Strategies for Increasing Participation in PDA Leadership and Events

Presenters:
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Workshop Objectives

• Identify challenges to PDA participation at your institution

• Learn best practices from Washington University Postdoctoral Association (WUPS)
  – Group Organization & Governance Case Study
  – Being Inclusive at a Personal Level

• Create concrete strategies for increasing PDA participation at your institution
Challenges

Discuss in small groups:

• How many total postdocs at your institution?
• How many postdocs usually attend events?
• What do you think prevents postdocs from attending PDA events?
• How could you encourage more postdocs to take on leadership roles in your PDA?
Challenges

Motivation, activation energy before event
Stepping up to leadership roles
Location, location, location
Same people do all the work, attend events
Fear of PI disapproval
Communicating (read the emails!)
Difficulty estimating number of event attendees
Competition for time, bandwidth

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WUPS Case Study

• Brief overview of WUPS
• Challenges addressed
• Solutions
• Future Plans
WUPS Case Study

Brief overview of WUPS:

- Since 1999
- Bylaws passed December 2005
- WU is divided in 2 campuses
- Now we serve all postdocs (previously only STEM)
- Orientation for new postdocs (once a month)
WUPS Case Study

Brief overview of WUPS:

- Meeting once a month (on both campuses)
- The group is managed by the Executive Council (has grown from 5-6 to 15)
- 6 Officers
- 4 Committees (1 chair each)
WUPS Case Study

Challenges addressed:

Increase:
1. PDA productivity
2. visibility and participation
3. communication with the Postdocs
4. Postdoc recognition
WUPS Case Study

- Brief overview of WUPS
- Challenges addressed
- **Solutions**
- Future Plans
WUPS Case Study

Solutions to Increase PDA productivity:

Creation of committees:
- Outreach
- Social events
- Career development
- Policy
- +others in the future
WUPS Case Study

Solutions to increase visibility and participation:
Created a Facebook page
WUPS Case Study

Solutions to increase visibility, participation and recognition:

Started PostdocsGoLIVE

“PostdocsGoLIVE!” is a series of posts that will shed light on postdocs from various fields at Washington University in Saint Louis.
WUPS Case Study

Modified the bylaws to create a new officer position: Publicist

– The Publicist shall:
  • Work with the Director of the OPA on the content of the WUPS website.
  • Assist the Vice-President in advertising for events and marketing.
  • Run the social media accounts of WUPS
  • Assure the continuity of the PostdocGoLIVE posts on the social media
WUPS Case Study

Solutions to increase visibility and participation:

Logo competition

We had 17 submissions!
2 winners were selected
WUPS Case Study

Logo competition

We merged the 2 logos into one
WUPS Case Study

Solutions to increase communication with the Postdocs:

Survey: let’s get in touch with the postdoctoral community! Feedbacks on events organized, ask for events suggestion, ideal time and place for events…

Have you ever heard about WUPS (Washington University Postdoctoral Society)?
115 responses

Have you ever joined us for one of our events?
115 responses

115 responses out of around 600 postdocs!
WUPS Case Study

Solutions:
Careers in science miniseries: created after the survey

Future Events:
MSL
Tech Transfer
WUPS Case Study

Solutions to increase visibility and participation:
Events off-campus and on both campuses
WUPS Case Study

Solutions to increase visibility and participation:
Introduction of interactive workshops in addition to frontal seminars

Workshop:
“Effective communication 101: step out of your comfort zone and create the career you want”
WUPS Case Study

- Brief overview of WUPS
- Challenges addressed
- Solutions
- Future Plans
WUPS Case Study

Future Plans to increase visibility and participation:

Bookmark/gadgets for new postdoc orientation

Coming Soon!
WUPS Case Study

Future Plans to increase Postdoc recognition:

Outstanding postdoctoral awards

Starting FY19
Creating Personal Connections and Enhancing Inclusion

We all have much more in common than we have difference. I would say that about people all over the world. They don't know how much in common that they have.

— Ernest Gaines —
Creating Personal Connections

Remove your own bias

Establishing Connectivity on a Personal Level

We are not so different?

In the most basic sense

We all love
We all mourn
We all laugh

Think about your top 5 movies, books, vacations
Creating Personal Connections

Connections begin at Orientation

Be genuine (first impressions about PDA)

Be interactive and ask questions

  • How many of you are from here? (personal)
  • Do you know what to expect from a postdoc? (prof.)
  • Are you interested in other careers in Science? (prof.)
  • Would you like veteran postdoc advice? (prof.)
Enhancing Inclusion

Creating inclusion through friendship

“treat others like you want to be treated”

Approaching a room of strangers

Strong eye contact with a smile

Engage and conversate-ask about lab and studies
*Do not say hello and then disengage

Accept and Include Diverse Perspectives
Enhancing Inclusion through Body Language
Enhancing Inclusion through Body Language
## Breakout Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Victorino</td>
<td>Francesca Cignarella</td>
<td>Jessica Hutchins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating personal connections &amp; enhancing inclusion</td>
<td>Branding your PDA</td>
<td>PDO support for your PDA</td>
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</tbody>
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Thank You!

WUPS members and officers
WashU Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
WashU Division of Biology & Biomedical Sciences
Dr. Erin Heckler
Dr. John Russell
NPA Meetings Committee

Postdoc Symposium 2018