

## **Postdoc Association Notes**

### **May 22, 2008**

**Attending:** Judy Cannon, Rifat Hasina, Cheng Huang, Imogen Hurley, Kolla Kristjansdottir, Harold Olivey, Victoria Robinson, Madina Sukhanova, Ben Wolfe, Nancy Schwartz, Melissa Lindberg, and Parag Shah.

#### **Discussion:**

**First Postdoc Information Meeting May 12:** The purpose of the meeting evolved into more of an informational session for postdocs, rather than an orientation for new postdocs. Postdocs may need this session when they are in transition from scholar to fellow and back, so renaming it is an attempt encourage participation, not discourage it. Approx. 6-7 postdocs attended the first session, which was an OK turnout for the first one. Imogen encouraged everyone to hang up flyers for the next one, as flyers are really the best form of advertising: they reinforce the messages in the bulletin, which can easily get skimmed over or lost. It was suggested that always having it on Monday may not be good: rotate the day of the week to capture different PD's – between lab meetings, and needing to start experiments on Monday mornings, the same day of the week is always going to be problematic. Rifat took notes on the questions that were asked for the “Frequently Asked Questions,” – the question is, what now? Do we produce a document with answers to these questions that can get posted on the web? Who needs to vet such a document? Can we just provide links to the answers on other web sites (Academic Affairs, etc.)? Can each answer be dated, so that Postdocs will follow up with HR if the date is too old?

**5-year transition:** Cheng and Judy brought up their experiences transitioning to a 5<sup>th</sup> year: Cheng is having a hard time getting his questions answered thoroughly. Judy noted that she is now a “Research Associate Assistant Professor” – non-tenure track faculty. There was discussion on the difference between that position and the Research Professional Associate. International postdocs are not eligible for Research Associate Assistant Professor on an HB1 visa: they must have a green card first. The RA AP requires a national search; more postdocs move to the RPA position, which is a staff scientist position. It was suggested we work on a table that distinguishes RA AP from RPA, similar to the benefits chart, as it can be difficult to track down the information about the two types of positions. RA AP can apply for grants on their own, RPA probably not, though its unclear what grants would be open to them.

**NPA Annual Meeting:** Rifat had prepared a document describing the NPA meeting, and went through the points one by one. There were many ideas to consider developing at UofC.

There is a need for a Postdoctoral Office (PDO) with one or two staff members who are dedicated solely to the needs of the postdocs. Also, this would allow institutional memory to develop. In a meeting with Dean Schwartz and Parag Shah, it was suggested that they (Rifat, Ben, James) write a proposal to Dean Madara justifying the expense. So perhaps a taskforce needs to be established to put the proposal together.

Rifat next went over the NPA Postdoctoral Core Competencies (Guidance for Research Institutions and Stakeholders). Dr. Schwartz noted that there has now been a group established within AAMC (American Association of Medical Colleges) for Deans and Directors of PDO's.

The Medical University of South Carolina offers an International Scholars Orientation Program, which gives all incoming international postdocs a primer in vocabulary, and some communication skills and understanding of the differences between foreign research practices and those in the US. Edward Krug, who gave the presentation, offered to come and train here. Also, there is a need to make more ESL resources available to postdocs.

Next was a discussion on teaching at UofC, and the resources currently available to Postdocs: whether it would be useful to have a conversation with the Center of Teaching and Learning to see if their courses could be modified to address issues of scientific teaching, to make them more applicable to postdocs and graduate students in the sciences.

Rifat discussed the NIH Grants workshops given at NPA.

At this point, time for discussion ran out, and the meeting adjourned.