



**Massachusetts Life Sciences Center's Internship Challenge Matches 104
Interns with 59 Life Sciences Companies and Research Institutions
Participation comes from academic institutions and companies across the state**

For Immediate Release:

Date: July 22, 2009

**Contact: Angus McQuilken, Vice President for Communications
Cell: 617-921-7749 Email: amcquilken@masslifesciences.com**

Waltham, Massachusetts, (July 22, 2009)- The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center's Internship Challenge has received an overwhelming response since its February launch, with more than 500 applicants looking for internships this summer. Dozens of companies and research institutions from all sectors of the life sciences community have combed through hundreds of resumes, held numerous interviews, and selected interns to hire. Through the Challenge, 104 interns have been matched with 59 life sciences companies and research institutions.

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center's Internship Challenge is a workforce development program focused on enhancing the talent pipeline for life sciences companies and research institutions in Massachusetts by specifically providing interns with practical, "hands on" experience that prepares them to step into the workforce ready to meet the job requirements of life sciences employers. The new program is providing summer 2009 internships to undergraduate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors and recent college graduates from 36 different colleges and universities who are considering career opportunities in life sciences – in either an industry or academic setting.

Students selected for the Internship Challenge are receiving a stipend of \$4,800 for 8 weeks of work. Host companies and institutions commit to providing a dedicated mentor and a meaningful internship opportunity related to the academic focus of eligible students. The Center established a web-based interface where students could post resumes, as well as cover letters highlighting their experience, and host organizations can match skills with their needs. Host organizations contacted and interviewed candidates, selected interns for their programs, and notified the Center of their desire to provide an internship to a qualified student.

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.

“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 Center. “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 is allowing 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 all across the state.”

“This experience has been an awesome opportunity to learn about the biotech industry that I otherwise would not have experienced without the Center’s program,” said Andrew Bartley, a senior from Worcester Polytechnic Institute who is working as a research associate this summer at Worcester-based EpigenDx, Inc. “I hope the Internship Challenge Program will give me a leg-up when applying to graduate school, and in my career, because I will have had actual lab experience.”

“I think it is fair to say that I have gained real world knowledge and experience that would not have been possible in a classroom setting,” said Jessica Sites, a senior at Tufts University majoring in Chemical Engineering, and interning this summer at Serica Technologies in Medford. “Working for a start-up biotech company has not only provided me with an excellent opportunity to advance my knowledge in chemical engineering, but has also exposed me to the world of business. Beyond gaining important hands-on lab skills and experience, I have been invited to attend weekly company review meetings where I can observe scientists and entrepreneurs discussing and solving real life business and technical problems. Because of my experiences at Serica, I intend to pursue a career in the biotech industry after graduation with hopes of returning to school to achieve a degree in business.”

“At PVLSI I am dissecting the molecular pathway by which the loss of a tumor suppressor gene affects breast cancer tumorigenesis,” said Kerry Chenausky, a senior at UMass-Amherst who is interning this summer at the Pioneer Valley Life Sciences institute (PVLSI) in Springfield. “The experience of participating in a summer-long research project will have effects that last long beyond the summer months. The fellowship has inspired me to continue my studies and work in the life sciences in the hopes that I will be fortunate enough to work with a group of motivated scientists as exceptional as those at PVLSI.”

“We’ve been extremely pleased with the Internship Challenge program,” said Dr. Jeffrey Kiplinger, President of Worcester-based Averica Discovery Services, Inc. “Our two interns, both Chemistry majors at WPI, have been big assets in the lab, and we’re thrilled that the Center facilitated the entire process. We found suitable resumes immediately, interviewed six candidates and chose two very rapidly, and they started work the next week. This is probably the best

organized and most transparent state program I've ever seen. Best of all, it gives good students useful work experience and good companies, especially small ones like mine, a boost. What a great use of funds!"

###