

WHOI Postdoctoral Association

MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 8

Thursday, April 27, 2006

Clark 271

Committee members present:

Angela Dickens, Jed Goldstone, Nancy Grumet Prouty, Rowena Lohman, Luc Rainville, David Ralston and Tim Verslycke.

Other representatives present:

Janet Fields (Postdoctoral Coordinator/Academic Programs)

Jim Yoder (Vice President for Academic Programs)

1. Meeting opened by Luc

2. Report on National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) Annual Meeting (Janet and Angie)

The general impression of the meeting was that it was useful in providing resources on things other PDAs are doing and working on but that the scope and depth of the meeting were somewhat disappointing. (Angie's primary impression was that WHOI postdocs have it extremely well, as most postdocs seem to be a fairly downtrodden bunch.) The postdoctoral office pre-meeting addressed issues with international postdocs (taxes, ESL, etc.), compensation and benefits and developing a model office. The PDA pre-meeting dealt with forming and maintaining a PDA, making it "vibrant" and strategies for achieving institutional change. Other sessions centered on professional development workshops, developing individual development plans (IDP) and setting up structured mentoring. At the meeting, MIT invited WHOI postdocs to attend their career development programs, and Janet is looking into having WHOI reimburse people for travel to Cambridge to attend these programs.

3. PDA help with taxes?

We discussed whether the PDA could/should somehow help new and existing postdocs, particularly international postdocs, with tax issues. We will look into sending an email about a month before tax day as a reminder and with help and possibly bringing someone (a vita) in, in conjunction with the International Office, to give a tax seminar and advice. Additionally, Tim will look into whether we could assemble useful information and links on the PDA website.

4. Individual development plans (IDP)

WHOI has a draft plan for implementing IDPs, which would involve a postdoc and advisor formalizing their plans and expectations for the postdoctoral tenure. We plan to put this on the Education Council agenda for next month. We would like to go into that meeting with a revised version of the plan, based on the material that Jed already has and the new information Janet gleaned from the NPA meeting. The committee will revise this ourselves, send the revision out to postdocs for comment and then send it on to the Ed Council.

5. *Updates/suggestions from Jim Yoder*

- WHOI has a proposal in to NSF ADVANCE to look at the mentoring and attention that women get at WHOI.
- The Mellon Foundation wants to increase collaboration between liberal arts colleges and research institutions. Jim is looking into writing a proposal to add an optional 6 months of teaching to postdoctoral scholar positions. The PDA thought there would definitely be interest in that at WHOI.
- Jim will be pursuing setting up a career development seminar in the fall for students and postdocs, co-sponsored by the student alumni board, with about five people talking about their career paths and such.
- Caryn House: WHOI is trying to reach an agreement on how this house will be used, with the downstairs room probably being set aside for postdoc use, including yoga. There's good outdoor space at Caryn House available as well.
- 2-3 NSF Program Managers will be visiting WHOI for the July 10-13 Ocean Carbon Meeting, and Jim suggested (and the PDA concurred) that we try to get them to spend an hour with postdocs and students talking about the current situation at NSF.

6. *Increasing interaction with JP students*

We discussed ways to increase postdoc-student interaction at WHOI. We thought inviting students to most of our events would make the event size too unwieldy, so we'll look into holding some events explicitly for this purpose. One exciting possibility would be to have a "Data and Dine" event where postdocs show posters they've recently presented at meetings to students, postdocs and scientists, accompanied by some good food.

7. *June social event*

We'll plan a social event for June at the next meeting, probably inviting just postdocs, not students, due to space limitations. This will probably be sushi at Caryn House.

8. *PDA turnover*

Nancy's leaving soon, and Rowena and Luc aren't sure of their plans. We'll continue with the same system in place for replacing PDA committee members: the leaving person finds a replacement who will serve until the elections in the fall.

9. *Next meeting*

Tentatively during the first week of June, exact date yet to be determined.

10. *Meeting closed by Luc*

(Minutes recorded by Angie)