

BSD Postdoctoral Association Committee Meeting

12 noon August 16th, 2006 BSLC 009

Present:

Imogen Hurley, Judy Cannon, Andie Ward, Isaac Skromne, Nilesh Banavali, Rifat Hasina, Kolla Kristjansdottir, Ayaz Sayeed, James McCracken, Cheng Huang

1. Postdoc Survey Raffle winners – Nilesh

The winners were chosen by Dean Schwartz at our July meeting and were invited to participate in the meeting. The iPod winner (Dierk Thomas) was on holiday and therefore awarded his prize previously. The others, Luciana Molinero and James Lodolce were present and awarded their prizes. Their pictures will be posted on the website.

2. New committee roles

Cheng - Foreign Postdoc Representative

Cheng will look at the existing page of the association website for foreign postdocs and provide feedback. Cheng will also help with any foreign postdoc matters in the handbook. He will attend postdoc seminars that are relevant to the international postdocs and introduce speakers. Finally, he will be the liaison to the Office of International Affairs.

James - Mentoring plan

James got the existing materials from Andie. He will come up with a format and as his own reappointment is upcoming, he will use his own experience as a dry-run for what might work well. He asked the committee for opinions on whether it should be short/informal or a longer, more detailed document. Most agreed that shorter would work better but make sure there is room for individual discussion of progress and career goals. James asked whether it would be required and most agreed it should be at reappointment time. The mentoring plan would need to be turned in at reappointment time for reappointment to go through. Once James has a document in hand, we will continue to discuss this.

Judy – Bulletin

The first one sent out should have everyone on blind cc rather than open cc. It will be sent out weekly once seminars begin again.

3. Survey – Nilesh

Analysis is done, the data is on a CD given to Imogen who will pass it onto Melissa for archiving. It only needs to be proofread then the final report can be posted. Nilesh is going to leave by the end of August, so Rifat was willing to take over the text and figure checking of the survey results. Rifat will also write the executive summary. The results will be posted on the website and the announcement made in the bulletin. We will also ask Nancy to send survey results to PIs as several people felt the PIs should also know the information provided by the survey.

4. Postdoc Handbook and Benefits – Imogen

Imogen has prepared 2 documents about benefits, one is comparative between postdoc scholars, fellows, and research professionals. The other specifically explains fellow's status. Both documents have been approved by the Office of Academic Affairs and Dean Schwartz. Imogen will distribute them to all postdocs in the BSD by email and post them on the association website. Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) is currently negotiating changes to postdoc policy which will be university wide. This will be a uniform policy throughout the university for all divisions. Dean Schwartz estimates that ~90% of all postdocs are in the BSD or PSD. OAA are drawing up a postdoc policy document that will include a grievance policy. They also plan to issue university IDs that will have "postdoc" as a category.

Cheng asked whether foreign postdocs on an H1 visa can be postdoc fellows, or can a fellow be on an H1 visa. Imogen said that as H-1B visas are employment-based visas, postdocs with an H-1B visa status may not be appointed as fellows, they must receive a salary and be appointed as a Postdoctoral Scholar or Research Professional Associate. Cheng then asked the perennial question of what is the advantage to a fellowship and others pointed out that the receipt of a fellowship illustrates the ability to obtain independent funding and perform high quality research. Several others brought up the fact that not being an employee as a fellow is a national issue.

Imogen will put off producing a BSD specific handbook until the OAA produce their new policy document. Nancy's office will advocate on behalf of BSD postdocs in the postdoc policy negotiations. We hope to see a draft of the policy document before the final copy is sent out.

5. Seminars - Ayaz, Isaac, Kolla,

Preparation and help with opening social?

Isaac passed out this quarter's schedule.

The main concern is the job search panel. Isaac asked several individuals who did not reply. Several others volunteered to ask their own mentors. Isaac will continue to follow up.

Childcare panel-Judy will ask Natalie Tilghman to participate. Isaac's wife Dina Weinstein and Sara Diwan of Baby Ph.D. will also be asked to participate. The seminar for 11/3 is set because of the symposium. Faculty from the small colleges will be asked to come on Friday to participate on the panel. If we cannot get the panel, we will tell postdocs about the event and announce the Saturday event instead.

Most weeks are set for the upcoming quarter.

McKinsey consulting will be set up in Jan or Feb. The seminars will be put on events calendar of the university in addition to the PDA website.

The social is on 9/8. 4-6pm on the BSLC lawn. The seminar committee will need help with the setup and putting things away. 3pm setup will be Andie, Ayaz, and Kolla. The food will arrive at 3:30pm. Cleanup will be Rifat, Judy, and James.

6. Postdoc Feedback – Imogen has received emails from postdocs about the following:

Ethics classes: The classes currently offered are not at a convenient time for some postdocs. One asked whether he/she could attend at another time. It could be rescheduled but also, Julian Solway, the course director, suggested recording the talks and putting them on the website. Everyone agreed that recording the talks would be the most convenient option for postdocs. Imogen will follow up with Julian Solway.

Turned away as a postdoc: There were no responses to this question on an email sent out regarding whether you had ever been turned away as a postdoc. Several people suggested that if there is no budget for postdocs at graduate recruitment events, the PIs should be made aware and make sure the PIs do not invite postdocs to events they are not welcome at.

NPP PDA: The NPP department will be reorganized, but the PDA within NPP is still hopeful they will get funding for next year.

Mol Medicine minicourses: Julian Solway is interested in whether postdocs will attend minicourses covering key concepts for learning topics outside the specific field of expertise. It will be a general overview of topics targeted at postdocs and fellows. The association thought it would be a good idea in principle and agreed to review course syllabuses.

Next meeting, Oct 18th, 2006.
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