Town Hall
NPA 13th Annual Meeting

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March 15, 2015
AGENDA

- Summary NPA Institutional Policy Report
- Summary NAS COSEPUP Policy Report
- Discussion groups
- Reporting
- Closing
2013 NIH minimum, $39,264
Health, Vision, and Dental Benefits

- **Single Health Insurance**: 46% 85% 88%
- **Family Health Insurance**: 49% 85% 85%
- **Single Dental Insurance**: 56% 77% 81%
- **Family Dental Insurance**: 61% 80% 82%
- **Single Vision Insurance**: 67% 69%
- **Family Vision Insurance**: 46% 67% 68%

- Institutionally Funded Postdoc Employees
- Institutionally Funded Postdoc Trainees
- Individually Funded Postdocs
- Externally Funded Postdocs
Retirement and Other Employee Benefits

- Matched contribution to a retirement plan
  - Institutionally Funded Postdoc Employees: 41%
  - Institutionally Funded Postdoc Trainees: 17%
  - Individually Funded Postdocs: 13%
  - Externally Funded Postdocs: 6%

- Ability to contribute individually to a tax-deferred retirement plan
  - Institutionally Funded Postdoc Employees: 79%
  - Institutionally Funded Postdoc Trainees: 39%
  - Individually Funded Postdocs: 17%
  - Externally Funded Postdocs: 17%

- Flexible Spending Accounts
  - Institutionally Funded Postdoc Employees: 68%
  - Institutionally Funded Postdoc Trainees: 35%
  - Individually Funded Postdocs: 31%
  - Externally Funded Postdocs: 13%

- Employee Assistance Program
  - Institutionally Funded Postdoc Employees: 74%
  - Institutionally Funded Postdoc Trainees: 47%
  - Individually Funded Postdocs: 55%
  - Externally Funded Postdocs: 31%
Maximum Postdoc Term Limit

- 3 years: 6%
- 4 years: 10%
- 5 years: 63%
- 6 years: 19%
- 7 years: 2%
Professional Development Programs

- Grant Proposal Writing: 94%
- Responsible Conduct of Research: 93%
- Presentation Skills: 77%
- Teaching Skills: 75%
- Manuscript/Scientific Writing: 68%
- Negotiation Skills: 61%
- Interpersonal Skills: 59%
- English Language Training: 58%
- Lab Management for an academic setting: 52%
- Diversity and Outreach Programs: 46%
- Time Management: 41%
- International Legal Issues: 33%
- Mock Study Sections: 33%
- Project Management for an academic setting: 28%
- Project Management for an industry setting: 22%
Career Services Programs

- Career Exploration Programs/ Panels/ Talks: 84%
- Networking Events: 77%
- Job Search Skills Workshops (including...): 70%
- CV / Cover Letter Reviews: 62%
- Individual Career Counseling Appointments: 59%
- Career Fairs: 54%
- Academic Job Search Programs: 54%
- Individual Development Plan Workshops: 51%
- Self-Assessment Programs/ Workshops: 46%
- Career-related Web site Resources: 45%
- Employer Presentations: 38%
- Mock Interviews: 38%
- Career Library: 35%
- Formal Career Interest Assessments...: 26%
- On-Site Visits to Local Employers: 17%
- On-Campus Interviews: 14%
- Not Applicable: 3%

Percentage of Institutions
PDO Annual Operating Budgets
(excludes salaries)

Percentage of Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Budget</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1,000-$9,999</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$10,000-$19,999</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>above $200,000</td>
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</table>
Exit Survey Provided

- Yes: 45%
- No: 55%
Recommendations

- Stipends/Funding
- Health Care/Retirement Benefits
- Appointment
- Training Programs
- Exit Survey
General Facts

• US has large and growing population of postdoctoral researchers primarily working at universities
• Undercounting has been a significant problem
• Population of postdoctoral researchers has increased in recent years
• Postdoctoral phenomena has spread to fields other than the physical and biomedical sciences
• Postdoctoral pay is relatively low
• Many postdoctoral fellows end up working in non-research positions
Postdoc rate, by field of study, new PhDs: 1992–2012

Survey of Earned Doctorates

Related detailed data: tables 44, 51, 52.
Median basic salary of doctorate recipients with definite commitments in the United States, by position type and field of study: 2012

*Includes business management and administration.
Related detailed data: tables 48, 49.

Survey of Earned Doctorates
Period of Service

• Period of Service: Postdoctoral appointments for a given postdoctoral researcher should total no more than 5 years in duration, barring extraordinary circumstances.

• Requires direct action by the funding agencies and institutions
  – Funding agencies should assign each postdoctoral researcher an identifier and keep a record of length of service
  – Institutions should maintain a record of how long postdocs remain in that position and that information should be provided to funding agencies as part of grant proposals
Title

• The title of “postdoctoral researcher” should be applied only to those people who are receiving advanced training in research. When the appointment period is completed, they should move on to a permanent position externally or be transitioned internally to a staff position with a different and appropriate designation and salary.

• Action required:
  – Funding agencies should be consistent in labeling of postdoctoral researchers and require evidence that advanced research training is a component of the postdoctoral experience
  – Institutions should create or identify professional positions for people who are conducting research but not receiving training, and these people should receive appropriate remuneration, benefits and privileges.
Career Development

- **Career Development**: Institutions and mentors should, beginning the first year of graduate school, make graduate students aware of the wide variety of career paths available for Ph.D. recipients and explain that postdoctoral positions are intended only for those seeking advanced research training. Career guidance should include, where feasible, the provision of internships and other practical experiences. The postdoctoral position should not be viewed by graduate students or principal investigators as the default step after the completion of doctoral training.
Compensation*

- **Compensation and Benefits of Employment:** Current postdoctoral salaries are low. Salaries should be increased to (1) reflect the qualifications of postdoctoral scholars, (2) address the slow progress the community has made towards implementing the salary increases recommended in several National Research Council reports, and (3) adjust the relative wage of postdoctoral researchers to appropriately reflect their value and contribution to research.
- NIH should raise the NRSA postdoctoral starting salary to **$50,000** (2014 dollars), and adjust it annually for inflation. Postdoctoral salaries should be appropriately higher where regional cost of living, disciplinary norms, and institutional or sector salary scales dictate higher salaries.

* Two of the committee members do not support the recommendation for a prescriptive “salary standard” based upon one particular field and funding agency.
Five Approaches Considered for Determining Appropriate Minimum

- Indexing to
  - Contemporaries who have but a college degree
  - Graduate stipends
  - Newly hired assistant professors

- Inflation adjustment of previous recommendations

- Research Grade Evaluation Guide

- All suggest a salary of around $50,000
Result

• Indexing to
  – Contemporaries who have only a college degree: $49,911 in 2012
  – Graduate stipends: Average total cost (including tuition) for graduate students in science and engineering was $51,000 in 2011
  – Newly hired assistant professors in 2013-2014: Two-thirds starting salary of new faculty in biomedical sciences (nine month salary): $49,700

• Inflation adjustment and NIH’s response to recommendation made in 2000: $54,800

• Research Grade Evaluation Guide: beginning researcher starts at GS-11 or minimum of $50,800 in 2014
Data Collection

• **Data Collection:** Current data on the postdoctoral population, in terms of demographics, career aspirations, and career outcomes are neither adequate nor timely. It should be the responsibility of every institution that employs postdocs to collect data on the number of postdocs and where they go after completion of their research training, and to make that information publicly available. **The National Science Foundation should serve as a primary curator for establishing and updating a database system that tracks postdoctoral researchers, including non-academic and foreign-trained postdoctoral researchers.**
Mentoring

Mentoring: Mentoring is an essential component of the postdoctoral experience and entails more than supervision. Mentoring, therefore, should not be solely a responsibility of the principal investigator, although he or she should be actively engaged in mentoring. Institutions should create provisions so that postdoctoral researchers can seek advice from a group of advisors, in addition to their immediate supervisor. Institutions and funding agencies should take responsibility for ensuring the quality of mentoring through evaluation of and training programs for the mentors.
Questions?

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Download *The Postdoctoral Experience Revisited* at http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18982/the-postdoctoral-experience-revisited
Discussion Questions

1. What part of the NPA or COSEPUP report was most surprising to you?
2. Were there any findings that you disagree with, and why?
3. What are the issues that affect postdocs that were not raised by either report?
4. Do you agree that the stipend postdoc salary should start at $50,000 stipend? What are the challenges to reaching that level and the consequences?
5. Should PD receive retirement benefits? What are the challenges for providing retirement benefits?
6. What are the institutional barriers to collecting better data about postdoc outcomes?
7. What information do graduate students need to have in order to make an informed decision about pursuing postdoctoral training?
THANK YOU!

SEE YOU AT THE 2016 NPA ANNUAL MEETING!

VAN ANDEL INSTITUTE
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN