

Meeting minutes 07 April 2022

PDA meeting 07 April 2022

In attendance: Elaine, Yaamini, Svenja, Mike, Hannah, Janet, Maggi, (Tzu-Ting, later), cameo by Svenja's kid

Elaine is running the meeting, Hannah is taking notes

Called to order 16:03

What happened for the last event?

Yaamini and Maggi hosted; social, walk with drinks

Yaamini:

There weren't really any logistics since there weren't speakers

Postdocs were very excited about interaction and socializing

Even if future events aren't only social events, we should try to incorporate some interaction at the ends of things - people would probably really want that

Informal poll of those who showed up: monthly events would be good, monthly social things in particular

Maggi:

Timing of events survey - results came back right before this, and those also highlighted want/need for social stuff

Only logistics were related to getting hot drink carafes from Janet, and getting reimbursement via Unanet

Discussion of compensation for panelists we might bring in

How would we do honoraria for external people? Can we?

Janet thinks this is a bad idea to set a precedent for people at WHOI because they need this kind of line on their CV for promotions anyway - shouldn't start paying people since they're not asking

APO budget is tight this year

Giving a gift like a mug might be more appropriate, particularly since people need this kind of thing for their own career advancement

Some disagreement - feeling that we should provide honoraria for external people, at least, though perhaps not WHOI-internal people. Important to respect the time that people are basically donating to us. People might also decline to be on our panels (externally, in particular) if they aren't paid.

Appropriate to ask WHOI people to volunteer, but inviting outside people is different

Even for WHOI alumni? Maybe they have more of a willingness to give back to the WHOI community

and maybe that's appropriate.

But perhaps part of the point is that we don't just want WHOI people and alumni, particularly for events aimed at early career stuff - WHOI is pretty unique in terms of how all that works, so inside-only people would be missing a lot of perspectives

APO budget is due a month early; Janet isn't sure if we'll be able to budget for this anyway but she'll look into it

Janet emphasizes that even at other institutions this kind of panel participation is considered part of the job and something you need for your career. For speakers who are, like, speaker speakers (authors, etc, not just scientists), those would probably be paid (they wouldn't come unless they are being paid)

At other institutions honoraria are a thing, even for department seminars

There are some cases where WHOI gives "honoraria" but it's basically just travel costs for people who come here in person. Remote visitors don't incur those costs.

Path forward: make some more concrete plans about what we want to do, who we might want to invite, etc. and then come back to Janet to discuss. Janet emphasizes that we have a broad range of alumni (not just in WHOI-esque career paths) who we could potentially tap for free.

Upcoming events

April: supposedly Maggi/Yaamini workshop on short-term postdocs

May: supposedly Elaine/Hannah workshop/panel on startup, negotiations

Startup/negotiations event

We would like to bring in ECRs for this, for the kinds of perspectives we are interested in getting (ie. to have people who went through this recently, rather than decades ago)

This, in particular, makes honoraria an equity issue since these people are more likely to be women and people of color who have a lot more asks on their time etc - we would not generally be comfortable tapping our own networks to ask for participation in this for free

Janet: why not the other side of the negotiations equation? Also want more senior people to say what is and isn't a good ask

Yes, we could have both

We need to give Janet a short proposal of what we want to do/who we might want to bring in/what the goals of the thing are so she can bring it to others at APO to ask if we can have, say, \$200 for two external panelists given \$100 each. Need to do this soon because budget is due soon.

Budget requests are relevant not just for this May event but for the whole rest of the year, so we need to get thinking about that basically yesterday

We will write up some stuff on our plans for the year, why we want to pay honoraria, equity concerns, etc.

Note that anything that gets funding from APO needs a 2 week lead time on when it's announced, because postdocs need to have time to figure out their schedules (childcare, etc)

Janet notes that APO has done these kinds of panels (startup/negotiation) for basically forever, so we can always ask for help

APO's past events: they don't have old materials or whatever; probably just lists of previous speakers.

There is a list of old questions from these workshops on the google drive.

Janet notes that this event is not the same thing every year because things change.

Short-term postdoc event

Yaamini and Maggi will probably need to do this in May, not April, given their schedules

It will probably be an internal panelist event since it's focused on how postdoc scholars here can optimize their time, so no need for honoraria

Could have current/recent postdoc scholars, and maybe department mentoring committee members

Janet notes that APO is pushing to make 18-month scholar appointments 2-year appointments in the future

We could probably do something like a \$25 gift card for panelists as a thank-you gift - exhibit center, or wherever we like, really

Janet notes that there used to be a lunch-and-learn type thing for postdocs, monthly, BYO lunch? And that would've been the venue for this short-term postdoc type topic. More casual, with a discussion topic/discussion leaders. Could have a faculty member come if there was a topic they wanted outside input on. Would be something like "3rd wednesday of the month" recurring event

That kind of more casual/social discussion might be a nice way to do something like this short-term postdoc event.

Other things

Should we have a small/casual April event? Yes we should!

Either another sip and stroll, or a BYO lunch?

People were interested in talking but not so much strolling at the last one, so maybe a non-moving lunch would be better (though April is still cold, would have to have good weather)

Janet notes April 29th there is a potluck sponsored by the International Committee

On April 28th there will be a WCC CommuniTea on community building - WCC wants postdocs in particular to come for this discussion, so we will reach out on slack and via email

We will aim for the 25th for something social, someone (Svenja? Yaamini? I missed it) volunteered to send out an email about this

Sustainability stuff

Mike says sustainability committee wants to know if postdocs would like to sponsor/lead one of the beach cleanup days they do once a month

"sponsor/lead" here basically means are responsible for carrying trash bags for everyone down to the beach - not a monetary commitment or anything. Would also want to advertise to postdocs to have people show up.

June/July are the available months - we think it's the first thursday? Mike will reach out to Stephanie and confirm available dates

Could we invite summer undergrads (SSF, PEP)? Yes we could! A good kind of interaction to foster.

APO events with other groups of trainees

Janet: what would we think of APO hosting some kind of (outdoor in person) ice cream social with all of their sponsored groups (ie SSFs, PEP students, JP students, postdocs, GFD fellows) to all mingle and make connections?

We like this idea - some students/postdocs have already been talking about how we can make those mentorship connections. Midsummer, when everyone's here, some casual afternoon thing

Might be good to have a forced interaction component so people actually talk to people they don't know (Yaamini suggests this, Maggi seconds - silly bingo card game? Some kind of icebreaker, Yaamini and Maggi seem to have lots of ideas for this) (name tags might also be good since we've been remote for so long) (name tags might be good for basically all of our events, actually)

Future plans

We will circle back for planning a late may PDA meeting - Elaine will reach out in early May

Janet notes that if we do have an ECR proposal workshop (not currently planned/scheduled at all) we should be sure to include someone on the admin side to talk about the actual submission process, budgeting, etc. especially since most institutions don't have as much support for that part of the process as WHOI does. The admins here do a tremendous amount of work that we all very much appreciate.

Janet also suggests possibly doing a ship time workshop - how to plan for going to sea. NSF has chief scientist training cruises but many people don't get to go on those. Knowing how to plan that might be a useful workshop, especially since UNOLS hasn't restarted their chief scientist training cruises post-pandemic. We could probably get the UNOLS guy who ran that stuff to come talk to us since he has a house on the Cape?

Janet notes that we also have access to bringing in someone from DC, like WHOI's lobbyist Peter Hill, to talk about budgeting/funding at the federal level for science - another potential event idea.

Janet notes that it is fine to have repeating events every year, but it's also nice to have new events rotate in and out.

Janet notes that APO has for whatever reason been out of the loop on PDA event-running for the last few years, so she's throwing out ideas for things that APO hasn't run for a while but would like to have run sometime soon

Janet also notes that she doesn't need to be involved in everything we do. She has google drive access but doesn't like to poke around to preserve PDA autonomy

Janet notes that we're about due for an all-postdoc + APO meeting to ask questions and air grievances. This needs to be a yearly event.

After mentoring survey results are in, might be good to talk to department chairs, mentoring committee chairs, etc about the results - get a conversation started about best practices. This kind of re-evaluation hasn't been done in a while, Janet/APO wants this to happen so we can codify it to some extent (write something up that can go online)

Svenja notes that we should try to plan dates for all events sooner rather than later so that we don't end up having to push everything back

Meeting adjourned 15:00

Things to do

- All think about future events/budget needs, especially speaker honoraria, and get summaries and requests to Janet ASAP (in the next 2 weeks or less, it sounds like)
 - diversity/equity concerns that we could pitch to development for funding? And also just want to have on record for future budget years
- Yaamini and Maggi will talk offline about short-term postdoc strategies event planning (mid/late May?)
- Hannah and Elaine will talk offline about startup/negotiations event planning (after postdoc strategies event?)
- Mike will look into sustainability beach cleanup date
- Someone (Svenja? Yaamini? I couldn't tell who) will send email to set up a casual postdoc lunch meetup or something on April 25th
- All think about scheduling all-postdoc + APO meeting in the near future since it needs to be done once a year