Mission
To improve the postdoctoral experience by supporting a culture of inclusive connection. At the individual, organizational, and national levels, we facilitate enhanced professional growth, raise awareness, and collaborate with stakeholders in the postdoctoral community.

Programs/Highlights
2022 was a banner year for the NPA coming out of the constraints of a global pandemic. Both exciting new programming and a strong return to its roots characterized the year of growth for the association. Advocacy, member benefits, communication, events, and internal improvements all saw advances in line with the 2021-24 NPA Strategic Plan.

- Designed and launched a new NPA website, creating a better representation of who we are. The redesigned site offers an overall smoother and more rewarding user experience with tools revamped by volunteers and now housed in a central resource center.

- Kicked off the What’s a Postdoc? project, featuring stories, photos and videos designed to demystify the postdoc position to multiple audiences. Included in this effort is 3Brief, a campaign humanizing the lives of postdocs from across many disciplines told through interviews of three minutes or less.

- Promoted mental health and wellness as a theme throughout the year, including partnering with Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) on a webinar to promote a culture of well-being, focusing 2022 National Postdoc Appreciation Week on mental health and wellness, and offering a postdoc version of Becoming a Resilient Scientist, taught by Dr. Sharon Milgrim, director of the Office of Intramural Training & Education at NIH.

- Selected as a subawardee on the five-year RISE UPP INCLUDES $10 million NSF award led by the University of Maryland. As an amplifying partner, the NPA will work to disseminate best practices and lessons learned on advancing greater diversity among postdocs entering faculty careers.

- Re-invented the model for NPA membership committees, on which volunteers from dozens of institutions participate. The NPA’s Advocacy Committee is exemplary of this transformation, with a set of three cascading leader positions, an amplified charge tied to the NPA Strategic Plan, and active, productive leadership and engagement.

- Developed a pilot class of the NPA Postdoc Council (PDC), designed to bring new voices to NPA leadership. With a revamped set of bylaws, the NPA paved the way to institute a formal PDC in 2023, including multiple spots for PDC leaders to serve as voting members on the NPA Board of Directors.

- Advocated for member postdocs and institutions in formal comments submitted to federal agencies on matters including easing the path for international scholars, improving NIH efforts at diversity, equity and inclusion, and boosting appropriations for science and research.

- Held the 2022 NPA Race and Ethnicity Equity Summit, a series of interactive online race and ethnicity discussions led by the NPA and its partner organizations. The summit yielded valuable discussion and insights on how to identify barriers – and find steps forward – in the greater postdoctoral community on the path to greater racial and ethnic equity.

- Launched NPA SmartSkills, a new virtual professional development course with monthly classes over the full year taught by experts from across the nation. The most successful program in NPA history, SmartSkills had more than 1,000 postdoc and postdoc office leader participants by year’s end.

- Hosted the first live NPA Annual Conference in three years with a return to in-person professional development, idea exchange, and networking with hundreds of attendees. The NPA’s 20th Annual Conference took place in Chicago and featured a virtual component to extend its reach for greater inclusivity to those unable to travel.

- The event also featured the culmination of the first class of the NPA IMPACT Fellowship Program, designed to increase access to opportunities for marginalized early-career research trainees to build skills, understand strengths and develop networks. The Chicago Annual Conference included a successful, live learning event for IMPACT Fellows funded by NSF.

- The 2022 IN REVIEW
Organizational Members

2022 NPA Organizational Members

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American Aging Association
American Association for Anatomy
American Association for Cancer Research
American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Immunologists, The
American Chemical Society
American Physiological Society
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics
American Society of Bone and Mineral Research
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Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities
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Baylor University
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
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Boston College
Boston University
Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard
Brookhaven National Laboratory
Brown University
Butler Institute for Research on Aging
California Institute of Technology
Case Western Reserve University
Cedar Sinai Medical Center, Graduate Research Education
Chapman University
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
City of Hope Beckman Research Institute
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Colorado State University
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Fellow members, thank you for making 2022 a year of new beginnings. Transitioning from two years of a pandemic seemed daunting given institutional budget uncertainty, new social anxieties, and political discord. With the help of dedicated volunteers and leaders like yourselves, the National Postdoctoral Association found opportunities to positively impact postdoctoral experiences through connection, advocacy, and advancements in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, finishing stronger than before.

Meeting so many colleagues and friends in person at our annual conference for the first time in two years started the first quarter of 2022 off with unprecedented joy. One never quite realizes what matters most until it is absent for a while. The conference brought with it one new component – the convening of new IMPACT fellows and sponsors to recognize, support, and celebrate some of our most vulnerable populations within the postdoctoral community. Fellows shared plans for paying their experience forward and provided feedback to make next year’s program even stronger.

Throughout the year, the NPA continued building spaces of belonging via its first Race and Ethnicity Equity Summit and by collaborating with AAMC on a mental health and wellness webinar. These offerings shed light on the myriad issues postdocs confront each day and provided a platform for shared voices and visions for change. Belonging being such a core NPA value, we were honored to receive a RISE UPP award by the University of Maryland. This five-year subaward allows us to both advance our own goal of diversity beyond lip-service and to support the initiatives of our partners through best practice exchanges.

Since its inception, the NPA aimed to give postdocs and serving offices their own space and voice. Honoring and advancing this tradition in 2022 meant creating an even stronger platform within the organization’s leadership body. Our inaugural Postdoc Council provides ideas and feedback from those directly living the postdoctoral experience every day. Their leadership, advocacy, and passion for improving both our organization and the global academic enterprise ensures timely, impactful change in the years to come.

Perhaps our greatest impact comes in the form of advocacy. The NPA serves as a sounding board for your interests, ideas, frustrations, and celebrations. We take pride in bringing these experiences to the attention of federal agencies as they consider policies that influence your academic work, professional prospects, and personal wellbeing.

In my final year as Chair of the Board, and my penultimate on the board in general, I am struck by where the NPA has been and where we are today. Historically, the NPA always provided opportunities for connection and advocacy; spaces where postdoc voices are not only shared but elevated, celebrated. I’m honored to be a part of its success and cannot wait to see where we go from here. Thank you for all you do to advance our visionary promise to “empower, value, recognize, and support” postdocs in their current and future endeavors.

In justice and peace,

Stevie Eberle, M.Ed.
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