

Meeting minutes 05 July 2023

In attendance: Donna, Hannah, Alice, Janet (zoom), Mohammed (zoom), Nina (zoom)

Donna is leading the meeting

Hannah is taking notes

Called to order circa 1104

Agenda

Events/workshops planning, general

Coffee hours

Beer hours

Welcoming new postdocs

Mentoring stuff

To do

- contact coffee hour contacts (Nina, Hannah)
 - send email to postdoc-official about coffee hours (Donna, to start)
 - Donna/Mohammed plan for ordering pizza for the scicomm workshop July 18 (and will get reimbursed for that from APO, via Janet)
 - Donna/Mohammed will send out info on tasks they need help with for July 18th workshop, other PDA members will sign up to help
 - Janet will plan to order drinks and paper goods from the Buttery for July 18th, estimating 40-50 attendees in person
 - Nina will draft a welcome email that we can use for new postdocs
 - Janet will start sending us info on new postdocs periodically (monthly, when we meet?)
 - Hannah will make sure everyone on the PDA has a way to actually read/understand the responses from Yaamini and Maggi's mentoring experiences survey
 - Hannah will re-send the mentorship experiences survey to all postdocs to see if we can get any new responses
 - we will all read those responses and think about what suggestions we want to bring to department chairs on standardizing/enhancing departmental mentoring
 - Janet/APO will start the process of asking dept mentoring chairs to write up/share their current practices
 - Donna will start planning for our next PDA meeting, in a month or so, when we can discuss mentoring and all other topics
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coffee hours

first one will be 2pm July 19th (Wednesday) with rare books! Donna and Mohammed are hosting this one. Donna will announce the date/time and the whole initiative, we will send update/reminder emails with the full schedule and subsequent dates

We are ready to send out emails to the next potential places and put dates on the calendar

Hannah will talk to John Collins about visiting OBSIC

Nina will email the other three contacts about dates for DSL, core lab, aquarium

Once we have dates, others of us (PDA) can sign up to host

Many thanks to Nina for getting this whole thing started and set up!

beer hours

There is one today! In the evening, quisset beach. If people stay long enough they might see the town fireworks that were postponed from yesterday

updates on lab demo/scicomm workshop

SeaGrant funded the initiative!

Professional development workshop has been announced for July 18th 2-5pm, Clark 507. 3-4 WHOI people as speakers on scicomm, one middle school teacher from Falmouth will also share perspective, and there will be some interactive activities with the speakers on communicating complex ideas in understandable ways. There will be snacks.

34 RSVPs already for the workshop (!)

Speakers are all secured and Donna and Mohammed have talked to them about what topics they will cover

Needs:

- figuring out food/drink options
- how does APO want to be involved?
- PDA volunteers for various organizing/running tasks?

Food/drink:

hope is that APO will help out? SeaGrant gave \$3300 instead of \$5k, complicated things with overhead vs participant support, so in the end most of the budget is supposed to go to supplies for labs to make lab demos. There may be a tiny bit of money for partially covering food and drinks but not maybe as much as will be needed. Mohammed has some random research \$ from APO that he is willing to use for this if APO allows it.

Pizza would be an easy option; plan is for food after the workshop (ie post 5pm) so it should be more food than just coffee and cookies. 40-50 people estimated, need about 15 pizzas estimating 3 slices per person on average and 8 slices per pizza. Let the pizza place know a few days in advance for timing/delivery, call in the order early. Remember to tip for delivery. Caterers are too expensive. Platters from a grocery store is another option if we want to set it up, but that is more work.

Pizzas around here are probably in the vicinity of \$20 a pie (or \$25 for fancy toppings) for a large.

Drinks from the buttery if we want seltzers/soda

Supreme pizza, Lobos, or Steves - all good options. Papa Gino's was also mentioned.

APO can pick up the tab for food and drinks (thank you, APO!)

Donna/Mohammed can order pizzas and get reimbursed via unanet

Janet can take care of ordering drinks, paper goods from the BATTERY

other logistics

Donna and Mohammed will circulate a list of tasks PDA members can sign up for and we will figure that out.

welcoming new postdocs

how should we do this better?

reactivate the introductions channel on slack?

can we get a list of new postdocs every month? Janet can try to give us this info, though it might not be super accurate depending on whether start dates shift.

Plan is to have a generic welcome email that is sent to everyone, rather than trying to personalize or do this by department. There are some previous year examples of email text for this.

The welcome will include general info on resources (like, pointing people to the PDA website) and tell people how to ask to join the slack, etc.

mentoring

There are responses from a survey of postdocs last year, on the topic of mentoring experiences with dept mentoring committees, advisors, and peer mentors. We want to look through this info and use it to guide the development of some minimum standards/best practices to share with departments, to try and equalize (and improve) mentoring across departments. APO does not currently provide much guidance to departments on mentoring; many departments consider annual merit reviews to be "mentoring."

Hope is to get depts, APO, and PDA in a room and get on the same page with respect to postdoc mentoring.

Depts are in some sense "required" to have mentoring committees and provide postdoc mentoring, but beyond that there is so far not much guidance or requirement for doing particular things or adhering to best practices. At the moment depts can do things however they choose (and they do, all in different ways), but APO wants to establish a minimum baseline for mentoring that depts will have to follow (though it has to be with buy-in? not clear to what level APO can actually require this, or if this all has to basically be by consensus/agreement with depts to abide by some group standards)

In 2010 there were some basic requirements/standards set up for merit review for postdocs. We want to do the same for postdoc mentoring.

In order to do this for postdoc mentoring, need to gather info about what postdocs need/want and what they are or are not getting from current mentoring structures (ie survey responses from last year). Also should draw on external sources of info on mentoring best practices, since we don't always actually know what we're missing or what constitutes good mentoring if we haven't had it.

There is a person in each department who is effectively the mentoring committee chair (though may have different titles in different departments), not the same person as the department chair

Note that the WCC is about to have a communi-tea on mentoring! So there will also be notes and info from the larger WHOI community on the topic after that (July 12th)

Ideally:

- dept mentoring chairs write up what their mentoring practices are and share that in advance
- PDA shares summarized survey results, needs that are or are not fulfilled
- APO brings everyone to the table with some info on best practices from external sources/the literature
- we all have a meeting, identify positive things that should form a baseline, and then depts revise their practices based on that
- APO/PDA put together a website that describes the minimum mentoring practices that are in place so incoming postdocs can see what they can expect, along with some info on departmental practices that differ across the institution

Meeting adjourned circa 1215