



**THE LIFE SCIENCES VOICE**  
The Georgia Bio Industry E-Newsletter

Newsletter Issue: September 2018

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National Life Sciences Partners



# Letter from the President



Dear Georgia Bio Members and Friends,

On October 9, biotech industry leaders throughout the region will convene at Georgia Bio's flagship conference, the Georgia Bio Innovation Summit. We anticipate over 500 professionals representing pharma, medtech, digital health and innovative growth stage companies, service providers and academic institutions at Cobb Galleria.

We have an exciting list of panelists and keynote speakers. **American Cancer Society** CEO Gary M. Reedy will discuss organization's new venture fund to commercialize promising new cancer therapies; the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** Director Dr. Robert R. Redfield will have a conversation with Chief Medical Officers from **Quest Diagnostics** and **Abbvie** discussing digital health innovation in the 21st century, and much more.

The conference will close with a panel discussion on **"The Future of Life Sciences in Georgia,"** presented by Georgia Research Alliance, Metro Atlanta Chamber, Georgia Global Health Alliance and Georgia Bio.

Speakers will discuss the latest efforts to improve access to capital, grow our workforce, and develop resource and innovation centers to position Georgia as a leading state for biosciences. This will be an exciting preview of the **2019 Georgia Bio Industry Report**.

Gatherings like the Georgia Bio Summit provide the opportunity for healthcare thought leaders to share varying perspectives, a critical precursor in the development of a common vision of value across stakeholders. If you are not yet registered, you can do so [online here](#).

**In 2019 the organization will celebrate its 30th anniversary.** Georgia's bioscience and medtech industries have accomplished a great deal over 30 years and Georgia Bio looks forward to showcasing these achievements next year. I encourage you to save the date for the **2019 Georgia Bio Life Sciences Health Impact Awards Ceremony and Gala** which will take place, **Friday, February 8, 2019 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta Perimeter at Villa Christina**. The event will be a celebration of the sector with dinner, a brief awards ceremony and roll out of the 2019 industry report. The evening will close with a live band and dancing. Don't miss this chance to celebrate where we have come in 30 years. I also encourage you to [submit your award nominations here](#) no later than November 4th.

I am excited for Summit on October 9th and thank our sponsors, members and community leaders for their support and engagement. I hope to see you all there and look forward to sharing more details about the awards dinner in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Maria Thacker Goethe

Acting President and CEO

Georgia Bio

A banner for the 2019 Georgia Bio Golden Helix Awards. It features a golden DNA double helix structure on a black background with sparkling particles. The text is in white and orange.

**NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS**  
**2019 Georgia Bio Golden Helix Awards**  
*Do you know a life sciences industry leader that deserves recognition for their work in Georgia? Review award categories and submit your nomination no later than November 4, 2018. **MORE >***

# Executive Interview: Steve Damon, Vice President, Femasys, Inc.

*Ashley Bohn, PhD, MSc, RVT, Bohn  
Communications, LLC*



Mr. Steve Damon is currently the Vice President of Business and Commercial Development for Femasys, Inc., a women's healthcare Med Tech company in the Atlanta area that works to improve the lives of women through their innovative medical technologies. His previous roles include CEO and President of 4P Therapeutics, a Bio-Tech company he founded, Vice

President of Business Development for Altea Therapeutics, Executive Director of Business Development with the Durect Corporation, and also with Kimberly Clark (now Halyard Health) as part of their Mergers and Acquisitions (M & A) team, to name a few. He currently serves as a Director on the Boards for Nutriband Corporation and Temple Therapeutics and is an Advisor for Micron BioMedical and Carmel Biosciences. Steve has been a member of the Georgia Bio Board of Directors for several years. He is the definition of a business mogul in the Bio Tech and Med Tech arena. I sat down with Steve to learn more about his career and path.

## **Will you tell me a little about your career and leadership path throughout your career?**

I started my career in the food industry with Kraft right after college. After 5 years with Kraft, I then spent 13 years with Kimberly Clark (KC) Corporation in the early days of their professional healthcare business; first, I was in sales, sales management, corporate development and then moved into M & A and helped the company grow into new areas. I moved to Europe with KC, which was an amazing experience. The healthcare sector of KC grew significantly over time through acquisitions, and later became Halyard Health and then most recently Avanos. After my time in Europe, I knew I wanted more leadership opportunities and strived to make an even bigger impact in my next role. This led me to BioTech/MedTech and to Durect Corporation in California.

The Durect Corporation was focused on drug delivery for established drugs to make them safer and easier to use. I honestly felt I was in a little over my head, because people in Life Sciences have a tremendous amount of formal education. I learned along the way that my experience in business made me an effective asset to the team, and I gained confidence along the way. I ran the Alzet brand research business, founded and was Chairman of Absorbable Polymers International (as a subsidiary) and executed multiple drug delivery partnerships with pharma. I really learned my way around the biotechnology industry in this role.

Altea Therapeutics recruited me back to Atlanta as VP of Business Development (BD). I led the BD team where we established some large partnerships, which funded the company for years. I also gained additional experience in biotechnology and medical technology, and continued to grow professionally as I helped Altea's business mature. While we had a lot of success in the beginning, the technology failed and the company eventually ran out of funding.

Following the close of Altea, I gathered some key scientists who were without jobs and subleased space from Inhibitex to start what became 4P Therapeutics. 4P Therapeutics is a transdermal drug delivery company with some leading abuse deterrent technology in development. I leaned heavily on old contacts in industry to get work to fund the company and do the R & D. We grew 4P Therapeutics over the next 7 years and then recently sold the company to Nutriband Inc. I am most proud of our 4P team's success over those years and look forward to watching the company continue to grow under the Nutriband umbrella.

I met Kathy Lee-Sepsick, Founder, President, and CEO of Femasys, Inc. very early in my BioTech/MedTech career. We stayed in touch over the years and eventually she asked if I would consult in a formal way. I ended up taking a full-time role after the sale of 4P Therapeutics and now spend all my time working on business and commercial development for Femasys. Femasys is poised to change the world in women's healthcare and I am thrilled to be a part of her team and this great company she built from scratch.

## **What do you think has been the key to your success?**

When I was in the surgical room assisting in the use of Kimberly Clark technologies, it was exciting, and I felt like we were doing good, helping to improve the quality of life, and maybe even saving lives. I've always looked for work and businesses that made me feel that way, which keeps me motivated and passionate about the businesses I'm working with or leading. It makes the job much easier and so satisfying if you believe in it.

I've also always hired and managed people who were secure in their own abilities. Imposter syndrome can sabotage the best and brightest people. It's okay to feel uncertain occasionally but believing in yourself is critical to overcoming obstacles and succeeding. Success includes failing along the way. It's adapting and adjusting until the goal is accomplished. Try not to read your own press when succeeding and just focus on being a good person. Being around these types of people helps me succeed with my goals.

## **What are some of the memorable opportunities, successes and/or challenges that occurred along your career and leadership path?**

I took a chance leaving my career with KC and going with a smaller company out west, but I was able to make a larger impact there. I reached out to my network for help, guidance, and encouragement when I made the decision. It was a difficult decision to move my family across the country and start a new career in BioTech/Medtech. I think

it might be easier for today's young professionals to keep in touch and reach out to their network when needed. This risky move turned out to be pivotal in my career and life. I didn't want to sit around and wait for success. Again, I wanted to make an even bigger impact in my next role. It turned out to be a good decision, but it was difficult to leave the security I had at KC.

**What is the current climate for startups in the Life Sciences and how do you see this changing in the next five years?**

Technology is improving, changing, and is the most exciting I've seen in my career. We are able to gather more information and do more with it. New approaches via drugs or devices to treating and curing diseases seem to be working more often. I think it's going to change the way we do business completely. From my observations, new technologies and drugs will continue to change everything from how we treat disease to what we invest in and even the structure of business models in our industry. These are going to be changes that will change the landscape for Biotech/Medtech. It's a great time to be a start up in my opinion. The next years will continue to be growth years for our industry and continue to improve and extend the lives of people.

**What opportunities do you see for Georgia Bio and the Life Sciences industry locally?**

We are in a good place under the leadership of the current President of Georgia Bio, Russell Allen. What's still needed to really propel Georgia's Life Sciences industry into the top tier nationally is more state support. We have the universities and infrastructure, but we need incentives to bring new businesses here and retain the ones we already have. We may eventually have to drag the state government along with us to make them realize what's possible with Life Sciences in Georgia. There's enormous change coming with even larger financial payoffs possible, but Georgia may be left behind if legislators don't get on board and give the support needed. Support in the form of tax credits and giving the BioTech/Medtech businesses the ability to buy and sell tax losses is something I would like to see more of. In my experience, 4P Therapeutics was lucky to be profitable in early years, which isn't the case for many businesses in the Life Sciences. 4P Therapeutics paid a lot of taxes in those early years. It would have helped a lot to have some more tax credit support. Overall, there are probably missed opportunities in tax revenue, job creation, wage increases, and general investments in our state. I'm not the expert but I feel we can do better by working together with the state and fully realizing the potential of our industry and the impact it can have locally and on our state.

**What advice would you give to entrepreneurs or young professionals?**

I've spent about eight years with the Emory and Georgia Tech TI:GER program, so have had some experience coaching young professionals. The key, in my opinion, is to start with a great education. This is a highly formally educated industry. It's not like "the old days". Advanced degrees are important and becoming more and more required. If you want to start a business, it should be one

that you love and believe in. Don't be afraid to fail along the way. Emerge stronger and smarter and better for the experience if in your first venture you don't succeed. Be able to adapt. Things almost never turn out how you planned- you almost never succeed with the initial plans or product. As much as you have to work to research and develop your ideas, you have to work harder to fund the ideas. Always be in fund raising mode.

**Are there any new developments that your company is currently working on that you can share?**

Of course! Femasys is going to change the world! That's why I made the commitment. We're developing a permanent contraception option for women who no longer want children. Half of all contraception sold is to families who have had their children and await menopause or don't want to have children. Sometimes that could mean 10-15 years of temporary birth control, tubal ligation surgery, or vasectomy surgery. Our product is a permanent contraception solution provided during gynecological visit in the office with no anesthesia and nothing left behind in the body We also have products to help with infertility as well as cancer diagnostics.

## Georgia Bio Hosts Annual Golf Outing to Raise Funds for GaBioEd STEM Programs

Georgia Bio hosted its 4th annual Swings FORE STEM golf outing at the Manor Golf & Country Club on September 4. Nearly 70 attendees, who represented life science companies and service providers throughout Georgia, banded together to raise funds for the cause.

The outing's revenue will help to maintain and stock the GaBioEd Equipment Depot which supplies Georgia teachers with the tools needed to teach biotechnology in classrooms.

**This year's proud owners of the green lab coats were: Joe Patti, Abel De La Rosa, Jason Foss, and Steve Farrar.**



Additional, winners included:

- Longest Drive (Men) – Kyle Leonard
- Longest Drive (Women) – Jamie Graham
- Closest to the Pin (Men) – Charles Krauth
- Closest to the Pin (Women) – Karen Gillespie
- Putting Contest – Sean Purdy
- Chipping Contest – Luis Gomez



Among the participants were former Atlanta Braves players Marty Perez, Luis Gomez, Alejandro Peña and Chris Chambliss who helped raise funds to promote and support STEM education programs run by the Institute. The funds raised for the event will benefit the Georgia BioEd Institute.

The institute is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization committed to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education with a focus in biotechnology and medtech in Georgia through school programs, workforce training, and lifelong learning. Serving as a link between education, industry, and government, GaBioEd is working to ensure Georgia's' biotechnology and medtech sectors have an appropriately trained workforce to meet the growing employment needs." For more information about GaBioEd, visit the website: <http://www.georgiabiomed.org/>

The Golf Outing was only made possible by its sponsors: **Alimera Sciences, Arbor Pharmaceuticals, CAI, Celtaxsys, CG Capital, CRB, Eversheds, Kilpatrick Townsend, PhRMA, Recro Gainesville, Sidney Lee Medical Gases, and UCB.**

Overall, the Swings FORE STEM was a success. [Photos can be found here.](#)

## The Great Debate Over Glyphosate

*Bijean Ford, Emory University, PhD Candidate*

As many of us have heard recently, Monsanto, which is now acquired by Bayer AG, was ordered to [pay \\$289 million](#) in damages to Dewayne Johnson of California. The jury ruled in his favor based on his claim that exposure to the glyphosate-

containing herbicide, Roundup, caused his terminal non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. With this civilian success against a juggernaut of a company like Monsanto/Bayer, there awaits a [parade of plaintiffs](#) that have higher hopes for obtaining justice, as many of them face similar personal circumstances as Mr. Johnson.

Following Mr. Johnson's legal triumph, a [riveting article](#) released by the Environmental Working Group, revealed traces of the herbicidal molecule, glyphosate, on various everyday foods such as Quaker Oats, Nature Valley granola bars, and even General Mill's Cheerios and Lucky Charms cereal, at levels above what is deemed safe for children by the EWG, which is 160 parts-per-billion (ppb). How on earth is an herbicide that has [been classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer \(IARC\) as a level 2A carcinogen](#) (probably carcinogenic), ending up on our food? And how widespread is this tainting of our food, by this herbicide? Is Monsanto justified in downplaying the negative buzz surrounding its product that for years has been dubbed by them "safe for humans", or by others "[safe enough to drink?](#)" Let's take a look.

Glyphosate, N-phosphonomethyl-glycine, is a non-selective herbicide which was patented by Monsanto in the 1970's and formulated with other ingredients to create the distributed product commonly known as Roundup. Monsanto prides itself on the assumption that as lethal as this product is to plants, it poses no "unreasonable risk" to humans when following the labelled instructions. This is because glyphosate inhibits an enzyme, EPSPS (5-enolpyruvylshikimate-3-phosphate synthase), which is essential to life in plants, but not produced by humans. We humans shouldn't have a problem then, right? That was the prevailing assumption for a very long time. So much so, Monsanto began manufacturing genetically modified (GMO) seeds that would be resistant to roundup. That way, farmers could address the numerous weeds that pop up and deleteriously compete with their crops for nutrients in an easier and effective manner, without the fear of harming their plants....in theory.

One of the biochemical characteristics of glyphosate is its chelating ability of important ions, such as Ca, Mg, Cu, Fe, Mn, Ni and Zn. In essence, glyphosate acts as a magnet for these ions, sequestering and withholding them from the life forms that need them, such as plants and even commensal microorganisms in the soil. This means GMO crops sprayed with glyphosate-herbicides like Roundup aren't as healthy or productive due to less available nutrients in the soil versus crops that aren't sprayed, so subsequently the crops themselves are [more susceptible to fungal infections](#), and their ripened produce are more likely to be deficient of nutrients and of lesser quality, unless soil amendments are considered. Other factors to consider, are the degradation times of glyphosate as well as the effects of its metabolites, such as AMPA (aminomethylphosphonic acid), which has been shown to confer [mild phytotoxicity](#) to treated plants.

This also means, when we consume products with residual glyphosate, we potentially are not getting the full nutritious value of the food because we experience

the same sequestration of vital minerals, as this molecule passes through our digestive tract and out of our bodies. Studies have even shown that of the minority of glyphosate absorbed by the body, it accumulates over time in the liver and kidneys as primary endpoints during the passage of the chemical through the body, so we may not be excreting the chemical at the same rate we are consuming it. Combining the chelating effects of glyphosate with its tendency to accumulate in the body, issues tend to arise such as the [Sri Lankan kidney disease epidemic](#), that has been allegedly linked to glyphosate prevalence in the region. This study opens up the possibility of similar occurrences in other regions of the world, such as India and areas of South America, being linked to the same issue. Consider this as well, that our gut microbiota can experience deleterious effects from glyphosate as they contain EPSPS, like plants. Some of these negative effects may be countered by additional supplementation on our part, which could make up for what is inhibited by glyphosate, but more research must be done.

Another unfortunate development with these GMO crops which are resistant to glyphosate, is the natural process of evolution. Over time, with more applications of Roundup, an ever-growing cohort of [glyphosate-resistant weeds](#) has taken hold, resulting in greater herbicide usage on these crops to eliminate their weedy counterparts. Ultimately, this means we consumers are at risk of greater glyphosate consumption as time goes on. On top of that, glyphosate alone is not the only culprit, as some of the additives in Roundup, such as [Polyethoxylated tallow amine \(POEA\)](#), have been shown to be toxic to human cells at relevant, real-world concentrations. This further complicates the already controversial topic of how toxic Roundup potentially is to humans, in spite of various health entities classifying substances like POEA as “safe”, but for the sake of keeping this article short, we will opt to side-step that rabbit hole for now. It’s important that we consider the fact that these applied herbicides are a formulation of multiple ingredients, in addition to glyphosate, so it’s pertinent that we consider studies using the whole product and not just its main ingredient. Nonetheless, Monsanto is adamant that their Roundup product is undoubtedly safe and even more outraged by the claims that it causes cancer. Why so?

Monsanto has repeatedly expressed its displeasure at the [IARC’s review](#) of glyphosate in 2015, claiming that the committee failed to consider relevant studies that would

contradict their final verdict of Roundup being a class 2A carcinogen. In its defense, Monsanto claims that a large U.S. study at the time, [published in May of this year](#), supported its premise that glyphosate was not connected to non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. However, this study could not be used in the review, based on the publication requirement, outlined on page 4 of the [IARC monographs preamble](#). Monsanto has also stated that their claims are backed by hundreds of studies that show no cancer link to their product, including [one particular review](#) which serves as a rebuttal to many negative findings on glyphosate up to that time. So, who do we believe, and what do we do?

First, we must believe the data. More research centered around multivariate exposure to Roundup, not just glyphosate or its other accompanying ingredients, must be done. There are still too many conflicting study results with varying conditions, and as we very well know in the world of research, reproducibility is the key to sound science. Researchers and reporters of their studies also need to be cognizant of the difference between glyphosate as an ingredient and Roundup as a complete product formulation. After all, some of the additives in Roundup serve as adjuvants and surfactants to enhance the effect of the product on its target. Animal models provide helpful insight, but greater relevance would be conferred to human samples and cell lines exposed to physiologically relevant doses, along with more epidemiological studies conducted on human populations, assessing the effects of these chemical exposures over time. Lastly, it would also be in our best interest to consider the effects of glyphosate’s metabolites, like AMPA, on human cells and in animal models after detecting what level, if any, is present in our bodies.

As it pertains to what we as consumers can control, one solution to our perpetual exposure to glyphosate, is to eat organically grown and derived food. In the earlier mentioned EWG study, most of the organic products listed had non-detectable levels of glyphosate, with only a few having trace amounts of the substance that fall well below the concentration limit. A [long-term, longitudinal study](#) conducted by the University of California San Diego highlighted the percentage of people having exposure to glyphosate has been dramatically increasing over the past 20 years. Through urine sample analysis in this study, individuals over time experienced greater levels of exposure to this chemical; this has been corroborated by [animal studies](#) as



well. In light of this research and associated commentary, the best way to assure minimal glyphosate ingestion, regardless of whether it is carcinogenic or not, is to control the setting in which your produce is grown and cultivate your own crops. I personally maintain a garden of my favorite vegetables, along with an assortment of berries and my wife's favorite, watermelon. Additionally, if you choose to use Roundup in your yard, or are required to handle it at work, follow the necessary precautions to minimize your exposure to the product via inhalation or through the skin.

It's important to eat healthy, but as we can see, even when our intentions are good, we can still be inadvertently harming ourselves. So, take heed, and pay attention to how your food is sourced. It will not only provide you with peace of mind, but your body and your taste buds will thank you too.



28 - 30 November 2018  
Loews Coronado Bay  
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## From Graduate School to Medical Communications and Surviving my First Business Trip

*Ashley Bohn, PhD, MSc, RVT, Bohn Communications, LLC*

Life as a graduate student in the Life Sciences is unique. It's a strange dynamic between learning to be an independent scientist, while becoming an expert in a very particular area, and preparing to have a successful career after you leave academia. There's certainly time to do all of these things since most PhDs average 5-6 years in their programs; however, it's often frowned upon for students to do anything except be in the lab. As I said, it's unique, but I can dive deeper into that in a separate blog.

I knew from my very first day in graduate school that I wanted a career outside of academia. I didn't quite know what I wanted to do, but I was certain life at the lab bench was not for me. Luckily, my PhD mentor allowed me to be involved in extracurricular activities, such as networking and our state trade association, Georgia Bio. Those extracurricular

activities slowed my progress as a researcher, but they were essential to my success post-grad school, as I'll explain.

While completing my PhD work and helping to manage the lab, I was heavily involved in the university's Biology Graduate Student Association. I taught as a lab teaching assistant and as an instructor to undergraduate students. I also took public health classes and earned a graduate certificate in Public Health Policy. Networking events were my forte, and I attended them routinely. I also completed an internship with Georgia Bio, which focused on legislative initiatives to encourage growth of life science businesses within the state. All of this experience, plus my PhD, was surely going to land me a good job straight out of school, right?

I hit the ground running after graduation. I was determined to break into pharmaceuticals, either as a medical writer, sales rep, or my dream job of being a Medical Science Liaison (MSL). Here's something they don't tell you in grad school: you can't get a job without experience, and anything you did before or while in grad school doesn't count. Pharma especially won't talk to you unless you've worked in pharmaceuticals previously. It's like some secret society you have to be invited to join only after you sacrifice your first-born child. I couldn't get an interview to save my life. So, I had to step up my game! I reached out to all my previous networking contacts, had my resume professionally written (twice!) and kept numerous versions saved, ready to tailor and send to potential employers, and I applied to literally hundreds of jobs. Almost immediately after submitting an application, which is a time-consuming process, I'd receive the dreaded rejection email. I wasn't making it past the resume screening software most companies use, and if I did make it through the initial screening, I didn't have enough experience to really be considered for the position.



Determined not to be defeated, I reached out to the hiring managers I knew from the industry. Most were kind enough to pass my resume along and tell me it looked good, but nothing much ever came of it. I did get an interview for what I thought was a medical writing position, but it turned out the company just wanted to see if I'd work on their help desk answering phones. I mean, I

knew I'd have to start at the bottom and work my way up, but I had worked way too hard to accept that. I respectfully declined the offer. Month after month went by without a job utilizing the PhD for which I had worked so very hard. This story does have a happy ending, but it took 8 months for me to get a full-time job in my field after completing my PhD.

As I mentioned previously, I routinely networked while in grad school, and one of the contacts I made was Dr. Karen Ventii, owner of Gold Star Communications, and all-around Rockstar who believes in helping the next generation of

scientists succeed. I knew Karen took on interns for her medical writing business, so I reached out to her and asked for a spot. She didn't have an opening at the time, but she called me a few weeks later and said something opened up. I jumped at the opportunity to gain experience and learn from Karen. At this point, I had returned to my previous career (before grad school) as a veterinary nurse in an emergency and critical care hospital. I was working swing shifts and overnight shifts to make ends meet, which allowed enough down time when things weren't busy to work on the projects Karen assigned to me. I like to think this is what's meant when they say a person has grit. Here I was, 34 years old with a PhD, working crazy, odd, hours getting covered in every bodily fluid you don't want to imagine, and being beaten up by large dogs each and every night all while continuing the hustle of trying to gain experience to start my career post-graduate school.

My first projects with Gold Star were helping to build and fact-check two scientific slide decks for one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world. Specifically, the slide decks would be used in the field to educate sales reps, MSLS, and prescribing doctors about cancer therapies to treat advanced disease. I felt like I was in freshman biology class again, but in a good way! The work reminded me why I loved science and of a time in my life when I found science to be exciting and life changing- you know, before grad school crushed all my hopes and dreams (I'm kidding - only partially crushed). Then, it got even better. With my internship with Gold Star completed, I took on another part-time job to gain experience in human medicine and continued my job hunt for something full-time. A couple of months went by when Karen reached back out to me in need of a writing team to go with her to... wait for it... GERMANY. Gold Star Communications was hired to write the scientific platform and executive summary and provide support for an advisory board meeting conducted by another very large pharmaceutical company. I'm not even sure I let Karen finish her spiel before all the "yesses" came out of my mouth. "You'll have to tell me what to do, but I will go and present myself and Gold Star the best I possibly can. Thank you, thank you, thank you!" This was the break I needed and deserved.

To prepare for the meeting, I obviously got up to speed on recent clinical trial data and treatment options in the disease state on which we were working, but this was also my first business trip - and it was an international one, too. The medical writing team Gold Star put together was fantastic and had more experience attending advisory boards than I did. I asked for advice on everything from the appropriate dress to purchasing the correct electrical adapter to making sure I recorded all the information we needed to put together a stellar executive summary.



First, business dress is appropriate for a meeting of this caliber, erring on the side of business formal for evening events. It's pharma, dress like you belong there. Second, obviously be professional. Be careful of drinking too much and making inappropriate jokes. Bring business cards with you and plan to represent your company with the utmost integrity. And always remember to thank your host(s). Ours was a lovely, brilliant woman who worked for the pharmaceutical company, spoke six languages (!), and took care of every last detail of our travel accommodations and meeting needs. We made it a point to shake her hand and thank her personally following the meetings.

I also extended my stay in Germany before and after the meetings, 1) because I wanted ample time to adjust to the time change and to review all materials relevant to the meetings, and 2) because I was in Germany for the first time! I needed schnitzel and beer in my life... as soon as all the important meetings were over, of course!

Prior to the meeting, the writing team and I worked incredibly hard preparing the materials that would be presented in front of a dozen or so bonified medical experts from all over the world. We discussed every possible thing that could go wrong and tried to prepare for every possible hiccup. The days flew by and suddenly, it was time to make the trip overseas!

I flew overnight, alone to Germany. Upon my arrival, I was of course exhausted and was so very thankful I gave myself an extra day to adjust to the time difference and prepare for the meetings. I slept all day and was wide awake all night, but I was ready to go the first morning of our meetings. What none of us could have anticipated was that the hotel would be doing construction and cutting our power off for several hours each day. It was horrible timing, but we all managed, and the meetings were a big success for Gold Star.

What struck us all about the meetings with the executives from this pharmaceutical company and the medical experts who traveled from all over the world was how kind and inviting they were. They treated us like professionals, which from my understanding is not always the case in these types of meetings. There was one Canadian doctor who took the time to learn our names and even invited me to join the round table discussion for which I was assigned to take notes. It was absolutely fascinating to hear them debate data from the clinical trials and discuss their own practices back home.

And just like that, the meetings were done. We all wanted to change out of our stuffy business attire and see the beautiful city where we were staying. So, we immediately backed up our audio recordings, organized our meeting notes, and then we crammed six adults into a European minivan, which is not even close to the size of an American minivan, and took a ride down to the touristy part of town. We walked along the river, had schnitzel, beer, Riesling, and apple wine. We were all instant friends and would share this experience forever. It was perfect.

That's not the end of my story, however. Prior to and while preparing for the trip to Germany, I had been interviewing for a full-time medical writing position. After weeks of requesting updates and all the anxiety, my phone rang with good news! They say it's not what you know but who you know that makes getting a job a reality. That proved true for me! I only found out about the position through my network. I called on one of my MSL contacts for the second time since graduation (out of frustration and a little desperation), and she was kind enough to put me in touch with her former classmate who works with a continuing medical education (CME) company, called Clinical Care Options, or CCO. The CCO team has a great reputation for not only the work they do but also for treating their employees well. I was ecstatic! I finally found a position that would allow me to use my medical knowledge from veterinary nursing and my scientific background in research with a company I could see myself staying with long-term.



Of course, I still have a lot to learn in the CME world, and CCO has especially high standards, but I'm making progress and absolutely loving my job and colleagues so far. I owe a lot to Karen

and Gold Star for giving me this opportunity, for fostering me as an inexperienced medical writer, and for helping young professionals get the experience they need to succeed—something I intend to pay forward as often as possible. I hope to stay with CCO long-term and plan to continue working with Karen and Gold Star as long as they'll have me, but life has many unexpected turns. Stay tuned to see where this journey takes me...

## New Purchasing Solution for Georgia Bio Members Advanta Advertising *We Have Solutions For Every Stage of Your Life Cycle*

Advanta Advertising, LLC understands the needs of your startup company and has refined a program for smaller companies in the life science, medical technology, digital health, therapeutic, and biotechnology industries

- we call this our "Seedling Stage" package. We speak your language throughout the lifecycle of your startup, from preclinical through approval stages, giving you the competitive edge, while shortening your brand development process.

Georgia Bio is proud to partner with Advanta to offer members a 5% discount on the engagement of one of their startup packages. These packages help entrepreneurs and startup companies get the ideas, devices, digital healthcare technologies, and therapeutics to the market faster, safer, and smarter; with a brand identity that builds a solid foundation for your company to continually grow!

These streamlined corporate brand packages were developed in effort to support the growth of seedling stage, startups, and incubator companies by helping them cost-effectively build better branding, communications strategy, build a strong foundation in which to continually grow, and to help you establish credibility as a company. We believe that a strong brand for a startup company, is one that strikes a balance and creates a synergy between the science that is being presented from both the clinical and layman perspectives; essentially bridging the gap for gaining investor interest and capital.

Your goal is to attract investors, generate conversation among your peers, and draw attention to your research, pipeline, or potential products. Our goal is to help you get started and establish credibility as a company.

### **But don't take it from us, take it from one of our clients...**

"The folks at Advanta have been a true partner and a delight to work with from the start. OncoViRx is a start-up drug discovery company with a great need for top-quality corporate marketing support, but with a very limited budget. Advanta has delivered in spades by keeping our marketing needs consistent and cost-effective. I have enthusiastically recommended Advanta to other young biopharma companies in the Philadelphia area since we began working together, and plan to continue my recommendations for the foreseeable future." - Francis Humann, CEO & President, OncoViRx

**At Advanta, we value the work you do to help feed, fuel, and heal the world. Contact us today to let us help you build a better brand — it's in our DNA.**

[Click Here for Advanta's Startup Packages](#)



## Featured New Core Member: **Tendonova**

TendoNova is developing a suite of specialized tools for minimally invasive orthopedic procedures that can be performed under ultrasound guidance in the physician's office.

Starting with chronic tendon pain, TendoNova seeks to provide clinicians with modalities that are customizable to individual patient needs without overwhelming expense.

[Learn more here.](#)

## Featured New Supporting Member: **Crowell & Moring**

Crowell & Moring is an international law firm headquartered in Washington, D.C., with offices in New York City, Irvine, Los Angeles, San Francisco, London and Brussels. With approximately 500 lawyers, the firm advises multinational corporations on regulatory, litigation, corporate, and investigations matters.

[Learn more here.](#)

## Upcoming Events

### [Member Benefits Webinar](#)

October 2, 2018

### [GSU All Majors Fair](#)

October 3, 2018

### [WIB: Book Club: The Confidence Code](#)

October 4, 2018

### [2018 Georgia Bio Innovation Summit](#)

October 9, 2018

### [BioNetwork 2018](#)

October 10, 2018

### [50th Annual Meeting - Biomedical Engineering Society](#)

October 17-20, 2018

### [Small Dinner with Mr. Scott Horn](#)

October 18, 2018

### [2018 International Society for Vaccines Annual Congress](#)

October 28-30, 2018

### [World Vaccine Congress Europe 2018](#)

October 29-31, 2018

### [World Immunotherapy Congress 2018](#)

October 29-31, 2018

### [National NIH SBIR/STTR Conference](#)

October 30-November 1, 2018

### [BIO-Europe® 2018](#)

November 5-7, 2018

### [World Orphan Drug Congress 2018](#)

November 6-8, 2018

### [SEBIO 2018](#)

November 13-14, 2018

### [Drug Development Boot Camp](#)

November 14-15, 2018

### [Webinar: Impact of the GDPR in the Life Science Sector](#)

November 27, 2018

### [World Vaccine & Immunotherapy Congress West Coast](#)

November 28-30, 2018

## Welcome New Members

- Commissioning Agents, Inc
- Crowell & Moring LLP
- Joe Costa & Associates
- NanoCliq
- Slingshot Product Development
- Sperry IP Law
- Tendonova
- Tonic AI

## 2018 Champion Sponsors



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## 2018 Premier Members

Alimera Sciences  
Arnall Golden Gregory  
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Recro Gainesville  
Thermo Fisher Scientific  
UPS