

BSD Postdoctoral Association Committee Meeting
12 noon, Thursday July 19, 2007 BSLC 202

Present: James McCracken (chair), Judy Cannon, Rifat Hasina, Cheng Huang, Guoqing Lin, Melissa Lindberg, Harold Olivey, Victoria Robinson, Ayaz Sayeed, Isaac Skromne, Madina Sukhanova, and Ben Wolfe

1. Seminar Update

IS related to committee the meeting he had with members of the Dean's Council (DC). The DC expressed their interest in having graduate students attending the PDA seminars and their frustration that the PDA seminars and the Graduate Student Seminar (GSS) are both held at 4 pm on Fridays. The DC requested if we could explore the possibility of changing our seminars to another time slot. IS indicated to the DC that this may be a good idea because 1) could increase attendance to PDA seminars, 2) DC and PDA seminars committees could work together and reduce planning burden and 3) would be a better use of BSD resources. IS agreed on re-exploring the possibility of changing PDA seminar without compromising. IS suggested a number of actions that, with the approval of the PDA steering committee, could be implemented. These include 1) offer members of the DC seminars committee to attend the PDA seminar committee planning meetings, 2) providing them with the PDA seminar schedule in advance, 3) ask the postdocs what would be the most convenient time for them to attend the PDA seminars during the week, and 4) amend PDA poster to make it more welcoming for graduate students.

During the discussion JC said that graduate students are not for postdocs and, even if they were, postdocs are not interested in attending the GSS. Therefore, this is a one-way avenue were graduate students have a problem that postdocs do not. CH and AS agreed and added that it is up to the DC to change the GSS if they want to attend the PDA seminars and not the PDA to change their seminars to accommodate the DC request. CH also said that changing the seminars to another time during the week might not increase attendance because graduate students are going to be busy and may not come anyway. IS said that the calendar for the 2007 fall quarter is almost complete and that the seminars are not changing time or place. JC suggested that we could use this year to try to figure out a solution, perhaps based on some of the suggestions brought up by IS. Regarding points 1 and 2 brought up by IS, members of the committee agreed that it would be a good idea to include 1-2 people involved in planning the GSS in the PDA seminars planning committee. They also agreed that giving them the PDA seminar schedule in advance would be a good idea and that it would be up to them to decide how to distribute the information among graduate students (either using their e-mail list, Melissa's e-mail list, posters, etc). HO said that we should organize our seminars according to our needs and the needs of the postdocs, which is the population that we serve, and not to the needs of the graduate students, i.e. plan our speakers as they accommodate to our schedule and not to a predetermined schedule dictated by the graduate students (i.e., having joint seminars every third Friday of the month). Regarding point 3 brought up by IS, RH said that it would be ok for her and for Ben Wolf (not present) to include one more question in the survey asking the postdocs what time during the week are seminars more convenient for them to attend. The committee approved the addition of this question to the survey. Regarding IS point 4, IS suggested removing "The BSD-Postdoctoral Association" from posters used to announce the seminars and instead to put at the bottom "Sponsored by the BSD-PDA". Many members of the committee disagreed saying that this is detrimental to our image and that, after all, the interests of the postdocs should be our priority. Instead members of the committee suggested replacing "All are welcome" with "Graduate students, research associates, P.I. etc. are

welcome". The PDA seminar committee will take final decision regarding poster wording and, if deemed necessary, will bring it for review to the steering committee.

2. Survey 2007

RH commented that she and Ben Wolfe had received no additional comments over the last month about the content of the survey. RH emphasized the need to decide upon a date at the next meeting and begin publicizing the survey through paper announcements and the weekly ebulliten. HO had comments on several of the questions' wording, which RH noted for revision. Of particular interest to HO, JC, and CH were how questions were scored when users were given a metric measurement for interest. The current system with a 1-5 score indicating interest was decided to be inadequate, and that the best system was 0 for a score indicating no interest and 1-4 indicating increasing levels of interest in the subject.

3. Potential Benefit Changes

JM reported that he had attended a meeting with members of the administration regarding postdoc benefits at the University. This was a seminar held by Garnett-Powers & Associates who has initiated similar changes in the U of California system. The idea presented, along with several potential benefit plans, was to bring up fellows (who currently lack University benefits) to the levels of scholars. These changes currently reflect only changes in regards to health and dental benefits. Other benefits were discussed at the meeting, but only these two were moving forward at this time. JM was asked to receive some feedback regarding this potential change and decided to begin with the committee. In general the committee is very guarded about these potential changes. HO remarked that if these changes resulted in PDs being forced into an HMO, or in any other way limited choice as it regards healthcare, that this change is negative. JC pointed out the importance of costs for the individual in this new plan vs current scholar coverage, especially in terms of family coverage. It was also remarked that the majority of scholars choose the UCHP plan for coverage, as it is the cheapest and allows for use of the University Hospitals and Clinics. JM says that this was mentioned in the previous meeting as a potential issue. JC and CH both wished to see more specific information about these changes. JC made the point that if 75% of the population are scholars, and therefore staff, that those PDs will be very resistant to changes in their benefits. It was agreed in general that we need to insure that scholars do not go backward in order to benefit fellows. IS suggested that the administration might wish to present a seminar on these changes to PDs. This would also allow for feedback from PDs. JM agreed to take these comments to Stephen Gabel and the rest of that committee when it meets again.