PDA meeting, 26 May 2017

Present: Virginie, Lola, Brian, Hilary, Annie via phone

* Update from the group planning the Access to the Sea workshop (Virginie, Annie, Lola)
  + Have a full panel, Carriage House, June 15, 3-4pm followed by reception
  + Annie will send an email to invite everyone listing the 4 speakers – will send to JP students, all-postdocs list, as well
* Next coffee hours: Woods Hole Science Aquarium on June 23rd; Lola is asking the SEA Dean about getting on the Cramer
* Discussed postdoc involvement in the process to hire the new Dean of Academic Programs (replacement for Jim Yoder when he retires)
  + Noted that there is a JP student on the search committee but no postdoc, so the JP student has to represent feedback from survey responses for us
  + Though it is a long time between times when Deans are hired, we’d like to encourage the next Dean search to include a postdoc on the committee to facilitate feedback
  + Noted that many ideas for improving postdoc experience have come up during the postdoc lunches with the Dean candidates, and that we should be sure to follow up with whoever becomes the new Dean to encourage further conversation
  + We discussed that although Jim has an open door policy and is very welcoming when we do meet with him, we do not take enough advantage of that opportunity. One suggestion for the new Dean would be to have regular meetings (say 2-3 times per year) between the PDA and the Dean, as a way to make sure we are keeping good communication with the Dean.
* Plans for and issues/ideas to bring up at department mentoring chair meeting on June 2
  + Have each department representative present what their department is doing (and we note that we know that different departments are all doing different things)
  + Ask them about a process by which we could request funds for mentoring-related events
  + Suggest that this meeting between the mentoring committee chairs and the PDA become a regular (annual?) event, to improve communication between departments and between mentoring committees and postdocs
  + Discuss possibilities for idea sharing between departments, ways to make sure there are some common mentoring baselines in all departments, and ways to make sure that all postdocs understand the mentoring system in place for them from soon after time of arrival
* Discussion of having key professional development events (related to job search, proposal writing, etc.) to be planned by others outside the PDA
  + Important to make sure that these events are held regularly, not at whim of the decisions/diligence of each year’s PDA representatives
  + Discussed the idea of a “2nd Janet” to help with these things (acknowledging that Janet does a lot of this work but asking her to take on more is not reasonable) 🡪 note that some possible ideas would be to have the department mentoring chairs help plan these events, or to have the Dean (or an Associate Dean) take on some of that work
  + This would also reduce the event-planning work of the current PDA and enable us to work more on other things to improve postdoc experience (including some of the things that came up at Dean candidate lunches, making sure we are more visible so everyone knows who their representatives are, and finding ways to reach out to a wider contingent within the postdoc community, etc.)
* Outcome of WHOI Climate Survey and issues relevant to postdocs
  + Postdocs were binned with JP students and the (few) undergrads, so difficult to identify any postdoc-specific issues
  + Difficulty of access to the full survey report and to the video recording of the presentation means that few postdocs have seen these results, and we would prefer eased restrictions so that the results could be more broadly discussed
* Replacement for the PDA members who are leaving soon/have already left (we will miss you!)
  + Virginie will take over the treasurer/beer czar position from Lola for July
  + Kate Lowry will replace Lola as the PO representative
  + Annie will take Lola’s place on the International Committee for the next few months
  + Also need an AOP&E replacement for Brian (he has tried but no luck so far) and a G&G replacement for Prosper 🡪 ask Janet if she has ideas for who to ask
* Plans for summer picnic on July 13th
  + Hold it behind Redfield, on Eel Pond
  + Ask Janet to reserve a grill, and the location
  + Ask Jim Yoder if he wants to grill
  + Remember we have a lot of juice from last year
  + Will need to hold a June meeting to plan, likely without Hilary there (but need Janet)
* Survey to send out to help plan for fall job application workshop 🡪 Hilary will send out in June