

Making History Today : An Interview with Jade Mondesir



Jade Mondesir
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Can you tell us a little bit about your personal and professional background?

I have about 10 years' experience in the Health Sciences industry. Currently I am a project manager at Siemens Healthineers, and I work in the Technical Operations Department. We help support ongoing manufacturing as well as process improvements and R&D assay development. Personally, I am married to my wonderful husband of 6 years and we have two beautiful children together. I have a Bachelor of Science in Biology.

What does a typical day look like in your role at Siemens Healthineers?

I run and attend a lot of meetings. I communicate and meet with team members to check in on deliverables and see if they are on track with their timelines. I help coordinate different activities and address any roadblocks that come up. I also take care of different documentation and paperwork for our projects.

You have also decided to run an ERG (Employee Resource Group) at Siemens. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Sure, so we have an ERG at Siemens Healthineers in our Diversity and Inclusion portfolio that is focused on supporting and promoting cultural awareness for Siemens employees of African descent but is open to all employees interested in supporting different goals and initiatives to support that demographic. I started a new chapter of this ERG at our Walpole site, which is where I report, in the summer of last year. So far, we have recruited members, and there has been a great appreciation, and a few other chapters at different sites have started as well. So as part of expanding our diversity inclusion, they really want there to be this ERG represented at all sites.

Why did you specifically decide to take on that role?

Well, it was actually the first that I heard of this ERG. I had heard of other ERGs that were supporting women in science. I had not heard of this specific one until our company started rolling out different communications and having different forums and open panels about the racial injustices that were happening in our country. So, once I learned that this ERG existed, I asked the question, can any site have this ERG? And they said Yeah, do you want to lead it? I said Okay, sure!?

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How have ongoing protests against systemic racism impacted your work?

The death of George Floyd, seeing those images and seeing the constant unrest—any human who saw the video of what happened—you could not help but be affected by it. It was very saddening, and I think it did have an effect on my work because in between [the protests] and when my company started talking about it, that period of silence was awkward, and it felt a little lonely at times. You saw these things happening on TV and no one was really talking about it at work, so I just felt like it was business as usual, but it was hard to do business as usual when in the back of your mind, you are thinking about all the things that were happening at that time. Even in cities close to me, there were protests and things like that ongoing.

How are you planning to celebrate Black History Month?

That's a good question. As I previously mentioned, I am the site lead for the ERG that supports Siemens employees of African descent, and our national chair has done a great job at hosting different events. One event that I was able to attend was a virtual tour of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights Museum. There are several locations, and this one was the one located in Atlanta, GA. It was very awesome to participate in it and it was a great way to see the hurdles that African Americans have overcome and to learn a lot of new facts that I didn't know about Martin Luther King Junior and others that were involved in the Civil Rights Movement. We also have had membership drives where I was able to meet a lot of new people and talk to them about our ERG. Seeing their interest was very cool. A lot of people want to get involved in this and it is always great to have volunteers. And another thing, Disney re-released “Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella” with Brandy as the star lead. That was something awesome to watch with my children as well. I have a young daughter and she wants to be a Princess, so to see a Princess that looks like her on screen was a great way to celebrate Black History Month too.

That’s really sweet. What are you hopeful for in 2021?

I'm hopeful for new opportunities. I'm hopeful for gaining new relationships and strengthening those I already have. I am hopeful to take risks. I'm trying to challenge myself this year to go outside of my comfort zone, to put myself out there and try things that I might have been hesitant about before. And really, just taking time to figure out what exactly are my goals and what exactly do I want the next steps of my career to be. Last year there was the passing of actor Chadwick Boseman, and a quote was going around where he said to “take your time, but don't waste time” and that has been my motto this year. I am going to take my time to figure out what I really want to do, but I'm not going to waste time. I'm going to go for it. I'm hopeful for a lot of things in 2021. I mean 2020 was not a great year, so I think, hopefully, we can only go up from here.

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As a professional working within the Life Sciences industry, what are you most proud of?

I am a first-generation college graduate in my family. So, me going to college and obtaining my bachelor's degree was a huge accomplishment for myself and my family, and the start of my career was big, being a Black American in my generation. I had the opportunity to be involved in some clinical and preclinical research when I worked at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Through that opportunity, I have been published in a few different scientific journals, and that's an accomplishment that I'm proud of.

Who are some of your role models? Do you have any role models that are in this space or in your life who have motivated you to pursue a career in the Life Sciences?

I wouldn't say that I have one particular role model, but I think along my journey, there have been influential people who have really helped me along the way. They may not even know that I was observing them and taking note of their approach in their career, but I was saving those gems in my back pocket as a way to go about my career and work life. I had a mentor during high school, and we kept in contact almost all the way through college. She was very helpful even when I was applying to schools and figuring out what I wanted to major in. I was very fortunate to have that guidance and to also have family members who have supported me and given me motivation to keep going and shoot for the stars. I just tried to take every relationship that I have made and learn something from it. Even in the bad situations, I think to myself well that was a hurdle, but what did I learn? So, I would say that I've observed and taken things from people throughout my life.

Is there anything else that you would like to share as it relates to a Black History Month or as a Life Sciences professional?

Yeah, another thing that I am hopeful for as you asked earlier. I recently volunteered as a MassBioEd Career Ambassador and that has given me an opportunity to give back, which has been very rewarding. I have been blessed and fortunate to have the career that I have and being able to give back and inspire the younger generations also makes me very hopeful that they will achieve even more than what my generation has.