APPRENTICESHIP SEPA NEWSLETTER: Issue 2 (Sent August 23, 2017)

APPRENTICESHIP PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: The Wistar Institute

The Wistar Institute is the nation’s first independent institution devoted to medical research and training. The Wistar Institute has evolved from its beginnings as an anatomical teaching museum to its present-day status as an international leader in basic biomedical research. In 1972, The Wistar Institute was designated a National Cancer Institute Cancer Center in basic research—a distinction it holds to this day. Wistar discoveries have led to the development of vaccines for rabies, rubella, and rotavirus, the identification of genes associated with breast, lung, and prostate cancer, and the development of monoclonal antibodies and other significant research technologies and tools.

For the past 16 years, The Wistar Institute has provided students from Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) with advanced skills and hands-on training in the research laboratory for a career path to basic and applied biomedical and cancer research at The Wistar Institute and other prestigious biomedical and pharmaceutical laboratories in the region. On May 11, 2017, The Wistar Institute accepted certification from the Council on Apprenticeship Standards for the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry ratifying the first-ever nontraditional apprenticeship program for biomedical research. The Wistar Institute’s Biomedical Research Technician (BRT) Training Apprenticeship is the first of its kind in the nation. This apprenticeship offers apprentices a career pathway to becoming biomedical research technicians in a research laboratory environment. Through advanced training they acquire skill sets to facilitate experimental procedures, manage a laboratory and monitor lab safety, conduct data analysis on experiments, and other highly-skilled techniques with the goal of supporting a lead scientist and staff in the laboratory to advance scientific hypotheses and outcomes. This apprenticeship model successfully creates cross-boundary collaborations between industry, academia and research institutes, offers in-depth training and education while providing students a wage, and gives trainees the skillsets sought after by the life sciences industry.

The apprenticeship is an extension of The Wistar Institute’s Biomedical Technician Training (BTT) Program, created close to 20 years ago by William Wunner, Ph.D., as a partnership with the Community...
College of Philadelphia. Successful completion of the BTT program at The Wistar Institute is a pre-requisite of the apprenticeship program.

*Source: The Wistar Institute. [Learn more here.]*