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Dear Colleague,

Rider University and the Princeton and Trenton sections of the American Chemical Society are proud to announce the first annual “Careers in Chemistry” Program.

The program is designed to introduce students, from those already studying chemistry in undergraduate and PhD programs, to high school students who have never even seen a molecule, to the wealth of professional and academic opportunities for chemists available right here in Central New Jersey and Philadelphia. Also, in an economical crisis when traditional pharmaceutical and chemical jobs are limited due to massive layoffs, it is crucial to know what other employment opportunities for chemists may exist.

Students in high schools with limited monetary and academic resources are typically unaware that a degree in chemistry can lead them to more than just a benchtop at a pharmaceutical or chemical company, making a major fashion faux pas in a lab coat and goggles. In addition, pre-med students are often under the impression that a degree in biology or a biological-related science is “more impressive” or necessary for application and acceptance into medical school. Rider and the surrounding community suffer from both of these phenomena.

In fact, a wide variety of higher education and career opportunities depend on a crucial foundation of chemistry knowledge. The “Careers in Chemistry” program promises to make students aware of everything they can do with a degree in chemistry by introducing them not only to chemists, but to other professionals in non-traditional careers with degrees in chemistry, from the central New Jersey/Philadelphia area.

The program will be executed in two stages, initiating with a full-day symposium on **Saturday, May 2, 2009**. Chemists from various careers and sectors of industry, academia, and government will give panel discussions and presentations about their careers. Significantly they will pay attention to how their educational background in chemistry is crucial to their careers on a daily basis. This year, invited speakers include pharmaceutical chemists, flavors and fragrances chemists, food chemists, toxicologists, professors, museum curators, government and army scientists, consultants, information scientists, science reporters and writers, scientific editors, sales representatives, secondary education teachers, patent lawyers, forensics scientists, science historians, and doctors.

Following the initial symposium, Rider will organize field trips to several, if not all, of the locations represented at the symposium. This will give students a more intimate understanding of their particular career(s) of interest, helping them narrow down their career choice—although in no way limiting it to just one. It is anticipated that these field trips will include tours, hands-on experiential encounters, and social opportunities to become acquainted with other professionals at the sites. Many of these field trips will be planned during the summer, when high school students would all be available to attend during the work week.

Most importantly, the symposium serves as an open forum for students to meet professionals in the careers they find interesting. An overwhelming number of students do not pursue chemistry in college because they have never met a professional chemist, or even know what a chemist would do outside of what they learn in high school. These professionals will not only provide information on internship and other opportunities for student work, but ideally, they will ultimately behave as mentors for students throughout their job searches and careers.

If you are interested, I would like to speak with you about this at your convenience. You can reach me in my office at 609-895-5667, or on my cell phone at 732-319-7960. Or, you can send me your phone number and I can call you.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to speaking with you.

Danielle Jacobs