



NATIONAL SUMMIT on

# Gender and the Postdoctorate

## What Can We Do? Promising Practices for Aiding Postdoc Women to ADVANCE

---

Kathleen Flint

NPA ADVANCE Project Manager

March 11, 2010



[www.nationalpostdoc.org/advance](http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/advance)



## What Can We Do?

---

- Already many initiatives from community, both focused on women (e.g. ADVANCE programs) and focused on postdocs (e.g. postdoc office and association activities)
  - Goal of NPA ADVANCE is to promote promising activities, drawing from both communities
-



## Fall 2009 Institutional Survey

---

- Sent to ~170 institutions, 70 individual institutions responded

*Important Limitations:*

- Not every respondent is aware of every activity at their institution
  - Often redirected to those who know about postdocs
  - Provides broad snapshot of what institutions are doing, esp. for postdocs.
-



# Intervention Types

---

## MENTORING:

- One-on-One Mentoring Programs (formal & informal)
- Group or Committee-based Mentoring Programs
- "How to" Workshops or Seminars on Mentoring

## NETWORKING:

- Formal Networking Events/Programs
- "How to" Workshops/Seminars on Networking
- "How to" Materials or Resources on Networking

## FUNDING AND GRANTS:

- Travel Awards to do Research or Attend Conferences
- Childcare Awards for Childcare Support at a Conference or Remote Site
- "Transition" Funding to Support Research During Life Transitions and Interruptions

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Workshops/Seminars on Balancing Work with Family/Personal Obligations
  - Workshops/Seminars on Avoiding Bias During Performance Evaluations
  - Workshops/Seminars on Skills Relating to Obtaining Grant Funding
  - Workshops/Seminars on Communication Skills
  - Workshops/Seminars on Other Professional Skills not Already Mentioned
-



# Intervention Types

---

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT:

- Negotiating Workshops/Seminars
- Interviewing Workshops/Seminars
- Workshops/Seminars on Other Aspects of Academic Job Searching
- Programs for Career Planning or Counseling
- Resources for Career Planning
- Workshops/Seminars on Becoming Faculty

## FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES:

- Job Search, Placement or Other "Dual-career" Assistance for Partners
  - On-Site Childcare Services
  - Subsidized or Discounted On-Site Childcare Services
  - Subsidized or Discounted Off-Site Childcare Services
  - Flexible Working Schedules or Part-time Positions
  - Programs or Resources to Raise Awareness about and/or Reduce any Stigma Associated with Using Family-friendly Policies
-



# Intervention Types

---

## POSTDOCTORAL POLICIES:

- Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
  - Postdoctoral Association
  - Explicit letters of appointment for postdocs
  - Formalized postdoc performance evaluations
  - Recommended or required Individual Development Plans (IDPs)
  - Term limit on time as postdoc
  - Salary scale or minimum salary
  - Formal sick and/or vacation leave
  - Formalized maternity and/or parental leave
  - Paid*** maternity and/or parental leave program for postdocs
  - Grievance procedures specific to postdocs
  - Employer-sponsored health insurance available to ***all*** postdocs
  - Employer-sponsored health insurance with dependent coverage
  - Training for an organizational Ombudsman on postdoc issues
-



## Selected Results

---

- ❑ Most practices had recently been offered, **most of which directed at or available to postdocs**
  - ❑ Group or committee-based mentoring less common than one-on-one mentoring programs
    - Respondents offering group vs. one-on-one: 35% vs. 60%
  - ❑ Workshops on work-life balance: one of few practices primarily intended for women, and the majority not intended for postdocs
-



# Selected Results

---

- Most postdoc policies adopted
    - *Notable exception: 28% **paid** maternity leave program for postdocs (not including, e.g., general employee disability leave or vacation & sick leave)*
  - Other less common practices:
    - Programs on avoiding bias during evaluations
    - Grants to support conference or remote site childcare
    - Subsidized or discounted childcare (on- or off-site)
    - Dual-career assistance for postdocs
    - Programs/resource to raise awareness of family-friendly policies
-





## Afternoon Sessions

---

- 2-3:30pm: BREAKOUT SESSIONS: What Can Be Done to Retain Postdoc Women?
    - Retaining Postdoc Women through Mentoring -- Crystal Ballroom, Second Floor
    - Retaining Postdoc Women with Professional and Career Development -- Chestnut Room, Third Floor
    - Retaining Postdoc Women through Effective Postdoctoral Policies -- Walnut Room, Third Floor
  - 3:45pm: Meet back here for summing up
-



# Small Group Discussion Topics

---

1. What are some creative ways to keep a research project going while a postdoc goes on parental leave?
  2. Given that postdocs are temporary employees, what can institutions do to help support “dual-career” postdoc couples and the relocation of postdoc partners?
  3. How do you increase the participation of postdocs in formal mentoring programs?
  4. How do you foster informal mentoring?
  5. What can we do as individuals to change the culture at our institutions so that it’s more attractive to “millenials” who want to “have it all”?
  6. How do we broaden the conversation on these issues instead of “preaching to the choir”?
-