

# National Postdoctoral Association

## Strategic Plan

January 2013 –December 2017

The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that supports postdoctoral scholars and the greater postdoctoral community through resource development, building community, and education of the public. Currently, the NPA is the only organization dedicated solely to improving the postdoctoral experience. We recognize that the innovative contributions of postdoctoral scholars are crucial to the research enterprise. Our goal is to enhance the postdoctoral experience and thereby increase their scholarship, research productivity, and quality of life.

### **Mission statement:**

The mission of the National Postdoctoral Association is to improve the postdoctoral experience by supporting enhanced research training and a culture of enhanced professional growth to benefit scholarship and innovation.

### **Supporting Postdocs, Promoting Discovery**

Our strategic initiatives are based on the knowledge that the NPA is the leading authority in postdoc policies and a knowledge center for postdoctoral stakeholders nation-wide. We are committed to diversity and to equal opportunity and inclusion for all persons in the membership, leadership and activities of the National Postdoctoral Association regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, disability, country of origin, socio-economic status, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. This commitment guides our efforts to lead national policy development, to provide resources for the community, and to build organizational capacity.

### **Strategic Initiative 1**

#### **Serve as the Leader in National Policy Development and Advocacy for Postdoctoral Scholars**

The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) aims to be the authority in all matters related to the postdoctorate. The NPA represents the interests of postdoctoral professionals. The NPA will leverage

key data related to the postdoctoral population (collected both internally and externally) to effectively promote best practices at both the institutional and national levels.

## Goals and Objectives

### *A. Promote improvements in the training and professional environment for postdoctoral scholars*

- Encourage institutions to adopt and implement the NPA recommendations on postdoctoral policies and practices, in order to facilitate their job performance and satisfaction
- Promote the use of the NPA Core Competencies as a guidepost for institutions to develop postdoc programs and for postdocs to self-assess their career needs
- Advocate for equitable salary and benefits (commensurate with level of training, experience, field of study, and location) for all postdoctoral scholars
- Support family-friendly policies that allow postdoctoral scholars to maintain a suitable work-life balance
- Engage funding agencies to encourage the development and monitoring of mentoring plan requirements on grants, contracts and fellowships that support postdoctoral scholars

### *B. Promote enhanced career pipelines for postdoctoral scholars*

- Encourage institutions to provide postdocs with resources for career development and planning
- Encourage individual postdocs to use a range of career planning and training tools
- Expand the traditional definition of “Career Success” to include all career paths available to postdoctoral scholars and end the use of the term “Alternative Careers”
- Promote the adoption of this expanded definition of career success among funding agencies and institutions in an effort to create a new standard for the evaluation of postdoctoral programs and the appropriateness of policies that affect postdoctoral scholars

### *C. Promote the importance of the value of mentorship*

- Encourage the use of individual development plans and postdoc-mentor compacts
- Create a repository of institutional Individual Development Plans templates as a resource to individual postdocs and other institutions

- Promote the importance of mentor-networks to help postdocs in various aspects of their career development

***D. Develop and foster key relationships with government and organizations and collectively address the issues affecting the postdoctorate***

- Establish and maintain partnerships with government, organizations, and professional societies, to collectively promote best practices for the postdoctoral training experience
- Serve in a model and/or advisory capacity to emerging postdoctoral associations worldwide

***E. Provide information to the public and address inquiries related to the postdoctoral experience – best practices, policies, and trends as relevant to the initiatives of government agencies and committees, professional societies, and other national policy makers***

- Provide data collection guidance to other bodies (e.g., NIH, /NSF, AAAS, Sigma Xi) that collect data relevant to the postdoctorate
- Collect data related to postdoctoral experience, as relevant to the mission of the NPA
- Provide data to interested parties to broadly disseminate information related to issues facing postdoctoral scholars

## **Strategic Initiative 2**

### **Strengthening the Postdoc Community**

The NPA seeks to build and maintain a strong postdoctoral community that includes all of its stakeholders. Accordingly, the NPA seeks to disseminate its message to a broad audience and to increase the size of the community in which stakeholders can network. The NPA will utilize two current annual events – the NPA Annual Meeting and the National Postdoc Appreciation Week – to build membership, bring stakeholders together, and expand awareness of the postdoctorate. The NPA website will continue to be a crucial portal for the dissemination of the NPA's message and resources.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

***A. Provide an Annual Meeting to strengthen the postdoctoral community***

- Facilitate and promote the NPA Annual Meeting
- Serve as a meeting place and venue for networking
- Provide opportunities for professional development

- Disseminate resources and information
- Provide a forum to discuss relevant issues and future trends in the postdoctorate
- Provide an opportunity to share and develop innovative practices that support postdocs
- Provide sustainable financial support for all levels of the organization

***B. Provide support and encourage widespread adoption of National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW)***

- Promote the annual NPAW among our stakeholders to raise the visibility and recognition of postdoctoral scholars at their institutions
- Facilitate the use of NPAW as a tool to raise awareness of issues facing the postdoctoral community
- Facilitate the use of NPAW as a tool to raise awareness of the NPA, to promote adoption of best practices by our stakeholders, to increase our membership base, and to increase our volunteer base

***C. Develop, expand, and disseminate information and resources that support the postdoctoral community***

- Produce and maintain appropriate toolkits, guides and resources
- Promote best practices for building and maintaining a postdoctoral community at the institutional, local, regional, and national levels
- Utilize effective communication tools (NPA Web site, E-Alerts, social networking, etc.) to inform the postdoctoral community of new and/or expanded resources and emerging best practices

***D. Ensure an effective and useful NPA Web site***

- Review the functionality and usability of the NPA Web site regularly, ensuring that the user experience is in line with modern standards of accessibility
- Effectively integrate the NPA Web site with other methods of outreach (E-Alerts, social networking, etc.) to establish it as the primary information source for NPA-related information
- Promote the use of NPA Community to further engage NPA stakeholders

***E. Broaden the reach of the NPA by forming mutually beneficial partnerships with external “organizations” to expand and increase member benefits***

- Establish the NPA as the “must join” organization for postdocs (and doctoral students)

- Identify and promote new benefits that raise interest in the NPA and promote long-term engagement of its stakeholders
- Create a mechanism to best promote the unique benefits of NPA membership among affiliate members, full members, and sustaining members
- Utilize available benefits to leverage increased interest in joining as dues-paying members of the NPA

***F. Deepen the dialogue between the NPA and its membership to identify needs and emerging issues***

- Discuss emerging postdoctoral issues with the advisory council of the NPA
- Discuss emerging postdoctoral issues at the town hall session of the Annual Meeting with the stakeholder community
- Collaborate with appropriate professional organizations to improve the postdoc experience

## **Strategic Initiative 3**

### **Build Organizational Capacity**

To grow its programs and national influence, the NPA must ensure its sustainability as an active 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The health of the NPA is derived from its membership base; growth and stability in revenue streams that includes both project-dependent and operational funding; an engaged and knowledgeable volunteer base; and an expanded but appropriate staffing. Together, these four areas are necessary to build our organizational capacity, to allow us to deliver a strong and consistent message to our target audiences, and to further promote the success of postdoctoral scholars.

#### **Goals and Objectives:**

***A. Develop and implement a sustainable revenue model***

- Build and maintain strong relationships with funding bodies that are relevant to the mission and vision of the NPA
- Develop and submit grant applications to potential funders that support the growth and financial health of the NPA
- Identify mechanisms to diversify the revenue streams of the NPA
- Identify mechanisms to increase the annual revenue of the NPA

- Examine and set membership rates bi-annually, taking into account membership value and the financial needs of the NPA

***B. Promote organizational growth through membership and infrastructure***

- Increase the number of postdoc and postdoc administrator members through the promotion of Sustaining, Affiliate, and Individual Memberships
- Recruit, retain and train an effective volunteer base, including leadership, to drive the mission of the NPA
- Increase the number of dedicated NPA staff members, commensurate with sufficient increases in revenue
- Retain and train NPA staff members to drive the mission of the NPA
- Ensure an information technology infrastructure that will enable us to grow and achieve our long term objectives

***C. Write and maintain a history of the NPA***

- Utilize this information as appropriate for both internal and external purposes