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Massachusetts Life Sciences Center Offers Internship Challenge

**Workforce Development Program Designed to Enhance Talent Pipeline for Life
Sciences in Massachusetts**

Boston, Massachusetts, (February 25, 2009)- The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) has created the Life Sciences Internship Challenge, a workforce development program focused on enhancing the talent pipeline for life sciences companies and research institutions in Massachusetts. The new program will provide Summer 2009 internships to at least 100 undergraduate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors who are considering career opportunities in life sciences – in either an industry or academic setting.

Students who are selected for the Internship Challenge will receive a stipend of \$4,800 for 8 weeks of work and host companies or institutions will commit to providing a dedicated mentor and meaningful internship opportunity that ties to the academic focus of eligible students, along with matching funds where feasible. The MLSC will provide a web-based interface where students can post resumes and experience and host organizations can match skills with their needs. Host organizations will contact and interview candidates, select interns for their programs, and notify the Center of their desire to provide an internship to a qualified student. The MLSC is actively recruiting companies and research institutions to participate in the challenge by hosting interns.

Objectives of the Life Sciences Internship Challenge include expanding the pool of prospective employees who have practical experience, enhancing opportunities for mentoring, enabling more students to explore career opportunities despite the challenging economic environment, and providing to students interested in working in the life sciences a peer network through educational and informational exchange events.

To be eligible, a student must currently be a Massachusetts resident or enrolled in a four-year college or university in Massachusetts majoring in a STEM field, and have completed at least their junior year of study, or, have completed their Bachelor's Degree in the past year. Students enrolled in a community college and concentrating in a STEM field must have completed an Associate's Degree, Certificate, or the equivalent of one year's course work related to the internship placement within the past year.

The need for expanded internship opportunities was a key finding of the Life Sciences Talent Initiative, a comprehensive study of the workforce needs of the life sciences industry in Massachusetts conducted by the University of Massachusetts' Donahue Institute, and released jointly by the MLSC and Massachusetts Biotechnology Council last year. Four other workforce reports prepared within the past year also have recommended internships for undergraduate students including a McKinsey study, a comprehensive state-wide study conducted for CommCorp by Northeastern University's Center for Urban and Regional Policy, a report from the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, and a report prepared by MIT's Industrial Performance Center on Bio-manufacturing in Massachusetts.

"The Life Sciences Internship Challenge is a key investment in the strength of our life sciences workforce in Massachusetts," said Dr. Susan Windham Bannister, President and CEO of the MLSC. "We have listened closely to life sciences employers and academic leaders throughout the Commonwealth regarding the workforce needs of the life sciences community, and the importance of internship programs has been mentioned repeatedly. This program will enable life sciences companies and research institutions to mentor students and provide on-the-job experience, while expanding the pool of qualified applicants for jobs in the life sciences."

"Internships provide students with invaluable hands-on experience --experiential learning that builds upon the skills they develop in university classrooms and labs," said Jack M. Wilson, President of the University of Massachusetts and a member of the MLSC Board of Directors. "This program is a win-win that will provide opportunities to Massachusetts students and connect talented young workers with life sciences companies."

"Through The Internship Challenge, the MLSC is addressing the need to fill the skilled talent pipeline for life sciences firms across the Commonwealth," said Dave Robinson, CEO of New England Peptide, a Gardner-based manufacturer of custom peptides and polyclonal antibodies. "This program will provide students with valuable industry experience and a real connection to the Massachusetts life sciences community."

"Providing work-based learning opportunities in the life sciences is an important part of our mission here at Middlesex Community College, and we're pleased to see the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center supporting this important work," said Dr. Carole Cowan, President of Middlesex Community College. "Life sciences companies tell us that they need new employees who are ready to hit the ground running, and this program will go a long way toward meeting that need."

"The work I do at the Life Sciences Center integrates subject matter from all of my courses into an exciting working environment," said MLSC intern Ashley Abarr, a first year student at Wellesley College majoring in neuroscience and economics. "I know that because of the skills and mentoring I've acquired while interning, I am better prepared to enter the life sciences industry, and I have more knowledge of everything Massachusetts offers to support my academic and career goals. I'm sure the same will be true for participants in the new Internship Challenge."

"The MLSC's new Internship Challenge is a terrific way for students to get their foot in the door at companies and research organizations," said MLSC intern Brian Jacques, a second year student majoring in communications at Mass Bay Community College. "Students need to understand that internships are the building blocks to establishing relationships and contacts at places they might be applying to for jobs after graduation. Internships are valuable because you can get a feel for what you like or don't like about a certain career field, but no matter what you take away from an internship the most important thing is gaining real world experience."

The MLSC is accepting web-based applications for the Life Sciences Internship Challenge via the MLSC web site at www.masslifesciences.com.

About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) is a quasi-public agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts tasked with implementing the Massachusetts Life Sciences Act, a ten-year, \$1 billion initiative that was signed into law in June of 2008. The Center's mission is to create jobs in the life sciences and support vital scientific research that will improve the human condition. This work includes making financial investments in public and private institutions that are advancing life sciences research, development and commercialization as well as building ties between sectors of the Massachusetts life sciences community. For more information, visit www.masslifesciences.com.