

How Lake Forest College Alumnae are Changing the World

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On February 27, 2007, Beta Beta Beta hosted the 2007 annual Biology Alumni Career Panel. Perhaps the most easily understood and relaxed seminar in the Biology seminar series, the Career Panel was an enjoyable, encouraging and educational program. The diverse personalities, careers, and future plans of the six alumna, all female, made the evening very dynamic and interesting. The panel included Silvia Skripskauskaitė ('04), Nijee Sharma ('04), Jessica Price ('05), D'Anne Duncan ('04), Julia Shklovskaya ('04), and Jessica Abruzzo ('05). Throughout the program, panel members took turns responding to questions from the moderator, Beta Beta Beta 2006-2007 president, Michael White ('07). Panel members answered questions regarding their current jobs, the career goals they had while at Lake Forest College, the preparation they received at LFC and their goals for the future.

Silvia Skripskauskaitė ('04) is both a full-time research project coordinator and a student at Northwestern University. She is involved in research on health policy and is also pursuing a master's degree in public administration. While at LFC, she followed a pre-med curriculum as a biology and psychology double major. Not certain whether she wanted to apply to medical school or not, Silvia decided to do research for a while. She believes that LFC gave her a good background in skills like research and public speaking. One student service she found particularly useful was the Career Advancement Center. Her long-term goal is to achieve the highest possible degree for her own personal satisfaction; this may one day include medical school. However, she is first focusing on finishing her master's in public administration. Over the course of the last few years, Silvia has published six papers, traveled to a conference in Switzerland, and applied for a position at Stanford University. Her motto in life is "it is what you make it to be, speak for yourself."

Nijee Sharma ('04) is currently a third year MD/PhD student at Loyola in the Neuroscience program. She is working in both a lab and a clinical practice. She finds the dual program very challenging because the tracks are incredibly different: although she receives significant guidance within the MD program, the independence of the PhD program begs adjustment. While at LFC, Nijee took the pre-med route. She also participated in several activities, including a clinical internship, research, peer teaching, and work with the writing center. Because of her research background and interests, she decided to pursue the MD/PhD program. Nijee feels that one of the treasures of LFC is its great advisors and faculty. Her goal is to finish the four and a half years remaining in the program. She is interested in completing a residency in neurology, practicing medicine and teaching, and she has long term plans to continue in research.

Jessica Price ('05) is a science editor and research coordinate in a lab at the University of Chicago. After graduating from LFC as a biology and art history double-major, she worked in Alaska for the summer. She took her current position in order time off before graduate school. Jessica is excited that

something that once was an extracurricular activity has turned into a paid job. During her college years, Jessica had several internships and gained much research experience: she was part of the University of Chicago's Research Experience Undergraduate (REU) program, she worked at the Chicago Botanic Garden and she participated in Advanced Cell Biology Research. She feels that at LFC, she had the opportunity to really stand out and make the most of her experience with the help of caring and attentive professors. The most challenging part of going out into the real world for Jessica was "going from being a big fish in a small pond to a small fish in a big pond." Her future plans "aside from changing the world," include finishing up the two-year commitment at her current position, pursuing a PhD in ecology, evolution and conservation biology and perhaps returning to work in Alaska. Jessica's advice for current biology students is to "go all out" by getting involved, staying committed to organizations of interest, and *always* proofreading your CVs!

D'Anne Duncan ('04) is a third year neuroscience PhD candidate at Northwestern University currently conducting research on multiple sclerosis in mouse models. The program is building her character and enhancing her time management skills. Originally, D'Anne planned to attend veterinary school, and she even shadowed at a vet hospital. However, after working in a human genetics lab at the University of Chicago and on neuroscience work at Rosalind Franklin University, D'Anne instead decided to go to graduate school. D'Anne's advice for students is to get involved without becoming overcommitted, and to pursue internships. D'Anne's future goals include graduating from the PhD program and "giving back" by teaching.

Julia Shklovskaya ('04) is currently a research assistant at Access Community Health Network. She conducts various public health research projects, conducts quality controls and puts together grant proposals. Initially, Julia's career goal was to go to medical school, and she worked in a hospital for part of her college career. She also loved foreign languages and studied abroad in Spain one semester. After graduation, Julia worked for Abbot Laboratories; however, the position was not what she was looking for and she decided to move on. Through great networking skills, she discovered her current position at Access Community Health Network. Julia's long-term goal is to save the world; in the meantime, she is pursuing a master's degree in public health policy.

Jessica Abruzzo ('05) works in the business and sales department for Baxter Pharmaceuticals, a medical delivery company. Jessica's exciting internship experiences include audiologist shadowing, participation in a student nursing program and work as a first responder emergency medical technician (EMT). Having transferred to LFC during her sophomore year, she became interested in plant biology graduate programs. Jessica's short-term goal (because she usually doesn't plan long-term!) is to go back to school.

Overwhelmingly, the panel advised current LFC science students to "get involved" on campus with internships and in research. They suggested that students become invested in the future by working with professors and the Career Advancement Center. They

urge students to be unafraid of the future and to get involved in the present.

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