human resources and corporate services at **Insmad Inc.**, and **Lynne Anderson**, partner at **Drinker, Biddle & Reath**, panelists commented on the variety of communication and mentorship styles and career expectations.

**Saakshi Arora**, quality assurance training associate, Insmad Inc.: "While I know how to take initiative and I am very



A look at the panel entitled: "Courageous Leadership: Wearing Your Power."

confident that I can succeed, if I am not told what it is you want me to do, I will continue with what my job description says."

**Jennifer Asay**, senior director of global strategy and new product planning devices at Sanofi U.S.: "You may need multiple mentors. Perhaps you are new to a role and you need a mentor in order to understand the dynamics in the group; you may also need a mentor to assist you with your career development, that can help you work out what your life and professional goals are; then, you need to make sure you are developing sponsors, or the person who when asked, 'Do we have any talent with this expertise?' will say, 'Yes, I know of someone and we should give this person a chance.'"

**Kamala Maddall**, vice president of biopharm market development, collaboration and companion diagnostics at **Cancer Genetics Inc.**: "I like every form of communication style — but it is important to use the right mix depending on the context and the situation at hand. ... For example, when I am mentoring someone, I make it a point to take time to meet with that person face to face. I say, let's go for lunch. Sit down. Talk. I believe it makes a huge difference."

**Maria Qadri**, Ph.D. candidate in biomedical engineering and quantitative biomedicine at Rutgers University: "What is obvious to you is not obvious to me — one of the biggest generational gaps that I see, and I am going to generalize, is that baby boomers expect us to know what they know, and we as millennials may be afraid to take initiative and overstep our boundaries."

### "COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP: WEARING YOUR POWER"

Moderated by **Elizabeth Garner**, chief medical officer and senior vice president of clinical development at **Agile Therapeutics**, and **Amy Rudolph**, vice president and head of early development, health economics and outcomes research at **Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp.**, panelists provided attendees with advice and the knowledge that has helped them to navigate their successful careers.

**Carolina Dorsa**, retired executive vice president and chief financial officer of **Public Service Enterprise Group Inc.** and **Merck & Co.**: "Language connotes and conveys confidence — for example, you will often hear men speak in declarative sentences. They say, 'This is what I think and this is the way I think we should go.' You will often

### Money question

According to BioNJ, women in STEM fields earn 92 cents for every \$1 earned by men, compared with 77 cents for other fields; however, while women fill close to half of all jobs in the U.S. economy, women hold less than 25 percent of STEM jobs.

hear women say things that partially devalue what they say before they say it. They often start by saying things such as, 'This just might be my opinion, I'm not sure; what do you think? I kind of think it's like this.'"

**Hilary Malone**, head of global regulatory affairs at Sanofi U.S.: "One of the most courageous and powerful things you can do as a leader is to be vulnerable. It is a real tipping point in your personal and professional development when you realize you have the confidence to be able to say, in front of your boss or your team, 'I have no idea — but I know how we are going to find the answer and move forward.'"

**Ester Banque**, vice president and head of immunology and dermatology U.S. general medicines at **Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp.**: "I've been more than 20 years with Novartis (and with my wife), but I came out to my colleagues only six years ago. ... I did not want my personal life to affect my career. I already had many labels — I was a woman, I was Hispanic, and the thought of anyone in my company finding out that I was gay was terrifying. ... One day, I was looking at her and our two beautiful daughters and I thought, 'What are you doing? Why are you hiding the most important things in your life — who you are, and who you love?' ... No company or career or opportunity was worth not being myself. The very next day, I started talking openly about my life with my wife and kids, without emphasis. And you know what happened? Nothing. ... I thought that I would not come out because society, and my company, were not ready, but the one who was not ready was me."

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A look at the panel discussing: "Building a Culture of Empowerment in a Multigenerational Workplace." — PHOTOS COURTESY BIO NJ