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Upcoming PDA Events: Check your email for more information to follow.

- **December 10, 2016**: PDA Holiday Party!! 5-7pm COMRB 8175. All postdocs are invited to attend.
- **January 6, 2016**: Financial planning for postdocs
- **February 24, 2016**: Career planning seminar hosted by Addgene
- **February 2016**: Tax preparation and filing workshop
- **March 2016**: Seminar for Postdocs with a Visa or Green Card

Your Future in Science Events: Every third Thursday at noon in MBRB auditorium.
- **December 17, 2016**: Life of a Medical Science Liaison: the good, the bad and the ugly!
- **January 21, 2016**: Postdoctoral opportunities at Argonne National Laboratories

Results from 2015 PDA Survey
By: Natalia Marangoni

Thank you so much to all postdocs that took the survey. This year we got a fair balance of gender and nationality but most survey responders were on the west campus. As the PDA has been growing, we hope to get a better representation across all disciplines in the next year. **Satisfaction**: Overall, UIC postdocs that took the survey are moderately satisfied with the UIC experience. **Productivity**: Most of us are not fully satisfied with our productivity level. **Career choice**: Many of us have decided to change our career goals from what we had originally planned for a wide variety of reasons. Hopefully PDA programming can help us better prepare for these decisions.

Considering the top-notch resources available to us at UIC, we could be more productive and feel more confident about our long term career goals by enhancing both academic and non-academic training and increasing our salary. Below is a snapshot of some of the results; a full report will be available at the PDA website soon.
Future of Research Chicago (FOR) Symposium
By: Harinder Singh

Future of Research (FOR), a Chicago chapter post-doc initiated symposium took place on October 29, 2015 at Northwestern University. The event was focused on creating a new framework for the future of scientific enterprise. This was a very successful event with 180 participants from universities all over the Chicago area (UIC, U of C, NU, IIT) as well as participants from other universities in the midwest region. UIC was represented very well, comprising 33% of the post-doctoral and graduate student participants across various departments. Some of the key points covered in the symposium included, a) illuminating fundamental challenges in training scientists in today’s research climate, b) proposing solutions to equip the STEM postdocs to be the leaders in diverse paths of the career landscape, c) initiating a dialogue with key stakeholders in the Chicago area about embracing the rich community of PhD-trained talent as drivers of innovation. The symposium thematically proceeded to identify issues and problems underlying the current state of the scientific research system which sparked a lively dialogue among participants in a bid to find and implement solutions to rectify the situation and make the system more efficient.

The symposium began with a keynote lecture by Dr. Keith Yamamoto (UCSF) discussing the need to bring a paradigm shift in the understanding of academic career paths. The present academic career path includes emphasis only on Ph.D training in order to transition into post-doctoral scientist, culminating into a research faculty position. However, there is a bottle neck when it comes to the transition from postdoc to faculty due to lack of enough faculty positions compared to the number available postdocs and decreasing amounts of basic research funding. Dr. Yamamoto concluded by highlighting the importance of educating and training young scientists about other science related career options such as pharmaceutical industry, communication (journalism and social media, scientific writing), education (teaching, admin), law (science policy, advocate, intellectual property (patent) business (Biotech startup, venture capitalist, business analyst). Dr. Gregory Petsko (Cornell University) echoed Dr. Yamamoto in his speech by emphasizing the flaws in the today’s scientific training and workforce model where diversification is initiated only at the postdoctoral level; whereas there is an urgent need new career path models including training graduate students early on about career choices so they are well equipped with skill set needed to make smooth transitions to other career paths.

The afternoon sessions involved four separate workshops on funding mechanisms, models for training scientists, workforce stability: how many PhD’s do we need? curricular reforms. Some of the highlights from each workshop are as follows: Funding mechanisms: Some of the crucial issues with the present funding climate other than lack of enough funds involve, discouragement to do creative or novel science, lack of efficient/sufficient mentorship. Solutions included the allocation of a small amount of money (20%) from grant for career development of postdocs. Instead of single PI grants, the new model should only fund collaborative grants. The present peer review process of grants includes only scientists, whereas it should be opened to reviewers outside of the specific field of study. Revolutionizing training process: There should be a compulsory training for mentors on when to train young scientists, an evaluation system for mentors and opportunities to enhance mentor-mentee communications. Other suggestions included, developing metrics for good mentoring and providing incentives for better training. Lastly PhD and postdoc training should include compulsory minor course work for fields outside of academia such as business, journalism, law, teaching. Workforce stability: About 50% of the attendees believe that there are currently too many postdocs and about 80% are interested in non-academic careers. In light of these metrics, some solutions included that academic training should include diverse tracks including a dual degree programs (Ex: science and MBA), non-academic mentor for guiding trainees for increasing overall career exposure, a restriction of the postdoc pool through higher salaries but lower number of postdoc positions and establishing additional jobs such as staff scientists. Curricular reform and experiential learning: There was consensus among participants to bring about curricular reforms and some of the proposed changes were to be more inclusive of all key stakeholders in a top-down approach i.e. institutional heads, PI’s, postdocs all way to graduate students. The success of this event was marked not only by the attendees and the engaging dialogue at the symposium but with hope and promise it carried in bringing about a revolution in the current state of scientific training and careers.

Review of PDA Events

October 16: Using LinkedIn for your professional job search.
Christine Renee Corral, the Assistant Director, Office of Career Services gave an insightful talk about using LinkedIn for networking and building a strong portfolio. We learned a lot of great tips for leveraging social media in today’s market.

November 20: College Teaching Fundamentals Bootcamp. Teaching expert Dr. John Coumbe-Lilley gave a half-day workshop geared for postdocs interested in learning effective teaching methods. Applicants learned about the components of a teaching portfolio, and how to better understand their teaching interests and styles.

December 3 Grant writing seminar. Dr. Shane A. Phillips gave a talk on how to prepare a winning grant application. Whether you are a postdoc, or a seasoned professor, writing a grant can be an overwhelming experience. Dr. Phillips showed an approach to simplify the process, and offered helpful advice and tricks.

CHIentist

CHIentist is a platform for connecting Chicago life scientist from academia and industry that brings together members of Chicago’s life sciences community to facilitate interactions, encourage collaborations, and foster the development of ideas, careers, and business ventures. More information at www.CHIentist.com or email CHIentist@gmail.com.

Follow CHIentist on LinkedIn and Facebook.
The PDA celebrated National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW) on September 24th, 2015 in the College of Medicine Research Building. The Office of Vice-Chancellor for Research (OVCR) generously hosted an ice-cream social for all the postdocs and raffled off gift cards. The PDA provided headshots taken by a professional photographer for use in job search applications and tools such as LinkedIn. This NPAW event was the most successful in PDA history, with over 50 postdocs attending and over 30 having photographs taken. Dr. Mitra Dutta, the Vice Chancellor gave a speech thanking the postdocs for their hardwork and for helping UIC thrive in its research efforts. The event was made possible by coordinated efforts by the members of PDA executive board, Dr. Luisa DiPietro, and the OVCR staff.

### AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellowship (STPF)

**By: Tuba Fehr**

Science policy deals with the effects of science and technology on society and considers how they can best serve the public. Best public policies are informed by good science, but often policymakers make policy decisions without using scientific evidence. Scientists can make an important contribution to this process as scientific advisors yet they often lack the skills to effectively communicate with policymakers. The STPF addresses this need by providing a training opportunity for scientists who want to facilitate and improve decision making as a means of public service. STPF is a year-long career development program based in Washington D.C. Fellows are accomplished scientists and engineers from a broad range of disciplines, backgrounds and career stages, and engage directly with policymaking at the federal government during their fellowship. Fellows can work in one of the many government agencies such as the NIH, the NSF, the Department of State or USAID, where they participate in policymaking and implementation in a range of topics while learning firsthand about the intersection of science and policy. More information about the fellowship and details for applications can be found at [www.aaas.org/program/science-technology-policy-fellowships](http://www.aaas.org/program/science-technology-policy-fellowships).

### Grant opportunities

Below you will find a table of grant opportunities with deadlines in the next few months. Opportunities highlighted in green are open to international postdocs. Future newsletters will include updated lists of grant opportunities so stay tuned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Biomedical sciences</td>
<td>Burroughs Wellcome Fund</td>
<td>January 15</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bwfund.org/grant-programs/diversity-science/postdoctoral-enrichment-program">http://www.bwfund.org/grant-programs/diversity-science/postdoctoral-enrichment-program</a></td>
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<td>Reproductive biology</td>
<td>Lalor Foundation</td>
<td>January 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Outcomes</td>
<td>PhRMA Foundation</td>
<td>February 1</td>
<td><a href="http://www.phrmafoundation.org/2015-awards/post-doctoral-fellowships/health-outcomes/">http://www.phrmafoundation.org/2015-awards/post-doctoral-fellowships/health-outcomes/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any</td>
<td>EMBO</td>
<td>February 13</td>
<td><a href="http://www.embo.org">www.embo.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Biomedical sciences</td>
<td>Janes Coffins Child Memorial Fund</td>
<td>February 15</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jccfund.org/fellowship-information">http://www.jccfund.org/fellowship-information</a></td>
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<td>LAM</td>
<td>The LAM Foundation</td>
<td>February 16</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thelamfoundation.org/research/apply-for-lam-funding">http://www.thelamfoundation.org/research/apply-for-lam-funding</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroscience</td>
<td>Parkinson’s Disease Foundation</td>
<td>February 16</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pdf.org/en/grant_funding_fellow#pdflabres">http://www.pdf.org/en/grant_funding_fellow#pdflabres</a></td>
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<td>Neuroscience</td>
<td>International Neurological Society</td>
<td>February 28</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ninds.nih.gov">www.ninds.nih.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Musculoskeletal/skin</td>
<td>NIAMS</td>
<td>February 28</td>
<td><a href="http://www.niams.nih.gov">www.niams.nih.gov</a></td>
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Your Future in Science (YFIS): Career Building Seminar Series
By: Jeffrey Mosenson

Your Future in Science is a Postdoctoral Association (PDA) and Graduate Education in Medical Sciences (GEMS) initiated seminar series aimed at guiding PhD scientists down a career path, and building the necessary skills required in today’s job market. The seminar series is championed by Dr. Philip Clifford, who is the Associate Dean for Research at the UIC College of Applied Health Sciences, and co-author of the acclaimed career website myIDP.sciencecareers.org. With a vast number of academic and non-academic career choices, this series will provide PhD scientists training in career skills and to explore career options. Each month, a renowned guest speaker is invited to give an interactive talk. To date, we have explored topics such as career planning, trends in biopharma, and succeeding in an interview. Come join us every third Thursday at noon in the Molecular Biology Research Building (MBRB) auditorium.

myCHOICE: Chicago Options In Career Empowerment
By: Harinder Singh

University of Chicago conducts the myCHOICE program to educate, broaden experiences in scientific training, and prepare trainees with biological or health science degrees for their ideal career path. The program covers 10 broad exposure subjects related to the myIDP (Individual Development Plan) categories. There are three levels planned for the program, each with increasing involvement in career training: E1: Exposure, E2: Education and E3: Experience. These comprehensively cover careers suited for individuals with a Ph.D. in the biological or health sciences. Some of the events conducted in past include day long teaching workshops, talks by professionals from the biotech/pharmaceutical industry, consulting firms, Medical Science Liaison professionals, grant writing workshops, representatives from banking/business analysis fields, improving presentations skills, theater/movie making after science etc. The myCHOICE website (www.mychoice.uchicago.edu) has a detailed calendar of events for the next 2 months, which includes upcoming talks on Careers in Consulting, Scholarly Publication, Data Science for Biological Data, and Careers in Investment Banking. The myCHOICE program is supported by a diverse group of mentors from University of Chicago and other Universities in the area. Although some of the events conducted by myCHOICE are restricted to University of Chicago students/postdocs, most of them are open to all universities in the Chicago area.

Student Society for Consulting
By: Ana Vicente

The Student Society for Consulting was created in September 2015 to provide UIC graduate students and postdocs with an insight into the world of consulting, and with a network of professionals and mentors to break into the job market. This past semester we have completed the official registration of our organization with the University, and we are pleased to announce our first event of 2016 that will be held in mid-February (date to be confirmed). Our panel will include speakers with extensive experience in a variety of consulting areas who will answer questions and share their personal insights, lessons and stories regarding lifestyle and job hunting. Please, send us an email at uicconsultingclub@gmail.com if you would like to hear more about this and our other upcoming events. We look forward to hearing from you!

Selected Awards, and First Author Publications by UIC Postdocs

Awards:

Harinder Singh and Ibra “Drew” Fancher received American Heart Association, post-doctoral fellowships.

Shyama Majumdar received poster awards in the 3rd Steroid Congress meeting and a travel award to attend the SBUR meeting in Florida.

Publications:


Sprouse AA and van Breemen RB. (2015) Pharmacokinetic Interactions between Drugs and Botanical Dietary Supplements. Drug Metab Dispos Published Online October 5, 2015, doi: 10.1124/dmd.115.066902


Congratulations to all!!