How to Plan Successful Postdoc Career Development Programming

Christina Burkot, Postdoc Programming Coordinator, Office of Faculty Affairs

Benedicte Mengel, Vice President, Postdoctoral Association, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Genetics and Complex Diseases
Office of Faculty Affairs

• Maintain postdoc email listserv
• Organize career development workshops
• Manage the annual postdoc evaluation process
• Confirm mentorship of new postdocs with faculty sponsor
• Oversee postdoc appointment policies and processing, including salary levels and benefits

Postdoctoral Association

• Serve as liaison between postdocs and school’s administration and faculty, Postdoc Advisory Committee
• Advocate on behalf of HSPH postdocs
• Run the postdoc led nanocourses
• Manage the travel and mentor awards
• Organize social events throughout Boston area
The structure of the HSPH PDA and Workshop planning

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Webmaster
- Social Chairs
- Editors of the Postdoc Post
- Grants and Research Strategy Chair
- Educational Initiatives
- Workshop Chair
- Office of Faculty Affairs
- Faculty Advisory Committee
Ideas for Workshops

Postdocs
- Evaluations
- Postdoc Survey
- Demand

Faculty
- Teachers of existing workshops
- Faculty Advisory Committee

Office of Faculty Affairs
- Decide together which workshops are possible

History
Number of US Citizen and Non-US Citizen Postdocs

- **Non-US citizen**
- **US citizen**

Appointment date:
- 1-Jul-07
- 1-Jul-08
- 1-Jul-09
- 1-Jul-10
- 1-Jul-11
- 1-Jul-12
- 1-Jul-13
Average Age of Postdocs

Number of postdocs

Appointment date

1-Jul-07 | 1-Jul-08 | 1-Jul-09 | 1-Jul-10 | 1-Jul-11 | 1-Jul-12 | 1-Jul-13
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
Number of Postdocs Located at HSPH and Elsewhere

Appointment date

Number of postdocs

- Office not at HSPH
- Office at HSPH
What workshops would you offer?
• Negotiations with Postdoc Mentors and Colleagues
• Alternative Careers in Science
• NIH Grants
• Managing Professional and Personal Responsibilities
• Academic Job Talks
• Effective Teaching
• Non-Governmental Sources of Funding

• Time Management
• Interviewing for Faculty Positions
• Scientific Writing
• Learning to Network Strategically
• Authorship Issues
• Peer-Review Writing Group
• How to Set up a Lab
• Moving to a New Institution
• CV and Cover Letter
Workshop Organization

• Select workshop topics
• Select faculty to present
  – Lecture
  – Panel
• Advertise for workshop
• Set up powerpoint for presenter
• Take attendance
• Ask for feedback
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer-Review Writing Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Communications Course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV and Cover Letter Writing Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Job Search</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Writing Course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Job Talks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorship Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing For and Negotiating Faculty Positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a Resume for Jobs Outside Academia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teaching: Case-Based Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teaching: Designing a Course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Workshop: Non-Governmental Funding Sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMP Statistical Software</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of NIH Grants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Teaching and Research Statements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Careers in Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIH Funding Mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essentials of Grant-Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Nanocourses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Teaching Experience

## Nanocourses
- Graduate and postdoc course
- 2 class meetings, minimum of 6h
- First class a lecture and is open
- Second class is discussion based and needs registration
- One topic, as Public Health 101
- Several postdocs teaching one course

## Topics
- Public Health 101
- Social & Behavioural Sciences
- Nutritional Epidemiology
- Epidemiology of Chronic Diseases
- Experimental Malaria Research
- Modeling Infectious Diseases

[https://nanosandothercourses.hms.harvard.edu/node/8](https://nanosandothercourses.hms.harvard.edu/node/8)
Feedback

• “While I learned a great deal in the time we had, the workshop was very rushed. Also, there was not as much time to discuss issues the postdocs were bringing up. For me, the most valuable part of the workshop was seeing actual examples and reviewing what was good and what needed improvement.

• “I think that at HSPH it can be difficult to have one program for all of us who come from all these different disciplines (lab science, quantitative sciences, economics, policy, etc.), but I thought this panel did a good job of dealing with that by having a diverse set of faculty. So I just hope that these programs continue to strive to get representation from each of these very different disciplines.”

• “The JMP session was very helpful. She was incredibly knowledgeable and gave examples that were pertinent, well-explained, and idea-generating. I'm so glad I participated and heartily recommend this session!”

• “Ideally, the online learning component would have been used as a way to tell us about how to view different teaching styles and see what worked for us, rather than spending a big chunk of time educating us about MOOCs in general. I think the online course session could have been its own 1 or 1.5 hour talk and this one could have been focused on the syllabus/learning objectives/lecturing piece.”
How to Tell if a Workshop is Successful

• Success criteria
  – Turnout/numbers
  – How satisfied the postdocs are
  – Evaluation forms

• Most popular workshops
  – NIH grant writing
  – Academic job search
  – Interviewing and negotiating for faculty positions
Limitations

• Limited staff working on postdoc affairs
  – 2 people in Faculty Affairs supporting postdocs

• Limited funds for outside speakers
  – We pay 20% of Writing Instructor salary
  – Enough funds for only one outside speaker
Accomplishments This Year

• Worked more closely with the PDA/Workshops Chair to identify areas of need and organize workshops most relevant to postdocs

• Created several new workshops
  – Interviewing For and Negotiating Faculty Positions
  – Non-Government Sources of Funding
  – Alternative Careers in Science Series
Areas for Improvement

- Advertisement
- Registration system
- Method of collecting feedback
- Address more areas of need for postdocs

Plans for the Future

- Brown bag sessions
- More PDA involvement in organizing the workshops
Thanks!

Office of Faculty Affairs

http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/faculty-affairs/
facultyaffairs@hsph.harvard.edu

Postdoctoral Association

http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/pda/
pda@hsph.harvard.edu