

tries and that a global approach is required to advance the development of this field.

Note: Supplementary information is available on the Nature Biotechnology website.

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#### COMPETING INTERESTS STATEMENT

The authors declare competing financial interests: details accompany the full-text HTML version of the paper at <http://www.nature.com/naturebiotechnology/>

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## BIO and the next generation

### To the Editor:

As president and CEO of the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO; Washington, DC, USA), I fully support the premise of the editorial in your December issue<sup>1</sup>: educating, cultivating and encouraging young people to lead the next generation of biotech innovation are critical to the continued growth and success of biotech. That is why BIO developed the Biotechnology Institute (Arlington, VA, USA) in 1998 to help promote early and expanded science, technology, engineering and math education and training initiatives.

BIO continues to promote increased investment in education. Currently, we are working with Battelle, a leading science and technology enterprise, and the Biotechnology Institute to survey all 50 states to identify how states are promoting science education. We will release the results of this survey during the BIO International Convention being held in Atlanta on May 18–21, 2009.

More directly, the career fair we hold during our international convention tactically assists companies in recruiting young talent while our “Growing the Biotech Workforce Track” of educational sessions provide attendees with detailed information, recruitment and training tools.

And we are reaching out to young people where they congregate—online. We are leveraging the power of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Delicious, LinkedIn and other social networking sites to develop communities to educate, proselytize and promote biotech. We have launched several blogs and podcasts covering a range of issues, including food and fuel, innovation, climate

change and general biotech advances that spotlight the scope and power of biotech. And through our new, broad-based public education and communications effort, we are establishing new online communities, such as <http://iam-biotech.org/>, to showcase the contributions being made by the biotech community to address the world's most pressing issues.

We agree it is imperative to support entrepreneurship as well as education. That is why BIO runs events like the BIO National Venture Conference. This event features seed-stage and A-round companies that go through an aggressive screening process. Our efforts to find

appropriate companies for this event include working with key technology transfer offices and outreach to business plan competitions. In addition, BIO conducts considerable education courses for new entrepreneurs. BIO has, for several years, conducted CEO presentation workshops. These workshops are dedicated to new entrepreneurs, providing guidance and real-time practice in how to make presentations to investors, which is one of the key hurdles for scientists seeking funding.

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