



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Bay Workforce Investment Board
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**HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM
SOUTH BAY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD BIO-FLEX
PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

HAWTHORNE – Twenty-Seven high school and college age students completed the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) Bio-Flex Pre-Apprentice Program and were honored during a virtual graduation ceremony, June 2, 2021.

Patterned after the SBWIB’s highly successful Aero-Flex Apprenticeship program that prepares individuals for career pathways in aerospace manufacturing, the Bio-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship program was developed to expose individuals to the skill sets and many career opportunities available in the growing bioscience industry.

“We developed this employer driven apprenticeship framework to meet the workforce development needs common to our industry partners,” said SBWIB Executive Director Jan Vogel. “Employers are able to tailor the curriculum to meet their individual training needs around a specific occupation or department,” he concluded.

In addition to the opportunity to work alongside professionals in the bioscience field, students completed three months of training including the SBWIB’s work readiness course called, Blueprint for Workplace Success, that includes skills training for job seeking about how to get a job, such as learning interviewing and resume writing techniques. Five high schools participated including Inglewood City Honors, Lawndale High School, North Torrance High School, STEM Academy of Hollywood and Verbum Dei High School. Students from Citrus College also participated.

Diana Santiago, a senior at Lawndale High School said, “I was able to learn a lot about what is important to have on a resume and I now know how to create a good resume.”

The Bio-Flex program provides a three-step curriculum that exposes students to the Bioscience industry. The training includes Track I-Work Readiness; Track II- Technical Skills utilizing online and employer designated coursework; Track III- Work Experience or a COVID adapted virtual experience that is interactive with employers and guest speakers working in the bioscience / biotechnology sectors.

Gildardo Limon, a Citrus College/Oak Crest Institute of Science participant, summarized the program by saying, “Being able to refamiliarize myself with various lab techniques was useful to reinforce those skills, which I can then use in other programs. Also, being exposed to people with careers in scientific research was useful in understanding if a path in lab research is a viable option for myself.”

Among the bioscience partners accepting apprentices onsite this cycle were Sakura Finetek and Pathways to STEM Cell Science both based in Torrance. Due to COVID restrictions, Oakcrest Institute of Science in Monrovia provided virtual career workshops featuring scientists and laboratory technicians. Funding for the program was provided in part by the LA County Board of Supervisors, 2nd district, and a foundation grant received from Howmet.

Bio-Flex graduate Alan Tran, a year junior attending UCLA said “I feel the BioTech Primer technical skills training [provided in Track II] was relevant to my school STEM curriculum and will contribute to my future workplace/career success. This experience [at Sakura Finetek] definitely taught me a lot about the nuances of bioscience manufacturing.”

Bio-Flex delivers an effective workforce development tool to the region, which is being used to attract new talent to the Bioscience industry. The program provides an important talent resource to employers and increases access for job seekers looking for well-paid careers in this exciting industry.

The SBWIB provides business and employment services for youth and adults at no cost to the public through its four One-Stop Business and Careers Centers serving 11 South Bay cities. It also manages countywide programs and operates two Teen Centers in Hawthorne and Inglewood and a Youthbuild program in Lennox.

For more information, please visit www.sbwib.org/bioflex or call (310) 970-7700.

