

The Post-y

Newsletter for the SOT Postdoctoral Assembly

Summer 2015



Message from the Chair

The last year brought another great and productive year for SOT Postdoctoral Assembly (PDA)! We had an outstanding Executive Board that organized two webinars and many events at the SOT Annual Meeting. Some of these meeting events included our annual luncheon, career session, scientific session, poster tours, and the presentation of the Best Postdoctoral Publication Awards (BPPA). Dr. John Clarke, one of our councilors, had the privilege of attending the National Postdoctoral Association Annual Meeting on behalf of SOT and has contributed a wonderful article below about his experiences. Looking forward, we will again be celebrating National Postdoctoral Appreciation Week September 21-25, with blog articles and a fall career webinar. Be sure to read on for details! BPPA applications are being accepted with an October 1 deadline, and I highly encourage all eligible members to apply. I am looking forward to the Annual Meeting in New Orleans where we will be organizing activities for PDA members. If you haven't already, be sure to update your ToXchange profiles and your membership to Postdoctoral Member! We hope to engage all of our PDA members in the following year, and I want to leave you with the following mantra: Get involved, stay involved, and get others involved!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or ideas for your PDA Executive Board.

Caitlin Murphy, PhD



Message from the 2014-2015 Outgoing Chair

It was an honor to serve on the PDA Executive Board the last two years. I gained a great deal of experience, was presented with unique opportunities, and worked with so many fantastic people. To name a few I would like to thank the 2014-2015 Executive Board in particular: Kathryn Page, April Lake, Karin Streifel, John Clarke, and Caitlin Murphy. Betty Eidemiller was an incredible resource throughout the year, and we were very lucky to have Rachel Woodson jump in whole heartedly mid-year and get us through the many activities at the Annual Meeting. Aaron Barchowsky, our Council liaison, was highly involved in the committee and a tremendous help and support. In the last year we initiated some changes to PDA activities including a new format for the Annual Meeting Luncheon and were pleased to receive much positive feedback. I would like to encourage every postdoc in the Society to get involved with PDA. There are always opportunities for volunteers and please fill out those surveys because your feedback is vital for us to best serve you. I am confident that the new Executive Board, under Caitlin's leadership, will continue to bring high quality programs.

Best wishes to all and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as Vice Chair and Chair of the PDA!

Colleen McLoughlin, PhD

2015-2016 SOT PDA Board

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Postdoc Perspectives

We Live In a Great Time of Human History

David Pamies, MD

IVAM Specialty Section Postdoctoral Representative

We live in a great time of human history. The 21st century has so far witnessed an incredible succession of amazing discoveries, including deciphering the human genome, discovering the Higgs boson, and harnessing pluripotent stem cells. Such exciting new discoveries are being incorporated into most research fields. This is particularly true for toxicology where the National Research Council's 2007 report *Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century: A Vision and a Strategy* is triggering a revolution. *In vitro* methods, primarily employing human cells, are being developed and applied in batteries of newly developed test methods that are designed specifically to mimic the adverse outcome pathway leading to toxicity to obtain human relevant information. Robots have been employed to screen thousands of chemicals in test batteries to identify which among the 60,000 or so untested chemicals now used in commerce need further testing. Three dimensional microphysiological organ specific chips are being developed (Human-on-a-Chip initiative) employing mechanical forces

such as occurs during breathing. As a result the cells exhibit the normal anatomical and physiological function rather than those exhibited by cells grown in culture. We are fortunate that SOT has long encouraged the development and use of *in vitro* and alternative methods. The *In Vitro* and Alternative Methods (IVAM) Specialty Section plays an active role in SOT promoting the harnessing of these exciting new technologies through webinars, newsletters, travel awards for students and postdocs, as well as various networking opportunities. There are so many opportunities for toxicologists to employ these exciting new methodologies, such as microfluidics, microphysiological systems, microfabrication, micro-electronics, biomaterials, nanoparticles, and induced pluripotent stem cells, to realistically understand the events leading to toxicology in humans and other organisms. I hope that you will consider joining me, and others, in IVAM and take advantage of this great time for toxicology.

"We are fortunate that SOT has long encouraged the development and use of in vitro and alternative methods"

Postdoctoral Experience Inside and Outside Our Countries: A Great Challenge to Face in Our Lives

Teresa Palacios-Hernandez, PhD

Hispanic Organization of Toxicologists Postdoctoral Representative

Yes, we love science, but sometimes we do not realize how difficult it can be to attempt to get a permanent position after we finish graduate school. Here in the United States and in other countries, it is very common to find ourselves in this situation, since after we obtain a doctoral degree, the next step for continuing in research is to get a postdoctoral position. When one decides to pursue a postdoctoral fellowship, the decision to choose a research group that will fill your expectations is very important. There may be many groups in your native country with broad experience in your field of research and although it is very important to consider postdoctoral positions at home, sometimes it is best to opt for a postdoctoral fellowship outside your country.

Let me talk a little more about my personal experience. When I finished my PhD, I had many research questions that emerged after my dissertation. For that reason, some professors in my university invited me to continue as a postdoctoral scholar. The dynamic inside the new group was very friendly, and I already knew what to expect from that lab. However, I realized that if I work only in one field, it would limit my research skills.

After the first six months of working as a postdoctoral scholar in my university, I decided to be brave and to apply for an international fellowship. In my country of birth, Mexico, we have programs that allow us to cover our salary and insurance if we are accepted in a postdoctoral position in

Continued on Page 3

another country, but we are not eligible if we apply for a fellowship three years post-graduation. Because of that situation, I was in a rush and I really wanted to have the international experience in an innovative program related to my research interests. So I was brave and decided to submit applications for a postdoctoral fellowship to different places inside the United States.

I would like to share with you some advice that could be useful if you decide to continue as a postdoctoral fellow inside or outside your home country. It is very important to know the application system where you wish to apply. It is also necessary to have a great capacity to clearly express all your ideas orally, as well as in writing. You will need to establish communications with a potential principal investigator (PI) who can mentor you. Your CV and cover letter must explain specific details about your research interests, the models with which you already worked, and the most important part, your commitment as a prospective postdoctoral scholar in his or her group. If the interest in that research group is genuine, you will not have any problem expressing your points of view and showing your potential skills.

Another important aspect that you must consider is how many applications you will send. You must not be limited in this part. Try to apply to multiple programs that fit your interests. In many countries, like the United States, you can find databases where you can explore many potential options as a postdoctoral scholar. For other countries, you will need to write an e-mail to the PI asking if there is an available position. Please don't be disappointed if you receive negative answers and keep calm, you will find a place. Sometimes it may require more time than expected to receive an answer from the PI. However, if you send three reminders to him or her in an interval of two to three weeks, my advice is to continue looking for another research group.

After you receive an acceptance from the research group, the next advice is to explore, if possible, how the environment is inside the group. Try to get an interview with some other members of the lab to have

a broader view. There are many groups that could fit in your professional expectations, but take into account that it is very important to establish in advance a balance between work and personal life. It is important to keep your stress level to a minimum because in all aspects of your life, unexpected situations can emerge and you will need to be healthy to face them. Also, never forget to negotiate your salary. Whether you may be a local or an international fellow, you must give enough value to your contribution.

Finally, it is important to mention that no matter how difficult beginning in a new group may be or the adapting to the new country and customs that you will find, it is better to consider the new experiences as positive "adventures." Inside your new lab, try to be respectful with all the colleagues you will work with as part of a team. The professional and personal learning that you will acquire as a postdoctoral scholar are very valuable and you will never regret your choice. Remember that professional success comes from the courage of people to take on new challenges that benefit them and the group to which they belong.

References and Links of Interest

- [Harvard Guide to Postdoctoral Fellowships](#)
- [International Postdoc Survival Guide](#)
- [Postdoctoral Training in the NIH Intramural Research Program](#)
- [Guidelines for Writing a Professional Email](#)
- [Guide to Resumes and Curricula Vitae](#)
- [Thoughts on Choosing a Research Mentor](#)
- [USA Jobs Website](#)

"Remember that professional success comes from the courage of people to take on new challenges"

Postdoctoral Assembly Board Report on the National Postdoctoral Association Annual Meeting

John Clarke, PhD

2014-2015 PDA Councilor

The 13th Annual Meeting of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) was held March 13-15 at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. The meeting was full of networking opportunities and sharing of ideas regarding the past, present, and future of the postdoctoral position. There were sessions that touched on topics of diversity, teaching, career development programs, collecting data on postdocs, alternative career paths, mentoring, and many, many more. Some of the great resources that I want to pass along to you are outlined here.

There was discussion regarding what the postdoctoral experience has been and what it needs to be in the future. There were two important reports released in 2014 that help to address the status of postdoctoral compensation, health benefits, career development, appointments, and data collection. These are the National Academies Press, *The Postdoctoral Experience Revisited* and NPA, *Institutional Policy Report 2014: Supporting and Developing Postdoctoral Scholars*. The purpose of the National Academies Press report was “to recommend further steps that all the participants in the research enterprise can take to improve the quality of postdoctoral experiences, and lay out a set of best practices toward achieving these recommendations.” Another effort to address the future of the postdoctoral experience came from a group of conscientious and ambitious postdocs in the Boston area. They held a symposium in October of 2014 to discuss the future of biomedical research in the United States. For more on this effort please visit the [Future of Research](#) website and published report of the proceedings ([PMID 25653845](#)).

Lastly, there were representatives from many (if not all) of the institutions that were awarded the BEST (Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training) grants at the NPA meeting discussing what they have done thus far and how these awards will help shed more light on how we can improve the postdoctoral experience in the future.

There are a couple of items that are helpful to postdocs as they navigate postdoctoral training. The first I gathered while attending a mentoring themed lunch-around. There was discussion regarding developing mentor and mentee expectations for the postdoctoral experience. It was suggested for PIs and postdocs to use the [American Association of Medical Colleges \(AAMC\) mentoring compact](#) as a guideline for developing these expectations. The second is the encouragement to utilize the AAAS Science Careers myIDP (my individual development plan). To find out more and create your own myIDP go to the following [website](#). The PDA will be proposing a career development session for the 2016 SOT Annual Meeting based on the career issues raised at the NPA meeting.

There was also excellent training on creating a culture of inclusion in the work place. Some key concepts discussed include: look for patterns of exclusion, knowing the difference between being invited to something and being included, code switching (changing how one acts with someone or in a particular group), understanding each person's cultural and social capital, and providing a “brave space” where someone steps outside of the safe space to be able to speak more freely. These are examples of some ways we are encouraged to create a culture of inclusion.

2016 Best Postdoctoral Publication Award Application Now Available!

The deadline for the 2016 BPPA applications is **October 1, 2015**. Eligible papers were published between October 1, 2014, and September 25, 2015. For details please check out the [BPPA Award Description](#) on the SOT website.

We look forward to your applications!

Upcoming PDA-Sponsored Fall Career Webinar Registration Open

Your Pathway to an Independent Academic Career: Tips and Good Practices for K99/R00s

Michael C. Humble, PhD, NIEHS-NIH

The SOT PDA Secretary, Tongde Wu, PhD, will moderate the **Fall Career Webinar** in celebration of Postdoctoral Appreciation Week.

**Postdoctoral
Appreciation
Week is
September 21– 25!**

Wednesday, September 23 at 2:00pm ET

Many postdoctoral scholars have their eyes set on academic careers. An early challenge they'll face is applying for and getting their first funded grant. Crafting a fundable research proposal is no small task for anyone and requires the use of clear, concise language that will guide the reviewer through the proposal and to an enthusiastic, positive outcome. In this webinar, Dr. Michael Humble, Program Administrator in the Genes, Environment and Health Branch, Division of Extramural Research and Training, NIEHS, will talk about some important tips on how to write a successful, competitive grant, as well as a few common missteps that should be avoided. The goal of this webinar is to shed some light on grantsmanship issues for those junior investigators/postdoctoral scholars who are planning to write K99/R00 applications.

55th Annual Meeting to be Held in New Orleans, Louisiana March 13-17, 2016



- Abstract submissions are due by October 7, 2015.
- Online and Early Bird Registration is strongly encouraged. The Annual Meeting Early Bird Registration deadline is January 15, 2016.
- There are several awards for which you can apply to assist with travel expenses to the meeting! Check here for [award deadlines](#).
- Don't forget to book your room early! Visit the [SOT housing website](#) for information on making reservations.
- Events of interest to postdocs include the Postdoctoral Assembly Luncheon, Poster Tours for Trainees, Student/Postdoc Mixer, Chat with an Expert, a PDA and GSLC-sponsored scientific session, a PDA-sponsored Career Development Session, and the SOT Job Bank.
- Make sure to update your profile in ToXchange and the SOT Job Bank before the meeting!

Register for the SOT Job Bank

The Society of Toxicology Career Resource and Development Committee [Job Bank](#) provide employers and candidates who are seeking jobs with the opportunity to establish contacts relating to their specific needs and areas of interest. Registrations will be valid for four months and all registrants may access the system as often as they wish.

In addition to this service, the traditional Career Resource and Development Service program will be offered at the 2016 SOT Annual Meeting, allowing employers to hold onsite job interviews with potential candidates.

After using the Job Bank, please complete the online survey, located on the main menu, as this provides the feedback needed to make improvements or enhancements to the Job Bank service.

You may also be interested in [Mentor Match](#), the SOT Online Mentoring Program for SOT members.

2014–2015 Postdoctoral Awards

The Postdoctoral Assembly is pleased to recognize these award recipients.

American Association of Chinese in Toxicology

2015 Charles River Best Abstract Award

Zhoumeng Lin, Second Place
Rui Yu, Third Place

Association of Scientists of Indian Origin

Postdoctoral Fellow Award

Ratanesh Kumar Seth

Biotechnology Specialty Section

Monsanto Postdoctoral Travel Award

Amy Sharma

Central States Regional Chapter

Postdoctoral Fellow Oral Presentation Award

Abhilash Sasidharan

Postdoctoral Fellow Poster Award

Mitchell R. McGill

Clinical and Translational Toxicology Specialty Section

Postdoctoral Travel Award

Mira Pavkovic

Hispanic Organization of Toxicologists

Outstanding Officer Award

Teresa De Jesus Palacios-Hernandez

Outstanding Postdoctoral Trainee Award

Daniela Morais Leme

MRI Global Postdoctoral Travel Award

David Pamies

In Vitro and Alternative Methods Specialty Section

2015 MB Research Laboratories Award

Susanne Ramm

Postdoctoral Awards

Jill Franzosa, First Place
Jayant Das, Second Place Tie
Natalia Van Duyn, Second Place Tie

Korean Toxicologists Association in America

Best Presentation by Postdoctoral Fellow

You-Jin Choi

Mechanisms Specialty Section

Gabriel L Plaa Education Award

Anna K. Kopec, First Place

Postdoctoral Travel Award

Anna K. Kopec, Second Place

Metals Specialty Section

Postdoctoral Awards

Alicia Bolt, First Place
Donghern Kim, Second Place
Xue Fu, Third Place

Mixtures Specialty Section

Best Postdoctoral Abstract

Melissa Badding

Molecular and Systems Biology Specialty Section

Postdoctoral Travel Award

Anna K. Kopec, Third Place

National Capitol Area Chapter Outstanding Research Award

Eric Sussman
Anurag Mishra

Neurotoxicology Specialty Section

Postdoctoral Poster Awards

Briana De Miranda, First Place
Marissa Sobolewski, Second Place
David Pamies, Third Place Tie
Galen Miller, Third Place Tie

North Carolina Regional Chapter

President Award for Research Competition

Samantha J. Snow, First Place
Yongquan Lai, Second Place
Yong Ho Kim, Third Place Tie
Rui Yu, Third Place Tie

Northern California Regional Chapter

Postdoctoral Achievement Award

Fenna Sillé

Occupational and Public Health Specialty Section

Award for Best Postdoctoral Manuscript

Samantha J. Snow

Postdoctoral Assembly Best Postdoctoral Publication Award Recipients

John Clarke
Yong Ho Kim
Christina Powers

Reproductive and Developmental Toxicology Postdoctoral Awards

Tamara Tal, First Place
Agnes Karmaus, Second Place
Hayley Furlong, Third Place

Stem Cells Specialty Section Postdoctoral Excellence in Research Awards

Joshua F. Robinson, First Place
Chia-I Ko, Second Place

Southern California Regional Chapter

Postdoctoral Awards

Nianwei Lin, First Place
Daniela Parod, Second Place
Daniel Ferreira, Third Place

Toxicologists of African Origin Postdoctoral Travel Award

Aina O. Adeogun

Women in Toxicology Postdoctoral Achievement Award

Melissa A. Badding, First Place
Jamie E. Mirowsky, Honorable Mention

All names as reported to the PDA

**Apply for 2016
Postdoctoral
Awards**

Go to [SOT Awards](#) for
details.

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Louisiana State University

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University*

Southern California
Parrisa Solaimani
*Western University of Health
Sciences*

Special Interest Group Representatives

Hispanic Organization of Toxicologists
Teresa Palacios-Hernandez
Johns Hopkins University

Korean Toxicologists Association in America
Hae-Ryung Park
University of Michigan

Toxicologists of African Origin
Yasmeen Nkrumah-Elie
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Women in Toxicology
Jaime Mirowsky
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Specialty Section Representatives

Biological Modeling
Christopher Ruark
*Henry M Jackson Foundation
for the Advancement of Military
Medicine Inc*

Biotechnology
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Yale University

Cardiovascular Toxicology
Leslie Thompson
US EPA

**Clinical and Translational
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Comparative & Veterinary
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Dermal Toxicology
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Food Safety
Murphy Wan
University of Hong Kong

Immunotoxicology
Ashwini Phadnis-Moghe
Michigan State University

**In Vitro and Alternative
Methods**
David Pamies
*Johns Hopkins Bloomberg
School of Public Health*

Inhalation and Respiratory
Jonathan Shannahan
University of Colorado

Mechanisms
Tod Harper
Amgen Inc.

**Medical Device and
Combination Product**
Sandra Chang
Johnson & Johnson

Metals
Hemantkumar Chavan
*University of Kansas Medical
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Mixtures
Julia Rager
ToxStrategies

**Molecular and Systems
Biology**
Susie Huang
AXYS Analytical Services Ltd

Specialty Section Representatives Continued

Nanotoxicology

Anurag Mishra
US FDA-CDRH

Neurotoxicology

Kiran Dhakal
University of California Davis

Occupational and Public Health

Melissa Badding
Exponent Inc

Regulatory and Safety Evaluation

Senthilkumar Perumal
Kuppusamy
CDC-NIOSH

Reproductive and Developmental Toxicology

Natasha Catlin
NIEHS-NTP

Risk Assessment

Kausar Begam Riaz Ahmed
US FDA

Stem Cells

Joshua Robinson
University of California San Francisco

Toxicologic and Exploratory Pathology

Mili Mandal
Rutgers University

Postdoctoral Representatives Needed!

Please contact the President if you are interested in one of these vacancies

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Udayan Apte, President

Lake Ontario

James Gomes, President

Midwest

Ronnie Yeager, President

Mountain West

Yin Chen, President

American Association of Chinese in Toxicology

Ching-Hung (Gene) Hsu,
President

Association of Scientists of Indian Origin

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Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues

Lynne T. Haber, President

Ocular Toxicology

Evan A. Thackaberry, President

Thank you to the incoming and outgoing PDA Board Members!
Congratulations on a job well done!



Top Row: Gabriel Knudsen, Current Vice Chair; Kathryn Page, Past Vice Chair; Kari Sant, Current Councilor; Eugene Gibbs-Flournoy, Current Councilor

Bottom Row: Colleen McLoughlin, Past Chair; April Lake, Past Treasurer; Karin Streifel, Past Secretary; Samantha Snow, Current Treasurer; Caitlin Murphy, Current Chair and Past Councilor; John Clarke, Past Councilor

Not Pictured: Tongde Wu, Current Secretary