Creating policy-focused regional symposia for grassroots advocacy

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NPA 2016 - Innovation In Action
Learning objectives for today’s workshop

After this workshop, you will be able to:

- Identify the aims and scope of recent policy-oriented regional symposia organized by postdocs
- Explain the purpose of grassroots advocacy as a means for guiding policy reform, and compare/contrast this with “top-down” advocacy
- Analyze the various aspects of planning a symposium and synthesize an action plan for creating your own event
First, a story...
**FoR Boston - 1st Symposium**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2014**

**Keynote:** Henry Bourne (UCSF) - “The Future: Make It Work”

**Panel Discussion 1:** Challenges Facing the Future of Research  
Sibby Anderson-Thompkins (UNC-CH), Galit Lahav (HMS), Graham Walker (MIT), David Glass (Novartis) & Richard Roberts (NEB)

**Networking and Brainstorming Reception**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2014**

**Panel discussion 2:** Challenges Facing the Future of Research  
Marc Kirschner (HMS), Michael Teitelbaum (HLS), Naomi Rosenberg (Tufts) & Cynthia Fuhrmann (UMMS)

**Workshops:** (2 rounds allowing for participants to attend 2 session)

**Training** – How should we prepare trainees for careers in science in 2014?

**Funding** – How do we structure funding to promote desired outcomes?

**Incentives** – The folly of hoping for X while rewarding for Y

**Workforce sustainability** – How do we match the supply of postdocs and graduate students to the demand of jobs to make a sustainable workforce?


Lots of media coverage

STEM postdoc researchers are highly trained, but for what? The Conversation, Gary McDowell, December 09 2014.
Voices of a generation: young scientists must be seen and heard. The Conversation, David Riglar and Douglas Hilton, December 08 2014.
Let’s change the system for postdocs. The Boston Globe, Yuly Fuentes-Medel, October 10 2014.
White paper from FOR Boston

Shaping the Future of Research: a perspective from junior scientists [version 2; referees: 2 approved]

Postdoc involvement in advocacy events 2015-2016

- FOR SF
- FOBGAPT
- Rescuing Biomedical Research
- ASBMB Sustainability Summit
- ASAPBio
Multiple choice 1: How long does it take to put a grassroots symposium together?

1. 3-5 months
2. 6-8 months
3. 9-12 months
4. Over 12 months
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Multiple choice 2: How much does it cost to produce a Future of Research Symposium?

1. $5,000-$10,000
2. $10,000-$15,000
3. $15,000-$20,000
4. $20,000-$25,000
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Why should postdocs be involved in grassroots advocacy?

- Constituency strongly affected by current practices and proposed reforms
- Understanding issues in preparation for transition into faculty positions (when you have your own postdocs!)
- Builds skills and attitudes of leadership for professional and personal life
Show of hands

• How many people have attended an advocacy event (e.g. FOR symposium) in the past 12 months?
• How many people have helped organize an advocacy event in the past 12 months?
Discussion activity 1--Whole group
Full group discussion

● What are some unique features/advantages of grassroots advocacy (e.g. among postdocs) as a strategy for creating change (vs. “top-down” approaches)?

● Disadvantages?
Imagine that you are going to plan a policy-focused symposium...

- Who do you need to target to successfully create change?
  - who?, why?, how?

- What deliverables do you need to prepare?
  - content of your symposium
  - post-event follow-up activities

- How will a symposium help you prepare these materials?
  - output of the symposium that will support the who to do the what
Programs of FOR Symposia

FOR Boston 2015
- Keynote (Paula Stephan)
- 6 panel discussions
  - Defining the postdoc
  - Academic labor
  - Career paths for PhDs
  - ECRs in publishing
  - Diversity in science
- FOR/ASBMB Hack Day
- Networking reception (co-sponsored by AWIS)

NYU PoIntS 2015
- 3 plenary speakers
- 2 panel discussions
  - Career paths after the postdoc
  - Fixing the postdoc pipeline problem
- Postdoc research talks
- Poster session
- Networking reception

FOR Chicago 2015
- Keynote addresses (Greg Petsko and Keith Yamamoto)
- Panel discussion
- 5 Interactive workshops
  - Revolutionizing Training
  - Workforce Structure
  - Incentivizing Good Science
  - Funding Mechanisms
  - Curricular Reforms and Experiential Learning
- Networking reception
Small Group Activity 1

1. Form Small groups

2. Identify your symposium task:
   a. Symposium Content
   b. Fundraising
   c. Advertising
   d. Logistics- Space/Catering
   e. Post Event Continued Engagement

3. Create a way to show how you will accomplish your assigned task
   a. What needs to be done?
   b. How will you do that? Who will help?
Small Group Activity 2

- Rearrange into new groups with at least one person from each of the previous groupings
- Based on your ideas in part 1, come up with an organizational diagram for creating a symposium related to your desired outcome(s)
  - What does your successful event achieve? (Use SMART goals!)
  - Who needs to do what tasks in order to succeed?
  - How do you order the tasks?
Small Group Activity Responses
Questions? Comments? Contact us!

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Thank you!