Session Description:

Building a community of postdocs at an institution or even between institutions greatly enhances the postdoctoral experience by providing a support system, fostering collaboration and enabling the sharing of ideas. Possible questions to be addressed include: How do postdocs find each other? Why are postdoc associations important? What are the initial steps postdocs can take to establish a PDA with institutional support? How can postdocs garner institutional support? How can PDAs at regional institutions work together?

Facilitators:
This session is facilitated by some founding members of the Midwest Postdoctoral Forum (MWPDF), an organization established to promote regional cooperation in social and professional areas among postdoctoral associations at institutions in the Midwestern U.S.

Nadja Grobe, Ph.D.; Research Assistant Professor at Wright State University, Ohio
Natalie Wilson, Ph.D.; Postdoctoral Fellow at University of Kansas Medical Center
Neal Bryan; Associate Director of Postdoctoral Studies, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Relevant NPA Resources:

PDA Toolkit: The NPA’s PDA Toolkit is intended to serve as a resource guide to assist postdocs and their allies in starting and sustaining an effective PDA. In this toolkit, NPA members will find a wealth of information, including best practices shared from PDAs nationwide, suggestions on how to gain support from key institute administrators, strategies for conducting surveys and methods for affecting institutional policies. (bit.ly/PDAtoolkit)

A Postdoc’s Guide to Advocacy: Created by Jennifer A. Hobin and Jennifer Zeitzer (FASEB), this resource serves as a quick guide to understanding advocacy, lobbying and legislative processes. New PDAs may find themselves acting as their own advocates as they work to garner institutional support. (bit.ly/advocacyNPA)

Recommended Sites/Reading:

How to Form a Postdoc Association, article at AAAS Science Careers (bit.ly/HowToPDA)
MWPDF LinkedIn Group (bit.ly/MWPDF48)
Crowdsourced ideas from the session (today.io/m4dn) link expires April 16, 2014

Related Events at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

Friday: Workshop—Postdoctoral Leadership: The Dos and Don’ts of a Postdoctoral Association
Saturday: Poster Session—The MWPDF, an innovative model for regional collaboration among postdoctoral communities