Celebrating Postdocs: National Postdoc Appreciation Week
Joseph Bernstein

National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW) is a premier NPA event held annually to celebrate postdocs and their fundamental contributions to the global research effort. On September 23, 2010, at 4:30 PM EDT, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H. Res. 1545, officially recognizing NPAW as the week beginning the third Monday of September annually. Last fall, NPAW events were held in 31 U.S. states plus Canada at 87 institutions encompassing a total of 141 events. As this year's NPAW draws near, you might be thinking “What about holding an NPAW event at my home institution?” NPAW events take on a wide variety of formats. Listed below are some examples of ways to participate in the 2011 NPAW.

Example 1: Short on funding but rich in enthusiasm? Many postdoc-driven events are possible! Consider having a series of research talks by postdocs during the NPAW, continued on page 2.

Implementation of an Administrative Fellowship to Enhance Career & Professional Development
Joerg Schlatterer and Victoria Freedman

Career development and professional (CPD) training are essential components of the graduate education process, enabling graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to be prepared for and successfully compete for both academic and nonacademic jobs. However, in large institutions the Career Office needs to serve multiple constituencies (sciences, humanities), while smaller institutions may not have a dedicated Career Office. The Albert Einstein College of Medicine (Bronx, NY), where nearly 400 postdocs and 350 PhD and MD/PhD students receive their training, fits the latter category. Therefore, in order to organize and centralize the career development activities specifically devoted to the needs of the biomedical graduate students and postdocs, an administrative fellowship was created within and funded by the Graduate Division (School) of Biomedical Sciences.

The administrative fellowship, a two-year appointment overseen by the Associate Dean, has two major goals. One of these is to develop organized career-advising activities and resources for graduate students and postdocs. The administrative fellowship will facilitate the development of a strong CPD program in a timely manner without the financial burden of setting up a new dedicated office. The other goal is to provide a postdoc or faculty member CPD, continued on page 10.
week advertised across your institution. Such an event will give postdocs a great opportunity to hone their presentation skills and network with people from other departments/divisions. Also consider festivities on the lighter side, such as a potluck dinner, movie nights, or a coordinated visit to a local sporting event.

Example 2: With some modest support from your home institution, other crowd-pleasing events are possible, such as pizza lunches held in conjunction with seminars, workshops, and panel discussions. These may include activities such as outside guest research talks, instruction on resume writing, interviewing and negotiation skills, round-table collaboration discussions, etc.

Example 3: With increasing institutional support, celebrations on a grander scale become possible. For example, consider a city-level or regional postdoctoral research symposium complete with talks, posters, coffee breaks, and formal meals. Other large scale celebration ideas include a career fair complete with hiring representatives across a range of sectors and industries (it’s not too early to starting thinking about NPAW 2012!). After all, a postdoc’s tenure is temporary by definition; what better way to celebrate a postdoc than to enhance her/his opportunity to land that open-ended job?

For further inspiration, please check out the NPAW toolkit and a list of past and future events: http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/meetings-and-events/appreciation.

Whatever kind of activity is held, remember that explicitly tying the event to the celebration of postdocs is the key characteristic of all NPAW celebrations. Given the “NPAW” name, I am sure it will come as no shock that making postdocs feel appreciated is what NPAW is all about. While funding helps, money is not the main ingredient of a successful NPAW event. The crucial elements are passion, enthusiasm, and creativity, so who better than postdocs and postdoc program officers to lead the charge? If you have any comments or suggestions, please e-mail me at jbernst@gmail.com.

Joseph Bernstein, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Argonne National Laboratory and Chair of the NPA Outreach Committee.
Entrepreneurial Postdocs Start Association of Industry-Minded Stanford Professionals (AIMS)

Irfan Ali-Khan, Stéphane Boutet, and Navaline Quach

While two-thirds of incoming Stanford postdoctoral scholars intend to pursue a career in academia, less than one-third of these scholars actually end up obtaining an academic position. In addition to increased competitiveness of the academic job market, this shift in career path may be explained by increased awareness about exciting careers beyond the classic academic field. The innovative nature of fundamental research, the myriad of applications it can produce, and exposure to the Silicon Valley entrepreneurial environment have influenced postdocs to consider alternative career options, one of which includes making a transition from science to business in order to transform research ideas into business ventures.

The Association of Industry-Minded Stanford Professionals (AIMS) was founded in August 2010 by three postdocs – Irfan Ali-Khan, PhD; Stéphane Boutet, PhD; and Navaline Quach, PhD – who recruited additional members to create the AIMS leadership team: Vice President of Mentoring Pushkar Joshi, PhD; Michael Kertesz, PhD; Arno Kourula, PhD; Mambi Madzivire, PhD; Jordan Plews, PhD; Hyejun Ra, PhD; Shiming Xu, PhD; Keren Ziv, PhD; Webmaster Andrew Razgulin, PhD; and Professional Communications Coach Mary Etta Eaton, MS. AIMS is the first postdoc-entrepreneur association at Stanford and has organized ten monthly events to date, providing education, networking, and mentoring opportunities to postdocs who wish to pursue a career in industry, with a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship.

In just under a year, AIMS has organized a wide spectrum of events. With nearly 2,000 Stanford postdocs, of whom 50 to 100 attend AIMS events on a regular basis, the group estimates that a non-negligible proportion of Stanford postdocs are interested in entrepreneurship and envision creating their own start-up.

While AIMS seminars are open to the public and attract on average 120 registrants per event, AIMS small workshops are limited to 25 selected applicants and provide mentorship opportunities from successful Silicon Valley entrepreneurs and venture capitalists (VC). AIMS recent speakers have included Tim Draper, MBA (Founder of the VC firm Draper Fisher Jurvetson), and Konstantin Guericke, MS (Co-Founder of LinkedIn). Deliberately, almost half of AIMS speakers are former postdocs – including Stephen Fodor, PhD (Founder of Affymetrix), and Christopher and Pamela Contag, PhD (Co-Founders of the bio-imaging company Xenogen) – providing key insights into the advantages and challenges faced by scientists who transition from academia to business.

In June, AIMS successfully organized a pilot entrepreneur-challenge, in which three Stanford postdocs presented their science-based business ideas to a panel of investors. In order to further bridge the chasm between science and business, AIMS will be hosting Peter Reiss, PhD, Professor of Economics at the Stanford Graduate School of Business (GSB) and co-Director of the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies (CES), who will present GSB programs that promote innovation and entrepreneurship for which postdocs can apply.

AIMS, continued on page 4
The success of AIMS relies on partnership with the School of Medicine Career Center as well as sponsorship from the Stanford Career Development Center, the Office of Technology Licensing, the BioX-Program, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) and local VC firms. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, directed by Rania Sanford, EdD, has been particularly supportive of the AIMS initiative by communicating AIMS’ efforts to the Dean of Stanford School of Medicine, Philip Pizzo, MD, and by informing Stanford postdocs about AIMS events. In April 2010, Dean Pizzo indicated the importance of informing postdocs about non-academic careers. He also applauded the AIMS initiative in the March 2011 Dean’s Newsletter, voicing support for this postdoc-initiated program.

Irfan Ali-Khan, PhD; Stéphane Boutet, PhD; and Navaline Quach, PhD; are Postdoctoral Researchers at Stanford School of Medicine and Co-Founders of AIMS.

Christopher Contag, PhD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Microbiology, and Immunology at Stanford, and his wife Pamela Contag, PhD, are former Stanford Postdocs and Co-Founders of Xenogen.

HOW ARE YOU CELEBRATING?

National Postdoc Appreciation Week
Sept. 19–23, 2011

The NPA established National Postdoc Appreciation Week to create awareness of and recognize the contributions that postdocs make to U.S. research and discovery.

In 2010, postdocs were recognized at 141 events at 87 institutions in 31 U.S. states plus Canada. So far this year, 28 institutions and counting have told us about their 2011 events.

Tell us about your event!
Just send an e-mail to contact@nationalpostdoc.org.

Read more at http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/meetings-and-events/appreciation
The postdoctoral years often coincide with the typical years of family formation. According to the Sigma Xi Postdoc Survey, most postdocs are aged between 30 and 35, most are married or partnered, and approximately a third have children. For women planning to have children during their postdoc, maternity leave planning can present an array of complexities due to the postdoctoral position’s temporary nature and the variety of funding sources. This article is an introduction to maternity leave for postdocs, providing some initial guidance on steps a postdoc can take to find the information that may apply to her situation at her institution.

Maternity Timeline. Pregnant postdocs should start planning for their pregnancy and maternity leave as soon as possible, regardless of when they decide to declare their pregnancy to their supervisor and colleagues. Some early considerations are researching and enrolling in any applicable benefits, such as health insurance and short-term disability (which may require enrollment before conception). It is also critical to review any health and safety hazards presented by her research, which in some cases can be most acute during the first trimester of pregnancy. Pregnant postdocs should consult their doctor and institutional safety officers, who may be able to consult confidentially before a pregnancy is officially declared. Other timing considerations are travel restrictions late in the pregnancy and allowing sufficient time for any preparations needed for work accommodations during pregnancy and/or maternity leave.

Pregnancy as a Disability. Federal law protects pregnant employees from discrimination, stating that employers must treat pregnancy as any other disability. In particular, Title IX protects both students and employees, and therefore postdocs, at federally-funded institutions from pregnancy discrimination, stating that these individuals are entitled to at least unpaid, job-protected maternity leave for a “reasonable” amount of time. Therefore, postdocs are entitled to modified work duties during pregnancy and time off, without working, for delivery and recovery. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) also provides for up to 12 work weeks of unpaid maternity leave for employees; however, some postdocs may not be eligible. For additional information on a postdoc’s basic right to maternity leave, please consult http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/publications/family-resources/551-family-resources and references therein.

Paid Maternity Leave. Pregnant postdocs will have different options for paid maternity leave. Some options may include:

- **Before you conceive**: Become familiar with your institution’s benefits and leave policies and make sure you are officially enrolled in any insurance benefits. Conduct a workplace hazard review.
- **7-9 months before leave**: Congratulations! You’re expecting! Review your leave options and begin planning. Discuss leave with your supervisor. Gather necessary paperwork for maternity leave and begin filling out forms. You may need your doctor’s signature.
- **4-5 months before leave**: Turn in paperwork for maternity leave.
- **2-3 months before leave**: Don’t forget to add your new dependent to your health/dental insurance policies.
- **Beginning of Leave**: The common misconception that being on maternity leave means you have more time to work.
- **1-2 months post-partum**: Maternity leave would be a good time to write your manuscript.

Suggested timeline for maternity planning.
Families, continued from page 5

nity leave depending on their institution’s usual practice, their institutional appointment classification (e.g., employee, trainee, fellow, etc.), and any applicable policies dictated by their source of funding. At a minimum, postdoc women may be able to cobble together various paid leave benefits such as vacation or annual leave, sick leave, and/or short-term disability benefits. In addition, some institutions may offer an explicit paid maternity leave program. Postdocs need to check with their institution’s postdoctoral or human resources representative about the availability of these types of benefits and their individual eligibility.

Postdocs funded on individual fellowships may have specific leave provisions dictated by their funding source, so she should also check with her cognizant funding official.

More Information. In all cases, postdocs should find out about the benefits and policies that apply to their specific situation. Some places to find additional institutional information are: an office of postdoctoral affairs; office of human resources; employee assistance program; ombudsman; postdoctoral supervisor or PI; department chair; postdoc or employee handbook; women’s resource center; and Title IX officer.

Kathleen Flint Ehm, PhD, is the NPA ADVANCE Project Manager, managing the NPA’s National Science Foundation-funded project to promote promising practices that aid women to make the postdoc-to-faculty transition. Amelia Linnemann, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

These resources were developed as part of NPA ADVANCE. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

The San Francisco Local Host Committee is planning some great pre- and post-meeting events*

- Architectural walking tours
- Tours of UC Berkeley, UC San Francisco and Stanford University
- “Duck,” Cable Car, and Boat Tours
- “Beach Blanket Babylon”
- Tours of Muir Woods
- And more!

Details to appear on the NPA Web site soon!

*There will be an additional cost to participate in some of these events.
The Importance of Citation

Adam Frank and Brendan Delaney

Did you know that scientists and researchers can self-sponsor in applications for a Green Card? Two varieties of this particular type of application are called the EB-1A/Extraordinary Ability and EB-2/National Interest Waiver categories. Scientists and researchers who pursue this route to become a permanent resident should realize the importance of citations when the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews their credentials.

An important aspect of making a strong case is the extent to which applicants can show impact or influence within their field. While research accomplishment and contribution can be demonstrated through the number of publications and presentations, a common way to measure the importance and impact of research is the frequency in which the work is cited. In evaluating the evidence and documentation in permanent residence applications, USCIS can easily recognize the extent of a publication and presentation record. While taking into consideration the entire body of evidence that applicants provide, USCIS perceives a researcher’s citation count as evidence of a broader level of recognition throughout the respective scientific field.

In fields that are less research-oriented (e.g., engineering), a publication record may not garner a high number of citations. In this case, professionals need to find other ways to convey to USCIS an applicant’s impact within the field. For example, show how others have utilized or implemented their work or provide other objective evidence to demonstrate that a low number of citations does not indicate lack of impact in that particular field.

However, for those applicants whose work, ongoing research projects, and findings lead to peer-reviewed articles, a high number of citations is a strong indication (in the eyes of many USCIS officers) that the work is well recognized and therefore can be seen as having an important impact upon the field. This article merely serves as a brief overview of this aspect of the Green Card process; any clarification or questions should be directed to a qualified immigration attorney.

H-1B Update: As of July 11, 2011 USCIS has received 19,000 H-1B regular cap (of 65,000 available), and 12,200 Master’s exemption (of 20,000 available) petitions.

Adam Frank, Esq., and Brendan Delaney, Esq., are at the law firm of Leavy, Frank & Delaney, LLC (www.leavyfrank.com), which specializes in immigration law. A longtime friend of the NPA, the firm conducts legal seminars for international post-docs on behalf of the NPA.
Teaching Postdoctoral Fellowships—More than Just a Trend

LaShauna M. Connell

Over the past decade the administration of teaching postdoctoral fellowships has nearly tripled in number. As faculty positions become more competitive and difficult to obtain, postdoctoral scholars are looking for ways to put themselves ahead of the competition. Today many traditional research-only postdocs receive part-time teaching positions at local two- or four-year colleges. Institutions also partner with a number of organizations aimed at enhancing teaching and curriculum development.

The National Institutes of Health-funded Institutional Research and Academic Career Development Award (IRACDA), launched in 1998, supports postdoctoral teaching programs at a number of institutions, including Emory University, Tufts, University of Pennsylvania, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Northwestern University. There are now eighteen IRACDA programs nationwide that provide research and teaching experiences. These programs partner with minority-serving institutions to help mentor and encourage underrepresented minorities to go into science careers: http://www.nigms.nih.gov/Training/CareerDev/MOREInstRes.htm.

Postdocs feel that these programs offer advantages for those pursuing academic careers. While conducting research, trainees are also exposed to faculty member obligations: postdocs learn course design, classroom and lab management, and are engaged in the department. Trainees in a teaching program also mentor undergraduates, which may be considered the most valuable experience gained from the program. Importantly, many of the teaching program alumni have successfully found faculty positions at competitive colleges throughout the nation and have published in top journals, thus proving that these programs can provide effective outcomes.

A postdoc survey conducted by Sigma Xi showed that more than 40 percent of science postdocs have an interest in learning how to teach. Yet 64 percent of science postdocs report having received no training on how to teach, and a mere 5 percent have attended workshops or done formal coursework on teaching skills. A number of organizations and universities are addressing this issue by providing programs that support teaching and mentoring skills at the postdoctoral level. More work is needed to help promote their value and to convince funders to allow postdocs on research grants to pursue such professional development without penalty.

LaShauna Myers Connell is the Recruitment and Diversity Coordinator at The University of Pennsylvania Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs and is a NPA Diversity Officer.

NPA Member Round-Up

Thank you to the following Sustaining Members that have joined or renewed their membership since the last issue of The POSTDOCket. You can find a complete list of the NPA’s Sustaining Members on our Web site at http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/membership/npa-sustaining-members.

NEW
Welcome to the NPA!
- Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard
- University of New Mexico
- University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
- Vaccine & Gene Therapy Institute, FL

RENEWED
Thank you for your continued support!
- Albert Einstein College of Medicine
- American Physiological Society
- American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center
- Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
- Columbia University
- Drexel University College of Medicine
- Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
- Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
- Harvard University
- H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute
- Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences
- McMaster University
- National Center for Atmospheric Research
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS/NIH)
- North Carolina State University
- Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research, Inc.
- Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences
- Oregon State University
- Salk Institute
- Stanford University
- The University of Texas at Austin
- University of California, San Francisco
- University of Massachusetts Medical School
- Virginia Tech University
- Wadsworth Center/NYSDOH
- Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Postdoctoral scholars are primary contributors to research innovation. Most academic research institutions, however, do not provide the business training that enables them to transform research ideas into start-ups. The Program in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (PRIE), launched last January at the Stanford Graduate School of Business (GSB), provides postdocs at Stanford University a unique opportunity to receive formal business training. Dean Garth Saloner, PhD; Director Peter Reiss, PhD; and Associate Director Aimee Slobin, MS, from the GSB initiated this 4-month evening program to teach aspiring entrepreneurs without a business degree the fundamentals of business and the process of venture creation.

The inaugural Class of 2011 was composed of 62 participants, including 18 postdocs. Approximately half of the participants were Stanford affiliates (master's and PhD students, postdocs, faculty, and MDs), while the other half were Silicon Valley engineers, scientists, and executives. At this time, the PRIE program participation is limited to Stanford University graduate students and professionals in the San Francisco Bay area. Postdocs from other institutions who are interested in entrepreneurship and do not have access to business training at their institutions can apply for the Summer Institute for Entrepreneurship (SIE), a month-long full-time program at the GSB with content similar to PRIE. This year, the 96 SIE participants included 17 postdocs from different institutions.

This initiative can truly benefit postdocs who envision making a career transition from science to business. Program participants can take advantage of a curriculum that balances business fundamentals with practical skills. Core business courses include:

- accounting;
- business models;
- finance;
- marketing;
- operations;
- product market-fit; and
- sales management.

Practical skills can be developed in courses in design thinking, negotiation, public speaking, leadership, and team building.

A significant component of the program is dedicated to learning how to build a new venture. Working in teams, participants obtain real-world experience writing business proposals, consulting with venture capitalists (VC), and presenting business plans to Silicon Valley angel investors. Certainly, one of the best aspects of PRIE is the opportunity to acquire basic business knowledge and learn how to prepare a business presentation from scratch. Another important part of the learning experience is the professional and social networks that each participant builds over the program through interactions with investors, entrepreneurs, and other program participants.

Further, when creating or joining a startup, it is indispensable for scientists to understand the commercialization aspect to make proper strategic decisions and show credibility when pitching ideas to investors. Postdocs have a number of transferable skills that can be leveraged to be successful in a business environment. For example, similarities exist between writing grant proposals and business plans, making scientific presentations and VC pitches, and conducting a scientific literature search and market research. Postdocs are also well prepared to deal with failure (such as grant proposal or publication rejections), a skill characterizing successful entrepreneurs.

Thanks to their cutting-edge research activities, postdocs can position themselves as entrepreneurs who can lead technology-driven innovation, if provided with the training to understand the business world. In the future, the hope is that similar initiatives can be developed at other universities, so that all entrepreneurial postdocs can access the business training that will help them leverage their scientific expertise and become successful entrepreneurs.

Resources:
PRIE: http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/prie/
SIE: http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/sie/

Navaline Quach, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Stanford University School of Medicine, a Co-Founder of the Association of Industry-Minded Stanford Professionals (AIMS), a Fellow of the Program in Innovation and Entrepreneurship 2011, and a Member of the NPA Advocacy Committee.
CPD, continued from page 1

an opportunity to attain administrative experience in higher education. In this capacity, the fellow will gain valuable insight into higher education administration and will receive formal recognition for his/her administrative accomplishments.

This unique fellowship was officially instituted at Einstein in 2010 and was awarded to a member of the Einstein Postdoctoral Association (EPA) who was already actively implementing career and skill development-related events. The appointment of the administrative fellow has encouraged rapid expansion of the CPD program. Major accomplishments to date include:

• a detailed survey (to be repeated annually) to identify the needs of graduate students and postdocs;

• bi-monthly “clinics” for personalized review of CVs and resumes;

• a program of seminars and information sessions to highlight career opportunities in academic and non-academic scientific settings; and

• workshops, panel discussions, and networking events to enhance the development of professional skills.

In the next year, further growth in the program is anticipated by expanding the professional skills development repertoire (e.g., networking, interview skills, and oral and written presentations). There are also plans to implement an Einstein alumni mentoring network and collaborate with local institutions to enhance the career development offerings for the graduate student and postdoctoral community.

The success of this administrative fellowship suggests that it may provide a model for other institutions seeking to develop a vigorous CPD program for their graduate students and postdocs.

Joerg Schlatterer, PhD, is an instructor in the Department of Biochemistry and is an Administrative Fellow in the Graduate Division at Einstein. Victoria Freedman, PhD, is the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Biomedical Sciences and Assistant Professor in the Department for Microbiology and Immunology at Einstein.
NPA Committee Quarterly Reports

The following section is devoted to summarizing the vast array of activities underway within each of the four NPA Committees of the Membership – Advocacy, Meetings, Outreach, and Resource Development. If you are interested in gaining professional experience in postdoc issues at the national level, please contact a Committee Leader directly. We seek interested and dedicated individuals who are willing to volunteer 3–10 hours/month. A comprehensive list of NPA Committee leaders can be found on the NPA Web site (http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/about-the-npa/our-leadership-a-governance/committees-officers/committee-leaders-a-officers).

Advocacy Committee
Rashada Alexander and Cory Blaiss
In the past quarter, the Advocacy Committee (AdCom) experienced a change in the Vice Chair leadership position: Rashada Alexander stepped down after serving two years as Vice Chair. The committee and the NPA very much appreciate her efforts and leadership skills that led to the committee’s development/growth. AdCom is pleased to announce that Cory Blaiss, PhD, was appointed the new Vice Chair. For almost two years, Dr. Blaiss has been a very active member of the committee, leading multiple workgroups on specific tasks. She is currently an Assistant Research Scientist at Ernest Gallo Clinic and Research Center, Emeryville, CA and previously was a postdoctoral scholar at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX.

AdCom has been advocating for an increase in overall National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding and a 4% increase in National Research Service Award (NRSA) stipends in an environment of contentious political debate regarding two competing Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 budget proposals. According to the Congressio-

nal Research Service, President Obama’s proposed budget requests a 2.4% increase over FY2010 levels in total NIH funding. In addition to the 2.5% increase in general funding for the NRSA program, this budget proposal also contains a specific request to increase NRSA stipends by 4%.

In contrast, the budget proposed by Congressman Paul Ryan, Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on the Budget, requests a 13.5% cut in overall NIH funding compared to current levels. This budget further proposes that NIH funding remain frozen at the reduced level until FY2016. To prevent significant funding cuts for institutes such as the NIH and NSF, consequently affecting postdocs across the country, AdCom encourages all postdocs and their mentors to contact their Congressional representatives to express their support for an increase in NIH funding: http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/policy/briefing-room/stipends/2011stipends.

If the topics discussed above interest you, or if you have ideas to share with AdCom, please feel free to contact Juliet Moncaster (Chair) or Cory Blaiss (Vice Chair).

Juliet Moncaster, PhD, is a Senior Postdoctoral Associate at Boston University School of Medicine and Chair of the NPA Advocacy Committee. Cory Blaiss, PhD, is an Assistant Research Scientist at Ernest Gallo Clinic and Research Center, Emeryville, CA and Vice Chair of the NPA Advocacy Committee.

Meetings Committee
Schaun Korff
Summer is here and volunteers on the Meetings Committee are hard at work to make the NPA 10th Annual Meeting a magnificent success. The meeting will be held in San Francisco from March 16 – 18, 2012, at the impressive Sir Francis Drake Hotel. During the past few months, the Meetings Committee has completed its review of the 2011 meeting, and we are including a number of your suggestions in the development of the 2012 meeting. To expedite planning and make sure we can implement as many of your ideas as possible, the Call for Workshops has already been published: http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/no-modules/535-2012-workshop-proposals.

In short, a workshop is a brief intensive course where people meet to concentrate on a defined area of concern or interest, emphasizing interaction and exchange of information among participants. The NPA values participatory workshops that maximize group discussion and promote problem-solving. If you plan to submit a proposal, your workshop should be designed to provide deliverable learning objectives for participants to enhance the implementation of new ideas, concepts, and programs at their home institutions. Also, be sure to keep an eye out for the announcement of our Keynote and Plenary speakers. This year’s lineup is exciting, and we look forward to sharing more about our program later this year!

In addition to planning a memorable meeting that will further the mission and goals of the NPA, the meeting will also serve as the showcase event of the NPA. Attendees will get the opportunity to attend great plenary sessions, participate in educational workshops, and build a network of new colleagues and friends. Since the meeting will be held in the bustling city of San Francisco, please come a day early or stay a day after the meeting; we plan to organize tours and special events that fit every budget and cater to different tastes. More details of everything being planned for next March will be available in the coming weeks.

Schaun Korff, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Genetics and Tumor Cell Biology at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital and is Chair of the NPA Meetings Committee.

Outreach Committee
Joseph Bernstein
The major focus of the Outreach Committee has been National Postdoc Appre-

Committees, continued on page 12.
State of the NPA
Zoe Fonseca-Kelly

Dear NPA Membership:

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on an important and exciting taskforce that has been established by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In June, myself and our Executive Director, Cathee Johnson Phillips, presented on behalf of the NPA at a meeting of a new NIH working group established to examine the future of the biomedical research workforce. The NIH asked us for advice and feedback on several key areas. Regarding the size of any future workforce, we deferred to the economists, and the NPA eagerly waits to hear what the economists might predict and suggest given the current economic climate. They also asked us what types of positions should be supported going forward that would facilitate successful career paths for all postdoctoral scholars. We spoke about continued support on all levels of postdoctoral positions, but we also suggested increasing the number of professional scientist positions. These types of positions would give scientists the opportunity to remain in the lab doing bench science, establish a professional career track, and become a valuable asset and resource to laboratories, without the pressure of looking for independent funding. We also discussed the importance of increasing postdoctoral stipends and increasing funding for all types of career options, from independent bench research to training for careers outside of the laboratory. The NPA also highlighted the importance of appropriate training and mentoring for postdocs and an instigation of various checkpoints to assist individuals on to appropriate career tracks at critical points in their training. A culture shift is urgently needed to fully embrace all types of career possibilities for young scientists – their expertise is vital to multiple areas of the economy, ranging from teaching to advising on scientific policy to liaisons between the public and the scientific community. Lastly, we gave our “top 3” suggestions to the committee where we again highlighted the absolute necessity for complete data collection on the current postdoctoral workforce, the need for fair compensation and benefits for all postdocs, and a shift in training goals for all parties, including a reexamination of what constitutes a successful biomedical career.

For further information, see: http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/no-modules/549-biomedical-presentation. We look forward to hearing the findings and recommendations from this committee and sharing them with our membership.

Finally, I would like to remind you that the ballots will open in September for the election of candidates to the Board of Directors. Please take the time to review the candidates and cast your vote!

Zoe Fonseca-Kelly is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania and Chair of the NPA Board of Directors.

NPA in the News
Robert Barrett

NPA Executive Director Cathee Johnson-Phillips quoted in “Recovering from Postdoc Mistakes”

NPA noted in “Postdoctoral training: Time for change”

Committees, continued from page 11

Resource Development Committee
Pallavi Eswara and Sanjukta Chakraborty

These are exciting months for our committee as several of the projects that we started early this year are slowly coming to fruition. The Annual Review of the NPA Web site is a core task for our committee, and it has been successfully completed. The NPA Staff is currently working to improve the site based on our report.

We have completed a list of professional societies encompassing different research areas that NPA leaders and staff can use to reach out and form collaborations and develop partnerships. We are working on updating the list of grants and fellowships that do not have citizenship limits and allow international postdoctoral scholars to apply.

The NPA has several toolkits online that are accessible to all its members. We are in the process of revising and updating them and hope to complete the update soon. We are presently also concentrating our efforts on the career development section of the Web site and giving it a face-lift. We welcome any suggestions and/or comments. Please be on the lookout in the E-alerts or The POSTDOCket for a variety of articles on loan deferment, parental leave, conflict resolution, and dual career issues, amongst others.

If you are interested in contributing to a richer, stronger postdoctoral training experience, please consider volunteering for our committee. We are always looking for new members to help out and bring a fresh perspective! Please e-mail Pallavi at pxe10@psu.edu and Sanjukta at schakraborty@tamhsc.edu if you are interested in joining our committee.

Pallavi Eswara, MS, is a Postdoctoral Office Administrator and is Chair of the NPA Resource Development Committee. Sanjukta Chakraborty, PhD, is an AHA Postdoctoral Research Associate at Texas A&M Health Science Center and is Vice Chair of the NPA Resource Development Committee.
SAVE THE DATE!

The NPA 10th Annual Meeting
March 16–18, 2012

San Francisco, CA
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