

BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION

The BWH Post(Doc)

Spring 2018



IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome!

by The Postdoctoral Leadership Council

We are beyond excited to present our inaugural BWH postdoc newsletter! Our aim is to bring awareness to the multitude of postdoc affair-related news and opportunities that are available to us. Moving forward, we plan to release newsletters on a bi-annual basis.

The BWH PDA (postdoc association) hosts several programs throughout the year that are open to all BWH postdocs. In the past, this has included career panels, speed networking events, and social events, among others. You will find highlights of some of the most recent events in this issue. We hope this will encourage you to attend future events, network, and improve your postdoc experience!

The PDA is governed by the postdoctoral leadership council (PLC), a team of postdocs who share a passion for enhancing the postdoc training experience of their peers. Our mission is overseen by the networking, career development, advocacy, and communications committees, as well as a mentoring circles program. We designed this first issue so that each committee is represented, giving the reader a sense of the activities each committee is involved in.

Joining the PLC is a great way to connect with other postdocs and the greater BWH community while improving leadership skills. We are always looking for eager postdocs to join us, new and old! For more information on how you can become involved, please contact us at bwhpda@partners.org

Editorial Team (Communications Committee): Ashley Ogawa-Wong, Ph.D.; Jessica Hall, Ph.D.; Yashini Govender, Ph.D.; Brian Sansbury, Ph.D.; Deepak Bhare, Ph.D.

Interested in joining the editorial team or becoming a contributor? Do you have a question, comment, or ideas for our next issue? Let us know!

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WINNER!

Congratulations to Belinda Kaskow, Ph.D., winner of the postdoc newsletter naming contest.

Thank you to all who participated!

Professional Networking: Break out of Your Comfort Zone

by Yashini Govender, Ph.D.

No one likes to be out of their comfort zone (including me), placed in a room full of strangers, and then expected to have fluid conversations. Networking can be awkward, especially for us postdocs. When I used to hear this word, instantly I would picture dreaded silences, forced smiles and the fear that I am portraying a job-hungry, desperate researcher. But then, I attended my first networking event in Boston (BiotechTuesday). However, this time instead of facing this awkward yet necessary activity alone, I persuaded a few postdocs to join me in my exploit. We were all networking "newbies," so we decided to meet after work and then go to the event together. When we arrived, the room was loud with conversation. At first glance, it looked as if everyone knew each other and I was glad that I had familiar faces with me. However, soon we realized this

was not the case. People were surprisingly friendly and not everyone was a scientist. There were many folks from multiple biotech companies encompassing various departments including research, IT, and marketing. It was nice to meet people from different fields, hear about their careers and practice talking about my research and career plans to a broad audience. What made this experience more enjoyable was having my postdoc group to lean on when that inevitable awkward silence crept in or when I was faced with the *how do I exit this prolonged conversation without being rude* scenario. As postdocs coming from various cities and countries, not all of us have access to a group that you can just message and say "hey, do you want to attend this event with me?" Therefore, we decided to create an initiative called "Biotech Networking Exposure." The

aim of this initiative is to provide support to BWH postdocs who would like to attend professional networking events in Boston/Cambridge. So, if you are interested in breaking out of your comfort zone to practice or enhance your networking skills, then you should join us at our next event!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the career development committee and the networking exposure initiative, please visit

<http://pda.bwh.harvard.edu/career-development/connectors-program/>

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Career Spotlight: Is a Non-profit Biotech Right for You?

by Ashley Ogawa-Wong, Ph.D.

As a non-profit biotech company, ALS Therapy Development Institute (ALS TDI) stands out among the myriad of biotech companies in Cambridge. But how is working for a nonprofit different from a traditional biotech, and what skills are necessary to land a job there? I had the opportunity to chat with two researchers from ALS TDI to find out more. Theo Hatzipetros, Ph.D. is a senior scientist involved in developing animal models that can be utilized for drug screening. He has been with ALS TDI for seven years, but previously worked at a for-profit pharmaceutical company, offering a perspective from both sides. Kyle Denton, Ph.D. recently joined the institute in 2016, after a short stint as a postdoctoral fellow at the National Institutes of Health. His project focuses on developing a more personalized approach to drug discovery using induced pluripotent stem cells from patients. Nonprofit organizations (NPO) and private foundations fill the gap in research for rare disorders which are largely underfunded because of their low profitability. While investors are an important source of funding

for a traditional company, nonprofit biotechs must rely on donations, which Theo admits can be challenging. On the flip side, funding is relatively stable in the face of economic

CAREER RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ *Develop a specialized skill set such as pharmacology or biomarker discovery, among others.*
- ✓ *Develop strong communication skills, which will come in handy during the interview process.*

fluctuations. "Generous people who want to give money, give no matter what," says Theo. Additionally, the absence of investors negates the intense pressure to please investors which can be felt in a traditional biopharmaceutical company, creating a workplace environment that is refreshing for Theo. There certainly is a

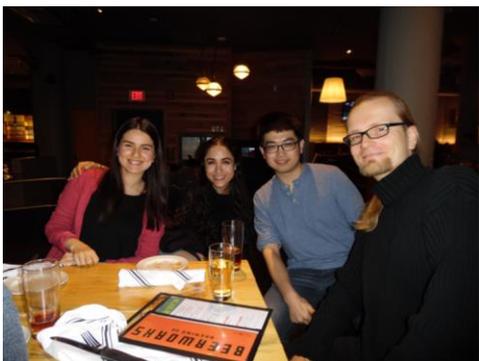
sense of urgency, but this comes from interacting with ALS patients and the drive to make an impact on their lives. In this way, it seems that working at an NPO can be personally fulfilling.

As a research scientist, what Kyle does day-to-day doesn't differ much from an academic position. One positive difference is that patient samples are more easily accessible. Moreover, in contrast to an academic laboratory, where research can be tedious and slow, the research methods employed at ALS TDI must be scalable.

In case you were wondering (I HAD to ask!), ALS TDI was in fact one of the recipients of the money that was raised via the #IceBucketChallenge from 2014. To find out more about ALS TDI, visit <https://www.als.net/>

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

St. Patrick's Day Social



BWH postdocs got together at Boston Beer Works to socialize and network over appetizers and drinks.

Spring Classic 5K



Team 20X BWH Running Buffer crushed it at the Spring Classic race. Friends and family are welcome to join regardless of experience. [Register now](#) for the Summer Classic 5K!

Were you there? [Tag yourself!](#)

JOIN THE NETWORKING COMMITTEE

For more information, please visit <http://pda.bwh.harvard.edu/networking/>

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Postdoc Salary: Are You Compensated Appropriately?

by Advocacy Committee

Similar to other employment positions, postdoctoral fellows also have a minimum pay set by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Although NIH provides a gold standard for postdoctoral compensation based on total years of experience, only 84% of national institutes require their postdoctoral fellows to be placed on the scale. Of this, only 36% of these institutions are required to annually increase compensation to account for years of experience.

To provide a fair work environment and align with NIH recommendations, BWH has put forth a postdoctoral policy requiring all Principal Investigators (PIs) to ensure that their postdoctoral fellows receive salary compensation in accordance to the NIH scale for years 0 - 2. All postdocs with more than 2 years of experience are at minimum required to receive compensation equivalent to that of year 2, but it is preferred that they are paid according to their specific experience level. The NIH typically adjusts their stipend scale on a yearly basis (usually in the winter). Accordingly, all new fellows onboarded at BWH must be paid according to the most recently published scale. For existing fellows, PIs must adjust the pay of their fellows up to the revised level by the start of the following fiscal year (October 1). This policy is effective towards all domestic and international fellows.

The table below reflects the updated NIH payscale for postdoctoral fellows for the 2018 fiscal year. As seen below, NIH has recommended an increase in overall stipend to account for higher cost of living and inflation. If your current salary is not in line

| Postdoctoral Stipend Levels for FY 2018 | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Years of Experience | Stipend for FY 2018 | Monthly Stipend (pre-tax) |
| 0 | \$48,432 | \$4,036 |
| 1 | \$48,804 | \$4,067 |
| 2 | \$49,188 | \$4,099 |
| 3 | \$51,324 | \$4,277 |
| 4 | \$53,184 | \$4,432 |
| 5 | \$55,308 | \$4,609 |
| 6 | \$57,528 | \$4,794 |
| 7 or More | \$59,736 | \$4,978 |

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-18-175.html>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you are interested in becoming involved in postdoc advocacy, visit <http://pda.bwh.harvard.edu/advocacy/>

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with the NIH guidelines, a discussion with your advisor may be beneficial in ascertaining why. While exceptions to the minimum pay policy are allowed by BWH, they must be reviewed in a case by case manner and are approved for a maximum of one year. If such an exception has been made in your case, you have a right to know.

Initiating conversations about issues like salary can be a daunting task for many fellows; however, as part of the BWH Postdoc Policy there are resources to assist you. Conducting an Annual Career Conference is a wonderful way to begin such a dialogue with your advisor. Along with a discussion regarding your career goals and progress, salary should be an integral part of this conference. Prepared forms to structure and guide this conversation are available in the Postdoc Policy, found on the [PDA website](#).

If conversations with your faculty advisor are not productive, there are other resources available to you within BWH and Harvard Medical School. Within BWH, your departmental administrator, the Postdoc Association or members of the Brigham Research Institute leadership (Allison Moriarty and Jackie Slavik) are here to help with these types of issues, and at HMS the Ombuds Office is a confidential service geared toward managing and resolving conflict.

The Mentoring Circles Program: Five-Year Anniversary

by Margaret Parker, Ph.D. & Budhaditya Banerjee, Ph.D.

Effective mentoring is essential to the success of postdoctoral fellows. However, the responsibilities and requirements of good mentoring are numerous, and it is increasingly understood that a single mentor cannot fulfill these expectations. For this reason, the Mentoring Circles Program (MCP) was initiated at BWH in 2013. This peer-to-peer mentoring program is designed to help postdocs find their best career fit by showing them scientific opportunities inside and outside of academia, as well as each career path's requirements, advantages and disadvantages. A major focus of the program is empowering our mentees to take responsibility for their own career development while guiding and supporting them during the academic year.

At the five-year anniversary, we are proud to report on the success of the Mentoring Circles

We are excited to announce that this year's awardees will receive a \$1,000 travel grant in addition to the recognition of their work.

Program. When initiated in the Fall of 2013, the inaugural term included 18 postdocs. This year, in the 2017 – 2018 academic year, over 50 postdocs participated in the program. The format includes once-a-month meetings between a "circle" of 2 senior postdocs and 4 - 5 first-year postdocs to discuss career-related topics. A survey of this year's participants revealed the most popular topics included CVs, resumes, informational interviewing, and networking. When asked about their experience this year, mentees had the following statements: "It is a great experience that I have valued a lot over the past months" and "Our circle is a platform where everyone shares their experiences. Mentees

were encouraged to take the lead and always were backed up by our mentors." Our program has been recognized outside of BWH. It won the inaugural "Award for Excellence in Mentoring" from Harvard Medical School in 2016. Additionally, the 2015 – 2016 program co-directors, Chantal Kuhn and Zafira Castano, published an [article in Nature Biotechnology](#) outlining the philosophy and implementation of the program at BWH.

Personally, the Mentoring Circles Program has been a very rewarding experience for us and a highlight of our time as postdocs at BWH. We participated as mentees in our 1st year as postdocs, mentors in our 2nd year, and currently are co-Directors for the 2017 – 2018 cycle. We encourage both new and experienced postdocs to join the MCP program next year. The 2018 – 2019 application cycle will begin in May 2018.

Additionally, the MCP sponsors an annual postdoc mentoring award, meant to recognize an outstanding BWH postdoc (regardless of his/her affiliation with the MCP). We are excited to announce that this year's awardees will receive a \$1,000 travel grant in addition to the recognition of their work. Applications have closed for this year's nominations, but please consider nominating an excellent postdoc next year!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

MENTORING CIRCLES PROGRAM
<http://pda.bwh.harvard.edu/mentoring/mcp/>

POSTDOCTORAL MENTORING AWARD
<http://pda.bwh.harvard.edu/mentoring/mcp/postdoc-mentoring-award>

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AROUND TOWN

Clover LMA

A vegetarian-focused fast casual spot, with a rotating selection of beers on tap. Great for those late nights in lab, as they are open until 11:30 pm on weeknights!
360 Longwood Ave

Boston Road Runners Races

Use code BWHPDA to receive discounts on all Boston Road Runners races! Next race is the El Pelon 5K on June 10. Visit <https://bostonroadrunners.org/> for upcoming races.

Enterprise Rent a Car

Did you know you can save ~30% on local car rentals with BWH code GB2973? This is a great deal for those of you planning day trips to your favorite New England beach or hike.

What's your favorite BWH employee perk? Let us know [here!](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

MCP Year End Celebration Event

Network over wine and cheese with other postdocs and alumni. All postdocs are welcome!

Thursday, May 31, 4-6 pm
Zinner Breakout Room

[Click here to register](#)

Run Club

Join 20x BWH Running Buffer for a short run along the muddy river. No experience necessary!

Every Thursday @5pm

Contact

Jessica Hall jhall@research.bwh.harvard.edu

Check our [calendar](#) for updates

PHOTO CONTEST



Where was this photo taken?
Hint: This is where BWH all began. First two postdocs to get it right win a prize! Submit your answers to aogawa-wong@bwh.harvard.edu

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