

AWIS-Boston Speed Networking Event with STEM Professionals

June 8, 2023

- **Start-up and Business Development**



Heather Drexler, Ph.D.

Associate Director of Strategy, Laronde

Heather Drexler is the Associate Director of Strategy at Laronde, an eRNA-based therapeutics company. She completed her Ph.D. at Harvard University, where her work focused on co-transcriptional processing using long-read sequencing technology. Prior to joining Laronde, Heather worked as a consultant and manager at Clarion, a life sciences consultancy, where she helped tailored solutions and strategies for companies facing complex life sciences challenges.

- **Patent Law**



Lydia Olson, Ph.D.

Senior Patent Attorney, Canon USA

Lydia Olson holds a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry and has worked in patent law for over 22 years. After working as a patent attorney at the law firms of Darby and Darby and Nutter McClennen and Fish, Lydia moved into the corporate world where she works for a medical device division of Canon U.S.A. which is developing medical devices in the areas of imaging and medical robotics. For the past nine years, she has developed a patent portfolio for the company, interfaced with inventors and collaborators, and provided support in freedom to operate, landscape analysis, and contracts.



Heather DiPietrantonio, Ph.D.

Shareholder–Biotechnology Practice, Wolf Greenfield

Heather DiPietrantonio is a shareholder at Wolf Greenfield, the largest Boston-based law firm devoted exclusively to intellectual property law. Her doctoral and postdoctoral research focused on the regulation of neuronal cell fate, differentiation, and axonal guidance through signal transduction mechanisms. Heather counsels a variety of clients, including start-ups, small to mid-sized biotech companies, and non-profit research institutions in the life sciences, and her practice focuses on patent prosecution, due diligence, licensing, and opinion work. She is particularly experienced in strategic counseling on the development and life

cycle management of U.S. and international intellectual property rights relating to gene editing, gene therapy, adoptive cell therapy, nucleic acid vaccines, and transgenic mouse models.

- **Science Philanthropy**



Julie Koh, Ph.D.

Associate Director of Institutional Giving, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard

Julie Koh is the Associate Director of Institutional Giving at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, where she advances key philanthropic efforts that support the Broad's mission to better understand the roots of disease and narrow the gap between new biological insights and their impact on patients. Julie previously served as Senior Director of Foundation Relations at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. A graduate of Emory University, Julie completed her Ph.D. in microbiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and did postdoctoral work at Vanderbilt University.

- **Science Communication**



Haley Bridger

Senior Program Manager for Science Communication, Mass General Brigham

Haley Bridger is a science communicator with 15 years of experience working with researchers and communication colleagues to develop and share news stories about science, medicine, and innovation. In her current role as senior program manager for science communication at Mass General Brigham, Haley identifies and elevates stories about patient-centered, clinical research and promotes the work of individual investigators and innovations across the Mass General Brigham system. Haley worked on the communication team at Brigham and Women's

Hospital for seven years and before that, she worked at the Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT. She graduated from Bowdoin College with a degree in biology and a passion for bringing science stories to life through writing.



Alexandra Nicodemo

Senior Manager of Corporate Affairs, Schrödinger

Alexandra (Allie) Nicodemo is a science writer with over a decade of experience communicating science and research to a lay audience through accessible storytelling. In her current role as senior manager of corporate affairs, she oversees all public-facing content, internal communications, and media relations for Schrödinger, whose physics-based software platform is transforming the way therapeutics and materials are discovered.

Allie previously served as Director of Communications for the Forsyth Institute, a Harvard-affiliated nonprofit research institution focused on oral health and systemic diseases. Prior to this, she

worked as the science writer for Northeastern University's award-winning news and information channel, News@Northeastern, and for Arizona State University's research communications department. Allie holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's in biomedical ethics, both from Arizona State University.

- **Medical Science Liaison**



Debra Walker, MHA

Senior Medical Science Liaison in Dermatology, Amgen

Debra Walker is a Senior Medical Science Liaison in Dermatology for Amgen in the Boston area. Joining Amgen in November 2019, she has been in the pharmaceutical industry for over 24 years in various therapeutic areas, with the majority of her time spent in Medical Affairs. During her tenure as a medical science liaison (MSL), Debra has held various leadership roles including Clinical Study Leads, Insights Core Team Lead, and many Medical Congress Leads. She has received numerous awards throughout her career including MSL of the Year, Rising Star, and several teamwork and collaboration awards. Debra received a BS in

Kinesiology from the University of Illinois, a BSN from Rush University, and her Masters in Health Administration from George Washington University.

- **Alliance Management**



Carla D'Avanzo, Ph.D.

Alliance Manager, Specialty Care and R&D, Global Alliance Management, Sanofi

Carla D'Avanzo recently joined the Sanofi Specialty Care and R&D Alliance Management teams. She has primary responsibility for managing some legacy Sanofi alliances and future ones through the Sanofi Global Alliance Management portfolio. In her previous role as Senior Research Alliance Manager at Mass General Research Institute, she promoted translational medicine by fostering collaborations between academic scientists and industry partners. Carla is a neurobiologist with over 10 years of experience in Alzheimer's disease research. She holds a Ph.D. in

neuroscience from the University of Naples "Federico II," Italy. She is passionate about communication and marketing, and she has worked with numerous organizations as a social media and marketing management consultant. Currently, Carla also serves as co-Director of the science podcast, Science Rehashed.



Neha Garg, Ph.D.

Director, Alliance Management, Takeda Rare Disease

Neha Garg is a scientist-turned-alliance management professional with over five years of experience managing strategic partnerships, from research to commercial, to ensure effective governance and maximize long-term value for the company and its partners. She has driven post-merger integrations, evaluated external opportunities in new emerging technologies, and supported pipeline strategy in rare diseases. She completed her Ph.D. in Biochemistry at UT Health San Antonio, and her academic research focused on aging and metabolism. Her experience managing collaborations during her postdoc at Harvard Medical School got her interested in alliance management. Neha's professional experience spans rare disease companies, such as bluebird bio, Alexion, and Takeda Rare Disease DDU.