

WHOI Postdoctoral Association

MINUTES OF MEETING No. 32

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

PDA Lounge - Caryn House

PDA representatives present: Neel Aluru, Shih-Nan Chen, Travis Meador, Kais Mohamed Falcon, Juliette Smith, Masako Tominaga

Other representatives present: Janet Fields (Postdoctoral Coordinator/Academic Programs)

1. Postdoctoral Mentorship

A discussion about the different implementation of the Postdoctoral Mentoring Committees in the different WHOI departments highlighted the existence of strong differences between them, with this interaction being almost inexistent in some departments. The PDA considers that this mentoring is an important part of the postdoctoral stage and wants to promote it in those departments where there is a need for improvement in this matter. PDA president Neel Aluru volunteered to draft a letter to the Academic Programs Office to request more effort in improving this issue.

2. Mentoring New Postdocs

New postdocs sometimes need help in settling in once they arrive to Woods Hole. For helping in this transition, PDA representatives can help the new postdocs familiarize with the Institution and life in the Woods Hole area. The PDA requested a list of the postdocs to Janet Fields, which she provided after the meeting.

Regarding this topic, there was a particular question about the fact that many postdocs move with their families, and the special needs that these postdocs face. In addition to the PDA mentoring, WHOI has a Committee in Work and Family Life which is directly involved in those matters. PDA representative Kristen Davis is a member in that committee.

3. Career Options

Following some Panel Discussions with scientist from other institutions in sabbatical at WHOI and with Program Managers during last year there is interest in having similar events to provide

information and advice in Career Options and Development and also about the hiring process at WHOI. WHOI has a policy on Appointments and Promotions known as the “Blue Book”, which may be downloaded at <http://www.whoi.edu/filesserver.do?id=27824&pt=2&p=30324>.

Of particular relevance to postdocs is the following section (page 50 of the Blue Book), which we think is important for postdocs to be aware of:

"[.]An individual may hold different types of appointments in succession up to a maximum of four years of postdoctoral appointments. Extensions of appointments beyond four years may be granted in exceptional circumstances upon recommendation of the Department Chair or Marine Policy Center Director and approval of the Vice President for Academic Programs and Dean."

4. Future Activities

- Neel Aluru contacted Chris Reddy to try and repeat the “Communicating Science” and is awaiting confirmation from him.
- Shih-Nan is working on organizing a Coffee Hour to visit the Deep Submergence Laboratory.

5. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held at the end of March.

Meeting closed.

Minutes recorded by Kais J. Mohamed Falcon