

Meeting minutes 22 May 2023

In attendance: Donna, Mohammed, Nina, Hannah, Janet, Alex K (in person!), plus Alex P, Alice (remote)

Meeting commenced circa 1432

agenda (approx)

some general updates
discussion of seagrant proposal
schedule planning for future events
having a pizza lunch soon (via Janet)
reviving coffee hours and beer hours
mentoring needs and program improvements
other things??

updates

PDA website is updated with photos of our lovely faces! Thank you Alex K.
The site is not perfectly mobile-responsive. Alex is working on it.
We are applying our scientific reasoning skills to try and discern what the issue is with the sizes of photos on phone screens etc. Might be a table issue. Alex will talk to Dina Pandya about a separate menu display issue.

seagrant proposal

Donna and Mohammed submitted the proposal! It has been received. We would like to hear back very soon (May 26?)

Once we hear back we can plan accordingly for future activities (lunch and learn, workshops, etc)

Mohammed will keep us posted

updates on spring picnic from Alice

Janet's pizza lunch would probably serve this purpose.
we could also have a later-in-the-day social event maybe a month later?

pizza lunch

Janet's pizza lunch plan: somewhere outside, very casual. Pizza, maybe some salads or fruit salad, if you don't like the menu bring your own lunch.

There will be a meeting with program managers from OCB and postdocs/JP students in June. Tuesday 13 June in the evening? We want to not have the pizza lunch overlap too closely with this so people don't get event fatigue.

mentoring

we should do something about it, and try to get departments to change their programs to be uniform and also generally better

survey postdocs about their experiences and needs? (this has been done recently but results were not fully acted upon)

Best practices etc. All of this should be public, no reason to hide the information, and it should be available to prospective postdocs.

We should have a meeting with department mentoring chairs and peer-pressure them into trying to adhere to minimum best practices. Unlikely that we can really *make* them do anything but we can certainly encourage.

We have a survey from last year's PDA that Yaamini and Maggi constructed, all about postdocs' experiences with departmental mentoring programs. We should use this information. Alice has access to this but note that the mentoring surveys and results got stuck in the old google drive because the files are owned by Yaamini's and Maggi's google accounts. We will find a way to port this info to the shared drive (export/re-import)

Departmental mentors are great if you want to be a tenure-track academic scientist but often they don't have a lot to offer if you want to do something outside academia. External resources are the key here likely? Janet has been working on getting some MIT folks to run the annual non-academic jobs workshop that is supposed serve some of that purpose. We could also invite postdoc and/or JP alumni to come back for a panel discussion of some sort.

We can possibly use a WCC mentoring communi-tea that will supposedly happen in the near future to get some ideas/topics into the WHOI consciousness. Or can we get WCC to bring in a speaker on the subject? Will consider, and Hannah can bring to Sheri and Konrad (WCC chairs)

We should plan for some future meetings outside of just PDA meetings to talk about mentoring plans

Natalie Nevarez is working on a seminar series that might also be attached to some training from external sources on things like implicit bias. If there's a need for mentoring training maybe this is something we can approach Natalie about.

We note that postdoc mentoring is somewhat distinct, although all of WHOI could use some mentoring upgrades.

planning for events/scheduling

Typical plans: there is something on non-academic jobs that APO runs in early summer, academic jobs series that we (PDA) run in later summer, and the postdoc symposium (fall, hopefully October but last year November). There are other workshops/social events scheduled around that in some fashion.

There is a comprehensive list of workshops etc that Janet has compiled - google drive has 2011-2015, Janet has an updated version. We will all look at it and think about workshops that we want to maybe bring back or update.

APO dean interview are June 17ish-??

coffee and beer hours

rotating monthly coffee hour visiting labs. this will require a good bit of planning. Basically social field trips with coffee from coffee o (someone from the PDA picks up the coffee, we all somehow decide on where we want to visit and we/Janet work on setting up said visit)

Beer hours: used to be Fridays but we would prefer Thursday evenings (first thursday of the month) so we don't conflict with Landfall times. "An hour in which we will be happy" (and only that one hour, no more)

Both of these "hours" should be monthly-ish, alternate every two weeks? And potentially switch 10am/2pm so people with different schedules

We will all think about different labs/spaces that might be fun for coffee hours, and try to actually get this started soon. Beer hour will be easier to restart and we will do that quite soon.

tangents

MPC postdocs always used to be affiliated with BIO (or some other secondary department) so they had a larger department to be a part of. That sort of still happens but maybe not as much anymore?

fun facts

We learn from Janet that the postdoc lounge used to be a CT scanner lab so the walls are lead-lined and the HVAC is very good. In the event of nuclear war, the bathroom here is a good option for a fallout shelter

Also the TV here has satellite so you can watch European football here

The snacks in the postdoc lounge are pre-2020. Open bags of pretzels have been discarded but we left the tortilla chips, melba toast, and apple juice just for the vibes

The lounge still smells a little funky but not as bad as it used to be

to do

- Hannah will port mentoring survey info to the new google drive and send to everyone
- Donna will help us schedule a meeting to start talking about mentoring things/plans (not with mentoring committee chairs yet, but maybe start to ask them to give us info about their programs)
 - start gathering information on departmental mentoring programs?
- Mohammed will wait for seagrant to respond and then act accordingly
- all will look at the old workshop list and see what we might want to bring back into circulation
- plan for beer hour maybe 4pm June 1 Thursday
 - Alex P is beer czar and will work on This
- plan for pizza lunch June 6 (Janet)
- we will perhaps plan to meet again soon because we have way too much to talk about this month
 - Donna will send a scheduling survey, we will all answer it promptly (target June 5-8)

Meeting adjourned 1545-ish