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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**USC to host seminar Oct. 28-29 on creating diverse pipeline
of biomedical scientists**

How can the University of South Carolina boost the number of women and underrepresented minorities in biomedical sciences?

That will be the prime topic of discussion Oct. 28-29 when USC will host a seminar on creating a diverse pipeline of biomedical scientists for the future. The event is open to faculty, students, and administrators from the USC system and several historically black colleges and universities in South Carolina.

Clifford W. Houston, an endowed professor and associate vice president for educational outreach at the University of Texas Medical Branch, will lead discussions on successful strategies for recruiting and mentoring diverse populations into the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professoriate and workforce.

“Lots of institutions talk about diversity, but you have to have a systemic commitment and buy-in from administration, faculty, and students to really make it happen, particularly in the STEM fields, which feed into the biomedical sciences,” said Houston, who holds the Herman Barnett Distinguished Endowed Professorship in Microbiology and Immunology.

“We also have to provide career awareness opportunities for students because they’re often limited in their career decisions by what few options they’re exposed to.”

To that end, the event will include a student-focused “Careers in Biomedical Sciences” session from 5 to 7 p.m. Oct. 28 in the Campus Room at Capstone. Free pizza will be served to admissions staff, student advisors, and undergraduate students from USC campuses, Allen University, Benedict College, Claflin University, Morris College, S.C. State University, Voorhees College and Columbia College.

“I tell students, ‘Don’t avoid the hard subjects; take courses with rigor.’ And always have other options. Aiming for medical school is great, but have a back-up plan in case you don’t get in,” said Houston, the first member of his family to attend college and who later was NASA Headquarter’s deputy associate administrator for education in Washington, D.C., providing guidance to the space program for developing materials for use in curricula at every learning level.

The two-day seminar series Houston will lead is made possible by a grant from the Scientific Advocate Network Program, part of the S.C. EPSCoR/IDEA office.

The seminar agenda follows:

- “Providing Educational Opportunities for Minorities,” including question-and-answer session for deans, department chairs, faculty, program directors, and administrators, 2-3 p.m., Oct. 28, Russell House Theater

- “Careers in Biomedical Sciences,” for admissions staff, advisors, and undergraduate students, 5-7 p.m., Oct. 28, Campus Room at Capstone
- “Educational Outreach,” followed by question-and-answer session with university, civic, and community leaders, 8:30-10 a.m., Oct. 29, Inn at USC, Carolina Room
- “Career Development Programs for Professional and Graduate Students,” 1:30-4 p.m., Oct. 29, USC School of Medicine, Building 3, M-11 Classroom.

For more information about the seminar, contact Rhonda Filiatreault at 803-777-2808; e-mail: Rhondaf@sc.edu.