

BSD Postdoctoral Association Committee Meeting
12 noon, Thursday March 22, 2007 BSLC 240

Present: James McCracken (chair), Kolla Kristjansdottir, Rifat Hasina, Jason Ward, Harold Olivey, Judy Cannon, Ben Wolfe, Ayaz Sayeed, and Isaac Skromne

1. New Members

Ben Wolfe was welcomed as a new member of the postdoctoral association.

2. Survey, 2007

RH and JW have been working on the 2007 postdoctoral association survey. The previous survey focused on salary issues, and these questions will remain in this year's survey. However, the survey will also focus on other issues, namely mentoring, grant/fellowship information, publications, research work presentation, and the PDA website. Most of the discussion revolved around the questions and how to word them. We also agreed that the number of questions needed to be limited, so that the survey could be completed within 10-15 minutes. Along these lines great care should be taken to make the questions multiple choice so the survey-taker could just click the appropriate answer.

JW agreed to type up a tentative list of survey questions and distribute to the committee members for their review. That tentative list of questions has been added to the end of the minutes.

3. Career Symposium

Last meeting we decided that because of the PDA seminar series, UofC postdocs probably do not need additional alternative career advise.

JM has been in contact with Garth Fowler from AAAS about hosting a workshop about lab management, setting up a laboratory, budgeting, and grant writing. Funding for this workshop will be provided at least partially by AAAS, and CAPS will be involved in the planning.

A major challenge with hosting this workshop will be getting people from outside of the university and Chicagoland area to attend. JM suggested that we pull in other universities to assist in the planning of the workshop—that way they are invested in it and will likely publicize at there institutions.

The association thought a workshop would be better than seminars. JM is contacting Garth Fowler to discuss workshop topics and a possible date.

4. Seminar Series

KK, IS, and AS presented the coming quarter's tentative seminar list. It is as follows:

4-6: No seminar

4-13: From paper submission to publication- Sabbi Lall, Associate Editor, Nature Struct Biol

4-20: Presentation skills-Law School

4-27: A comparison of academic and industrial careers-Jeffrey Masters, Astellas

5-4: Research vs. Management track in industry-Walter Leise and ?, Abbott

5-11: Information session: The green card application process—Kempster, Keller & Lenz-Calvo

5-18: Panel Session: How to navigate your first years as a professor—Naoum Issa, David Boone, Jason Maclean

5-25: No seminar

6-1: Improving your negotiation skills—Beth Milnikell, UofC Law School

6-8: End of year picnic

Much of the discussion about the seminar series revolved around the 5-11 seminar regarding the green card process. JC and others expressed concern because we are only inviting one law firm to present at the seminar. JC suggested having someone else to presenting or have a panel discussion about the topic. The committee did not like the idea of a panel session because a lot of individual, personal questions may be asked. Another suggestion was to have two firms present, although this raises the question of who will present. Additionally, KK said that Madina contacted a number of firms and this was the only one who got back to her. JC is emailing an Immigration professor at UofC law school. If this can be arranged it may be nice to have the professor talk about the law and then the firm talk about the process. Another suggestion was to pass out a list of firms recommended by UofC to the people who attend the seminar. Another suggestion was that a disclaimer statement be announced before the seminar, stating that the postdoctoral association does not endorse the law firm presenting.

5. National PDA Meeting, Berkeley CA

RH will be attending the National PDA meeting at the end of this month. A detailed schedule of events was passed around during the meeting. RH has agreed to spend a good portion of next meeting telling us about the things she learned at the national PDA meeting.

6. Miscellaneous

IS announced that Heather Sevener from CAPS would like feedback about their website. They are looking to update it and would like suggestions for improving it.

IS is the only individual who has had alcohol safety training. This training is required to have alcohol at our seminar series. He is going to contact those who provide the training, so that other members in the association can attend the training course.

Tentative Survey Questions

I. Basic Information

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

2. Age group?

- 24 or younger
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45 or older

3. What is your position title?

- Postdoctoral Research Scholar
- Postdoctoral Research Fellow (stipend only from fellowship)
- Postdoctoral Research Fellow (fellowship stipend + supplemental stipend from PI)
- Research Professional Associate
- Other (please specify)

4. What is your citizenship status?

- US citizen
- Permanent resident
- H1-B visa
- J1 visa
- F1 visa
- Country of citizenship if not US

5. If you are not a U.S. citizen, how long have you been in the U.S.?

- I am a U.S. citizen
- 0-1 years
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- more than 5 years

6. In what year did you get your Ph.D.?

7. What year did you join the University of Chicago as a postdoc?

8. Which department are you in?

- Anesthesia & Critical Care
- Ben May Institute for Cancer Research
- Biochemistry & Molecular Biology
- Ecology & Evolution
- Family Medicine
- Health Studies
- Human Genetics
- Medicine
- Microbiology
- Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology
- Neurobiology, Pharmacology & Physiology
- Neurology
- Obstetrics & Gynecology
- Ophthalmology & Visual Science
- Organismal Biology & Anatomy
- Pathology
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry
- Radiation & Cellular Oncology
- Radiology
- Surgery
- Other (please specify)

9. What are your long-term career plans?

- Academia
- Consulting
- Government
- Industrial Research
- Science publishing/Science writing
- Science policy
- Teaching
- Undecided
- Other (please specify)

II. Finances and Costs

10. What is your present gross (pre-tax) income?

- 35000 or less
- 35001 – 40000
- 40001 – 45000
- 45001 – 50000
- 50001 – 55000
- above 55001 (please specify)

11. What are your total annual taxes (federal + state + local)?

- 1000 or less
- 1000 – 2500
- 2501 – 5000
- 5001 – 7500
- 7501 – 10000
- 10001 or more (please specify)

12. Any additional family income (e.g. spouse income, stock dividends, etc.)? Please specify before tax amount?

13. Number of people in household (including yourself)?

14. What are your housing and living costs per month (rent + utilities + misc expenses):

- 500 or less
- 501 – 1000
- 1001 – 1500
- 1501 – 2000
- 2001 and more

15. Do you rent or own?

- Own
- Rent (University Housing)
- Rent (Non-university housing)
- Other (please specify)

16. What are your transportation costs per month (car insurance, gas, CTA pass etc.)?

- 0
- 1 – 50
- 51 – 100
- 101 – 150
- 151 – 200
- 201 and more

17. What are your childcare costs per month (in \$)?

III. Grants and Presentations

18. What is the source of funding that supports you (check all that apply)?

- Training grant
- Advisor's grant
- Individual fellowship (please specify)

19. Have you written a grant proposal for a fellowship or some other type of funding?

- Yes
- No
- If yes what organizations did you apply to?

20. Do you intend to write a grant proposal during your time as a postdoc?

- Yes
- No

21. Are you aware of the K99 awards from NIH?

- Yes
- No

22. Are you aware that the University of Chicago Office of Research Services provides grant writing help?

- Yes
- No

23. Would you benefit from a grant-writing workshop?

- Yes
- No

24. How many publications have you co-authored while at the University of Chicago?

Total:
First author:

25. Do you have a platform to present your research work on a regular basis?

- Yes
- No

26. Have you presented your work at (please check all that apply):

- Lab meetings
- Departmental seminars
- Local conferences
- National Conferences
- International Conferences
- As an invited speaker at another institution

27. How many professional conferences did you attend in the last year?

28. Where did you get the funding to attend the meeting?

- PI
- Travel award from professional organization
- Paid for yourself
- Other (please specify)

29. In what form did you present your work?

- poster
- seminar
- did not present

IV. Mentoring

30. Are you happy with the mentoring you receive in your laboratory?

- Yes
- No

31. In the most recent year how often did you meet with your advisor to discuss your project?

- daily
- weekly
- 1-2 times per month
- quarterly
- less than quarterly

32. How often do you meet with your mentor to discuss career goals and your progress towards meeting them?

- quarterly
- once a year
- less than once a year
- never

33. How supportive is your advisor of your career goals?

- Very supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Not supportive
- My advisor doesn't know what my career goals are.

34. Please rank your mentor in the following categories:

(1=very bad, 2=poor, 3=fair, 4=good, 5=excellent)

- communication
- conflict resolution
- impartiality to all lab members
- lab resources (\$)
- looking after your professional interests
- mentoring/teaching

35. Are you aware of the BSD Mentoring Plan (found on BSD postdoctoral website)?

- Yes
- No

36. Have you received a performance evaluation in the most recent year?

- Yes
- No

37. Please rate the scientific/professional training received at the university in the following categories:

(1=very bad, 2=poor, 3=fair, 4=good, 5=excellent)

- article writing/publications
- experimental techniques learned
- favorable conditions for project success
- grant writing/success obtaining funding
- laboratory management
- opportunity to develop your own project
- presentation skills (poster and oral)

V. BSD Postdoctoral Association Website

38. How often do you visit the University of Chicago BSD Postdoctoral Association Website (www.bsdpostdoc.uchicago.edu)?

- Never
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- I didn't know there was a website

39. What have you visited the website for (check all that apply):

- Information about the association
- Orientation information
- Information about University of Chicago resources
- Career information
- Seminar information
- Other please specify

40. Comments or suggestions about BSD Postdoctoral Association website:

VI. BSD Postdoctoral Association Postdoc Seminars

41. Number of BSD postdoc association seminars you have attended:

- 0
- 1 – 5
- 5 – 10
- 10 – 15
- no sure

42. Please rank the following seminar subjects:

(1=very interested, 2=interested, 3=somewhat interested, 4=do not care, 5= completely indifferent).

- Career guidance (academic)
- Career guidance (industry)
- Career guidance (alternative)
- Fellow Post-doc research presentations
- University resources (facilities, i.e. microscopy, proteomics, etc.)

- Mentoring and lab management
- Funding Opportunities
- Hiring and benefit issues
- Funding opportunities
- Minorities in science
- Immigration and tax issues
- Teaching and Presentation skills
- Social event instead of seminar

43. Suggestions as to how to improve the BSD-PDA seminar series:

44. Please rank the University of Chicago's performance with respect to the following post doc concerns:

(1=very good, 2=good, 3=fair, 4=poor, 5= very poor, 6=N/A).

- Stipend
- Housing
- Health insurance and benefits
- Childcare support
- Transportation and parking
- Mentoring (quality, availability, communication)
- Professional guidance
- Future job placement
- Standard evaluation of your research performance
- Laboratory research resources
- Conflict resolution
- Handling of discrimination issues
- Prevention of social isolation/ stress
- Work environment

45. Your comments/questions: