

## **SEMINAR ATTENDANCE:**

The reasons for the decline in the attendance to PDA seminars was discussed. Melissa said that we usually had 15-20 people per seminar. One even had over 30. Cheng wanted to have a comparison from the past: we had 30-50 before. James said that it's usually not the same 15 people so it's somewhat encouraging. Goqing said that the intellectual property seminar had ~15 people and this worried James since in the past we had 30-50. Ben suggested that it could be a problem of redundancy. James and Judy suggested that one solution could be to cut it down to every other week, but Cheng said that people then would forget about it. James suggested sending out something in the bulletin asking the people. Cheng suggested maybe food is the big factor. Mike said that he'll come to seminars and write down how many attend. He said that one reason people don't go to these seminars is that the faculty support you working in the lab and not going to these seminars. Bridging this hurdle is also important. He told some PIs to support career development of their post-docs through PDA seminars. The response was very supportive.

One suggestion was that we could pass around sign-up sheets. Tuba suggested that we could also give feed-back forms. Mike said that sign-up sheet could ask how you heard about this seminar so that we would know how to target people to which James said that we could do it for a little while and see if it works. Melissa said that if the forms would get to her, she doesn't mind dealing with them.

People didn't think that the online forms would work, an idea suggested by Harold.

James likes the idea of getting immediate feedback after a seminar.

Cheng wanted to know how long we've had the seminar series and whether we've hit a critical time for recycling topics, to which Harold responded this format has been around for 3 years and before then it was data. Natasha said that there's a lot of turnover to which Cheng added that maybe the frequency of the cycle was OK for the first 1-2 years and not OK anymore, hence the attendance decline.

Ben thinks it could be a lot of things. He said that people go to seminars if they think they'll get a job and right now it's recession. Mike added that the UCBA seminar on networking was well attended so content is important.

Ben then asked Mike about the grad student/post-doc ratio in that seminar (Mike doesn't know). Ben said not a lot of grad students attend our seminars. A lot of our seminars are applicable to them too. Mike agreed that this type of career development should be started early. To this, Melissa suggested that we could send out an email to grad students. Parag suggested that we can send emails out and see the response. We'll hear about it if they complain. We can also try to have food again once a month.

James likes to keep a monitor until the end of this quarter and see in the fall quarter if the attendance is still low. Doesn't want to bring in the food bribery. Melissa added that

if people are going back to the lab after the seminar and they're still hungry, they may skip on it.

Cheng also noted that there's an absence of social events at these seminars. Mike suggested a post-seminar discussion with drinks/networking to talk to the seminar speaker. James said maybe we could do this once a month, to which Parag said that if the departments pitch in a little bit, they can match it. James said that he asked ??? to fund us and he was agreeable. Maybe once a month networking event after a seminar may work.

Natasha suggested that we should do it soon to which Goqing said there's a presentation skills seminar coming up on 5/15/09. Maybe we could have the happy hour then. Mike thinks this is the perfect event for networking afterwards, he'll try to find some money.

Ben commented that in the past refreshments were provided by companies, to which James said that when a company comes they bring food.

Mike will have UCBA people cross-advertise PDA. Nancy said that there's an alum coming and Cathy Olson from the NSA is coming. We'll have a reception for both. Mike also noted that David Horowitz, MD, PhD, executive-VP of Lifescan J&J company is coming. This could be an opportunity for a seminar. They'll try to cross-promote and increase attendance.

Nancy talked about a meeting they had with Abbot and how they pushed them for a fellowship for a post-doc; it went well. She has a feeling that they'll shift their priorities; medical school fellows are also supported by Abbot. They also provide support work workshops.

Mike said that there are a lot of resources. There's a workshop for ??? and he'll send the invitation.

## **WEBSITE:**

Harold talked about the developments about the PDA website. We got approval to go ahead with budgeting for 10 hours from NSIT support. He made up a priority list for the website; most important is the cosmetics. He wants to make menus more interactive, change graphic styles. He had not time to delve into it but will budget time the next month. He'll get some training from NSIT. By the end of the quarter, he'll have as much of this done as possible and by next month he wants to get it done at least for the homepage.

We're given 3 options on how to do this but there's no standard officially supported by the university. There's a license software package, one that the univ. supports but it's \$1500. We may not use it enough to justify \$1500.

## **NPA meeting:**

Mike talked about the highlights of the annual NPA meeting in Houston, March 2009. 75% of the content was career development and leveraging your skills. Post-doc apathy was a big aspect. They went through similar things with seminar attendance. Some things came up: content. Like, if we have seminar series more geared towards US post-docs, we're neglecting foreign post-docs. Interview techniques for foreign post-docs. Off-site interviewing through computer is one content we can have for our seminar.

Faculty support is another big one. Having the faculty support professional development is a tough hurdle. International post-docs were reluctant to invest in career development if they think this takes away from cranking papers.

He talked to a dean that there's incentive for faculty to promote career development that is put explicitly in training grants and RO1. He talked to his boss but he said "yes, there's incentive but we don't know how to do it."

Then Natasha commented that they don't know about the seminars then, to which Mike added that they're not as well informed. He also added that he mentioned this in a seminar that he gave. Natasha said that that would only reach to 3-4 people. James said that maybe talking to department heads is a good way to start.

Mike then added that what feeds into this is institutional memory and keeping a track record of post-docs. PDA has a list of alumni. James said that we have a linked-in group for PDA, to which Harold suggested that we could put it on the webpage.

