

24-year-old Venture Capitalist/Scientist Presented Anti-aging SciTech Lecture

By Julie Reynolds, Nanotechnology Student, Forsyth Tech

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Laura Deming - speaking(credit- Fisher Elliott)

Laura Deming, director of the Longevity Fund, presented “Using Biological Research to Reduce or Reverse the Effects of Aging and Increase Longevity” for this month’s SciTech Lecture at Rhoades Conference Center, Main Campus, on Thursday, Feb. 8, at 1:00pm.

Attendees of the free lecture included 101 students, faculty, and staff of Forsyth Tech and many local CEOs and entrepreneurs. Deming shared breakthrough developments in aging research in animals that could eventually work to increase human health and lifespan.

Examples included decreasing senescence (non-functional cells), administering drugs that affect metabolism, and manipulating what the brain perceives to control body functions, all of which resulted in increased lifespan of animals.

Deming’s current approach to advancing anti-aging research is through her venture capital firm, The Longevity Fund that recently raised \$22 million and is currently investing in five leading-edge research and development biotech companies.

Although she is only 24, Deming began working in a biogerontology lab at age 12. By 14, she was a student at MIT. She left MIT at 16 when she received backing from Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal, to start a venture capital fund.

Deming has been driven by what she sees as a gap in commercialization of ongoing research into usable products that benefit people. Deming shared that she felt completely unprepared to run a company at 16 but that she did it anyway.

She encouraged everyone to innovate and take risks because the very act of trying teaches more than any other method. She also shared that she would like everyone in the world to have access to lifespan-enhancing therapeutics, regardless of economic status.

While it is unusual to have speakers like Deming flown in from California, all of the speakers for SciTech lectures are selected based on what is new and interesting in their fields.

Russ Read, organizer of the SciTech lectures series, explained during an interview, the speakers are asked to illustrate the practical and inspirational aspects of their work. The lectures are also a way to connect Forsyth Tech with the larger community.

A coalition of Triad organizations partnered to bring Deming to the Triad including the National Center for Biotechnology Workforce, NC Biotechnology Center, Venture Café, Wake Forest University School of Medicine, and Wake Forest Innovation Quarter.

For information about upcoming or past events, visit www.biotechworkforce.org, the site for the National Center for Biotechnology Workforce.

For questions, contact **Mary Flournoy** at 336-757-3812 or mflournoy@forysthtech.edu or **Russ Read** at 336-734-7651 or rread@forysthtech.edu.