



Issue 3: June 2017

Mentoring Roundtable

Matt Eckwahl-Sanna

Every year the BSD PDA Seminar Committee hosts a mentoring roundtable, a popular career development event, where postdocs meet with faculty who have expertise in specific academic topics to foster discussions in a small group learning environment. These discussions provide postdocs with an opportunity to ask questions and get advice about areas particularly relevant for academic careers.

This year's event was organized by postdocs Matt Eckwahl and Aurelie Desgardin, who hosted six faculty members - Tao Pan, Peter Savage, Ellie Heckscher, Erin Adams, and Allan Drummond, who led discussions in Career Development Planning, Grant Writing, Getting Your Paper Published, Academic Job Search and Interview Tips, Negotiating a Job Offer, and Starting and Managing a Lab. An additional group led by Dean and Director of Postdoctoral Affairs, Nancy Schwartz, focused specifically on developing an effective Individual Development Plan (IDP).

There were 18 postdocs who participated in the event, from a variety of BSD Departments including BMB, Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, and Human Genetics. The small-group discussion format helped support enthusiastic conversations between postdocs and faculty. Many postdocs who attended the event this year said it was particularly helpful to get a chance to talk with young faculty who had more recently been on the job market and learning about how they established their lab.



Postdocs participate in the annual Career Development Mentoring Roundtable event with UChicago faculty, organized by the PDA Seminar Committee in May.

If you are interested in learning about the Seminar Committee, or have a seminar topic you would like to propose, please contact bsdpostdoc@gmail.com. Check out our [website](http://www.bsdpostdoc.org) for info on upcoming seminars and events.

The BSD PDA - Helping to serve, promote, and explore postdoc interests since 1999

Future of Biomedical Graduate and Postdoctoral Training Conference

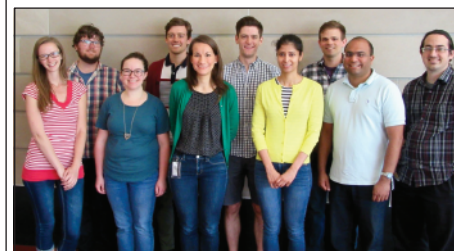
The **Future of Bioscience Graduate and Postdoctoral Training Conference** (Part 2) was hosted by the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical School in June. Nancy Schwartz, Dean and Director of Postdoctoral Affairs, led the workshop series on STEM Leadership Diversity with national colleagues. Other workshop series topics included faculty mentorship engagement, partnering with the private sector, modernizing training, and trainee data collection. Erin Heckler, Postdoc Affairs Administrator, contributed to the data collection workshop by presenting an abstract and preliminary data from the National Postdoctoral Survey conducted by the Postdoctoral Association with support from Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs last year. Kristy Hentchel, former Vice President of the PDA, was one of 20 graduate students and postdocs who received a travel award to attend the meeting and provide their input and perspective on workshop topics. Abby Stayart, myCHOICE Program Manager, presented the **BEST consortium's** career taxonomy project in an effort to standardize trainee career



Left to right: myCHOICE Program Manager Abby Stayart; Dean and Director of Postdoctoral Affairs, Nancy Schwartz; former PDA Vice President Kristy Hentchel; and Postdoctoral Affairs Administrator Erin Heckler

outcomes data nationally. At the closing reception the workshop leaders presented a recap of the recommendations from the two days of intense discussion and will publish a white paper on the meeting outcomes this fall.

PDA Election Outcomes



Left to right: Britney Helling, Matt Eckwahl, Katie Harris, Parker Woods, Cara Froyd, John Leonard, Mohana Ray, Justin Luebke, Bharat Reddy, and Colin McFaul. Not pictured Sean McConnell, Mickey McDonald, and Nicolaus Schmandt.

At the last **PDA Steering Committee** new and returning leaders were elected:

President: John Leonard

Vice President: Parker Woods

Secretary: Cara Froyd

Seminar Committee Co-Chairs: Matt Eckwahl and Mohana Ray

Teaching & Outreach Committee Co-Chairs: Britney Helling, Parker Woods, and Cara Froyd

Survey Committee: Sean McConnell

Science Policy Committee Co-Chairs: Cara Froyd and Mickey McDonald

Symposium Committee Co-Chairs: Open

Welcome Committee: Colin McFaul and Katie Harris

Social Committee Co-Chairs: Bharat Reddy and Nicolaus Schmandt

University Affairs Chair: Justin Luebke

If you are interested in learning more about the PDA or want to get involved, come to our monthly PDA Steering Committee meeting.

Postdoc Spotlight: Wenndy Hernandez

Lab: Barbara Stranger (current, 1 year); Minoli Perera (4 years)

Department: Department of Medicine, Section of Genetic Medicine

What is your research focus? My research focused has been evolving since I finished graduate school. My doctorate was in Cancer Biology from UChicago, and I focused on genetic susceptibility to prostate cancer in African American men. But my postdoc was on pharmacogenomics, particularly, warfarin dose response in African Americans. However, for the past two years I have become more interested and involved in cardiovascular diseases, specifically stroke, and identifying genetic risk factors in African Americans. My goal is to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, disparities in stroke incidence, morbidity and mortality in African Americans through research by identifying molecular determinants of ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke in order to enhance patient treatment.

Why did you choose this area of research? I am committed to deciphering the molecular mechanisms underlying complex human diseases, particularly those that disproportionately afflict under-represented minorities. My desire to work with under-represented groups stems from belonging to one, Hispanic/Latina. It is crucial that genomics research includes under-represented populations in order to ensure an equal distribution of the benefits that come from research, as well as to maximize the potential for discovery.

What is the one thing you like most about working in lab? Learning from others and helping others as well. I also love when we get high school or undergrad students for the summer because it provides a wonderful opportunity to be a mentor. I don't think of myself as working in a lab, I see myself as a member of the Section of Genetic Medicine. This has been particularly important because a Section provides even more people to discuss ideas with or generate new ideas, as well as mentors.



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