

*Making your Postdoctoral
Training Work for You*

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- B.S. - Penn State (2000-2004)
 - Animal Biosciences/Microbiology
 - McNair scholar – Allergic Asthma
- Ph.D. - Rutgers University (2005-2011)
 - Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences
 - Founder & President of the Animal Sciences Graduate Student Organization
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- Postdoc - University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute
The Women's Cancer Research Center (2011-Present)
 - Breast cancer research with a focus in epigenetics
 - The University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association
 - Chair of Outreach

Outline

- What is a Postdoctoral Scholar?
- How to ensure success
 - Passion & Plan
 - Publication
 - Funding
 - Networking
- Conclusions

What Does the U.S. Postdoctorate Look Like?

- “Postdocs have become **indispensable to the science and engineering enterprise**, performing a **substantial portion of the nation’s research** in every setting.”
 - National Academies Report
- The NSF estimates that according to science and engineering indicators, there are somewhere between **43,000 and 89,000 postdocs** in the United States.

Changes and Challenges

- Originally - short training position and more rare.
- The postdoctoral position became more abundant and open-ended
 - “permanent postdoc”
- Capped the amount of time an individual can be a postdoc

- 60% International postdocs, here on temporary visas
- The “average” postdoc is in their 30’ s and married. Many have children.
- In spite of holding a Ph.D., the median salary of postdoctoral scholars is \$38,000 a year—far below the median wage of individuals who hold bachelor’ s degrees.

- Where do scholars go after the postdoc?
 - 40% find careers in business/industry;
 - 9 % in government;
 - 49 % in education (includes all positions in education, administrative, tenure-track, and other).

Ensuring Success

- Passion
 - Love you work & have fun!
- Have a Plan
- Publish
- Obtain Funding
- Network

Getting the Most Out of Your Training

Develop a Plan

*Your **Goals** During the Postdoc:*

- Learn specific skills/techniques/equipment?
- Teaching and/or Mentoring students?
- Apply for individual funding?
- Preparing for a non-academic career?

Research Area:

- Do I want to continue research in my current subject area?
- In what areas of research do I **WANT** to be?
- In what areas of research am I **WILLING** to be?
- What areas of research do I want to **AVOID**?

Publish

- Numbers count!
- Ask to write a review
- Co-author papers and help each other out!

Why do Postdocs *Need* Funding?

- Attitude not to have:
 - The Pi has the money to pay me so why do the extra work?
- Your time as a postdoc is your time to prove yourself!
 - Need to make yourself marketable – better your CV
 - Competing for your own money and earning it!
- Practice Writing
- Makes you think about your work

How Do I Find Funding?

- Institutional organizations can help
 - PDA seminars
 - University funding counselors
- Web searching on your own
 - Grants.gov
 - www.cos.com
 - Foundationcenter.org
 - Sign up for alerts when funding opportunities are announced
- Government Agencies
- Private Foundations
 - American Heart Association, Susan G. Komen etc.

Networking

- Every conference
 - business card & elevator talk
 - Poster > Talk
 - Ask Questions! Make yourself visible!
 - Start at Lab meeting and Journal club – Then Departmental Retreat – Then National Meetings!
- Invited speakers:
 - Suggest a speaker you're interested in for your department
 - Have lunch with any invited speaker whose field you may be interested in.
- Cold e-mails!
 - Feel like you're always reading a certain investigator's papers? Are you interested in particular techniques? E-mail them!

Continually Market Yourself!
Even if you are not yet on the job market.

Join the NPA



Mission:

- Enhance the quality of the postdoctoral experience in the U.S.
- A leadership role in addressing the many issues confronting the postdoctoral community that are national in scope and requiring action beyond the local level.
- <http://nationalpostdoc.org/membership-6/join-us>

Benefits of Membership:

- **Subscriptions** to the NPA E-Alerts, our periodic e-mail announcement, and the POSTDOCKET, our quarterly newsletter;
- **Reduced registration fees** to meetings;
- **Discounts** on selected products and services;
- **Leadership and professional development opportunities**
- **Our commitment to be your national voice on postdoctoral issues;**

Conclusions

- A postdoctoral position is prestigious and EARNED!
- Have Passion and a Plan!
- Publish – First & co-authors
- Get Funding
- Network