

Columbia University Postdoc Society (CUPS) Newsletter

Featuring:

CUPS updates
Mission statements from
URPostdocs and PostdoQs
In the city of New York
Recent awards and honors

Postdocs on the move
Funding opportunities
Career focus: *Medical Writing*
Events from OPA and CUPS
Welcome to Columbia



Welcome to the first edition of 2017! This is a year where a few good things have come our way, including new policies that help to make our training at Columbia better. We share one of them: Compensation/Approvals for Postdoc Incidental Career Development Activities. We have packed this issue with other exciting opportunities, guides to our beautiful city and a career focus, just to name a few. Enjoy!

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Social and Networking

Builds a sense of community via:
Social events and group outings.

Professional Development

Organizes training opportunities
and events towards advancing
postdocs careers.



Outreach and Communication

Spreads information and
communicates on behalf
of CUPS.

Creates quarterly newsletter
to keep postdocs in touch.

JoinCUPS@columbia.edu

CUPS is expanding!

We want to grow our team and expand our work on behalf of Columbia's postdocs.

Join us, email JoinCUPS@columbia.edu today!

Advocacy on behalf of postdocs

Participates on university Senate subcommittees
to promote positive change in Columbia's policies.

We are constantly looking for your input and direct involvement by becoming a member of the editorial committee. Share your opinions, jokes, articles, interviews, book reviews, etc. for publication.

Reach us at:

cupostdocnewsletter@gmail.com

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Rory Flinn, PhD

Pictures courtesy of CUPS members, Rory, Mulugeta, Jenny, Carlos Rueda Diez, Raphaelle Berger, and others

Updates from the Columbia University Postdoctoral Society (CUPS)

Dear Postdocs,

CUPS has had an eventful fall! We first welcome Michael Stokes as the Morningside Co-President, Jenny Robinson as secretary, and Glicella Salazar-De Simone as treasurer. We thank Riyaz Maderbocus and Joon Ho Ahn for being the inaugural Co-President and Secretary and working so hard to get this organization off the ground. We are excited about the progress that we have made over the last year and the events that we will host in the upcoming months.

The Networking & Community Building committee has continued to host monthly happy hours open to all postdocs uptown at Heights Tavern and Coogan's and downtown at Amity Hall, the Ellington and Bier International. Come join us each month and share a libation with your colleagues. We're also hosting other social events like picnics, bus tours through the Hudson valley, and trivia nights and co-hosted the annual ski-trip with OPA. If you have a fun idea for an event, email us at cups_networking_community@columbia.edu. We're always looking for new ideas and committee members!

The Advocacy Committee has been working to enhance the postdoc experience. We've restarted the NYC-wide postdoctoral coalition together with representatives from NYU, Mount Sinai, Rockefeller, Albert Einstein, Memorial-Sloan Kettering and Weill Cornell (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/859257324215592/>). Together, we've identified areas of common interest for NYC schools to advocate. Look out for upcoming NYC-wide postdoc events in the next year and keep an eye out for advocacy surveys from CUPS to express your thoughts. If you have an issue that you would like to address, email us at AdvoCUPS@columbia.edu.

In the fall, the Research & Professional Development Committee put together a Precision Medicine Panel featuring Drs. Tom Maniatis (Director of Precision Medicine Initiative at Columbia), David Goldstein (Columbia Institute of Genomic Medicine Director), and Oscar Puig (Senior VP of Research and Development at Phosphorus NY). The event was a large success with great attendance and lively discussion about opportunities in this emerging field. We co-hosted a session in The Art of Scientific Communication series with OPA featuring KnowScience, aimed at helping participants become better science communicators. This spring, keep your eye out for our panel session on Visa and Green Card applications from recent postdoctoral recipients (May 17th) and a postdoctoral seminar series in the works. We look forward to seeing you there! If you're interested in joining the RPDC or have an idea for an event that you would like to host, email cups_research_professional_development@columbia.edu.

We are actively looking for new members that are passionate about enhancing the postdoc experience at Columbia. If you are interested in joining CUPS, or have other comments or concerns, please email us at (JoinCUPS@columbia.edu).

Stay tuned for more events and follow us on Facebook and Twitter to keep up to date!

<https://www.facebook.com/ColumbiaPostdocs>

<https://twitter.com/cupostdocs>

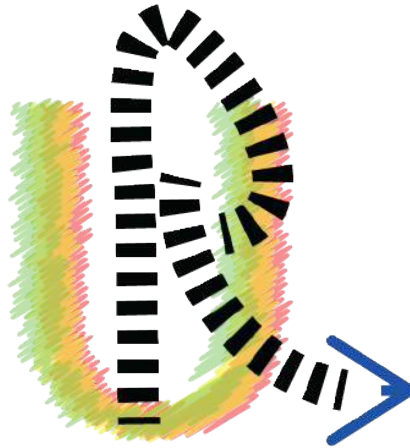
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8594785>

Yalda

URPostdocs

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/URPostdocs/>

URPostdocs@columbia.edu



Underrepresented Postdocs
group at Columbia University

Our Mission

Established in 2016, the Columbia URPostdocs seeks to unite underrepresented (UR) postdocs (Women, Latinos, African-Americans, Native Americans, and persons with disabilities, etc.) into one group. Despite the diverse background of the members, the mission of the group is to form a cohesive network that will work together to highlight URPostdocs distinct contributions, promote awareness of issues that are important to all URPostdocs and encourage participation and recruitment of new members. The group is committed to advocate and find means to improve recruitment, retention and mentoring of URPostdocs to aid in the development of successful careers both in academic and non-academic settings. With the same commitment that URPostdocs seeks to educate within the Columbia community, the group also seeks to educate the public through outreach activities. An important goal of the URPostdocs group is to provide a platform for the participating members to develop a variety of skills crucial in any career, such as confidence, leadership, teamwork, communication, teaching and networking among others.

PostDoQs (LGBTQIA group at Columbia University)

Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PostdoQsColumbiaUniversity/>



PostdoQs@columbia.edu

Our Mission

Columbia University's LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, and asexual) group's mission is to promote and stimulate activities for the LGBTQ community at Columbia University and throughout New York City. Our group seeks to become a place where people of diverse sexual and gender expressions feel free to generate discussion, facilitate the distribution of information on health, well-being, and working life at Columbia, as well as build camaraderie and friendship among the members of the community. All are welcome! Our group is based on the respect and celebration of diversity and many activities will focus on increasing visibility and enhancing LGBTQIA social opportunities. Although we are supported by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA), we also aim to reach out to all workers and undergraduate students in order to promote strong ties within the academic community and wish to expand professional life as part of LGBTQIA community at Columbia. This way, people with the same affinity will find a safe place where they can express themselves and grow our community.

Principles and guidelines

Implementation of all activities described above requires some principles and guidelines from our growing number of members and the people who want to be part of this group:

1. Respectful of all sexual preferences and gender expressions;
2. Promote diversity and inclusiveness policies at Columbia University;
3. Collaboration with other academies and LGBTQIA organizations in New York;
4. Host and coordination social events;
5. Inclusive and representative of the diversity found at Columbia University;
6. To communicate relevant information about LGBTQIA communities to all our members.

Email: PostdoQs@columbia.edu

In the City of New York

Theatre/Music



- Celebrate Brooklyn www.bricartsmedia.org/events-performances/bric-celebrate-brooklyn-festival
- Summer stage www.cityparksfoundation.org/summerstage/
- Concerts www.timeout.com/newyork/music/summer-concerts-in-nyc?
- Theatre www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/

Sports



- Soccer
- Basketball
- Baseball www.meetup.com/NYCWorldCup
- Hockey
- NYC Mayor's cup www.nycgo.com/sports
- NYC Marathon www.tcsnycmarathon.org
- Sports News www.tcsnycmarathon.org

Science/Art festivals



- 10th Annual World Science Festival
May 30 - June 4
www.worldsciencefestival.com
- USA Science and Engineering Festival
www.usasciencefestival.org
- NY Events & Festivals www.timeout.com/newyork/things-to-do/events-festivals

Movie events



- Rooftop Films rooftopfilms.com
- Summer outdoor movies
www.thrillist.com/entertainment/new-york/outdoor-movie-nyc-calendar
- Park Events www.nycgovparks.org/events/free_summer_movies
- NY Film Festivals www.filmlinc.com

Exhibits and shows



- Javits center events
www.javitscenter.com/events/events/
- TimeOut New York best museum exhibitions
www.timeout.com/newyork/attractions/best-museum-exhibitions-in-nyc
- NYC shows www.broadway.com

Shen Yun 2017
May 3 - 7, 2017
New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Mulugeta

NOT TO BE MISSED In the City of New York

With spring-like weather already on the horizon this year, it's easy to get excited about many of the events happening in and around the city this spring. Check out a couple of them featured here:

Smorgasburg

(<https://www.smorgasburg.com/>)

A Brooklyn Flea Food Market as it's described online, this weekly event brings together food from restaurants throughout the city. If you enjoy eating doughnuts, ramen burgers, and satay in the same meal, you will love this event. I would recommend getting there before noon as it starts to get extremely crowded.

- Saturdays in Williamsburg starting April 1st
- Sundays in Prospect Park starting April 2nd

Orchid Show at New York Botanical Gardens

(<http://www.nybg.org/exhibitions/2017/orchid-show/>)

Take the subway up to the Bronx and enjoy the beauty within the botanical gardens. This year's exhibit features colors and flowers from Thailand. The show runs from February 18th through

Baseball Season

What better way to appreciate nice spring weather than to enjoy a day at the ballpark. Both the NY Mets and the NY Yankees open their seasons in April.

- Yankees Home Opener
Monday, April 10th

For anyone interested in FREE and EXCITING events in the city, subscribe to **The Skint** (<https://theskint.com/>). They send out a daily newsletter highlighting cheap events that most people are otherwise unaware. Enjoy!

Jenny

Welcome to Columbia

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) welcomes new postdocs at the University every other month by holding a new postdoc orientation with a postdoc coffee hour or happy hour immediately following. We welcome to the University, the following new postdocs who have joined us over the last few months:

Alireza Nabavizadehrafsanjani, Biomed Engineering	Marissa Rashkovan, ICG Ferrando Lab
Amirali Zangiabadi, Appl Physics & Appl Math	Maryam Karimi, Envir Health Science
Atul Kumar, Pathology	Micaela dos Santos Cunha, Radiological Rsch
Brett Maricque, A&S Biology Research	Minjie Zhang, ICG Zhang Lab
Chad Cummings, Chemical Engineering	Minu Seong, A&S Biology Research
Chiaki Ishida, Pathology	Mohammad Khabbazian, Statistics Research
Dina Ahram, MED Nephrology	Noa Zemer Wassercug, Cardiology
Elise Bonner, A&S Music	Nokuthula Manyathi, JRN Centers
Fulvio D'Angelo, ICG Iavarone/Lasorella Lab	Paolo Botta, ZUC Costa Lab
Giulietta Riboldi, Pathology	Qiulin Zhuang, Inst for Human Nutrition
Haikel Dridi, PHY Research	Sanghoon Chae, ENG CISE
Holly Hunsberger, Integrative Neurosciences	Seitetsu Lee, Cardiology
Huize Pan, Cardiology	Shaina Reid, Epidemiology
Ipsita Pal, Experimental Therapeutics	Sobhi Samour, A&S MEI Research
James Robert McIntosh, Biomedical Engineering	Thibault Sellam, Computer Science
Jen-Wei Huang, Genetics & Development	Thusitha Arthanayakam, Astrophysics Lab
Jingji Zhang, Biochem & MolecBiophysics	Tin Chi Chak, A&S E3B Research
Jonathan De Roo, Chemistry Research	Wenyan Jiang, Systems Biology
Karla Leavitt, OBG Research	Yael Lifshitz, Law
Krista Perks, Neuroscience	Yaniv Brailovschi, OBG MFM
Kyle Bowen, Columbia Astrophysics Lab	Yoonhee Lee, Electrical Engineering
Leonor Matos Viegas Remedio, ZUC Costa Lab	Yu Tao, ICG Gautier Lab
Li Fang, IGM Inst for Genomic Medicine	Yu-Kwang Donovan Tay, Endocrinology
Maria Rabadan Lozano, Biology Research	Zhichao Wu, Psychology Research

Erica/Rory

Recent Awards and honors

Jenny Robinson, PhD, a postdoc in Biomedical Engineering and the College of Dental Medicine, was awarded a NIH NRSA F32 fellowship to conduct research on the role of estrogen on the temporomandibular joint structure and function.

Saleem Khan Amsad Ibrahim Khan, PhD, a recent Fulbright Scholar and Postdoctoral Research Scientist from the Center for International Earth Science Information network (CIESIN) was recognized by the UN for developing a new tool, COREDAR, which helps communities better understand climate change.

Postdocs on the move



Katherine Alfredo, PhD, has been (for the past year), in India as a Fulbright-Nehru Postdoctoral Fellow expanding on the work she conducted while a Columbia University Earth Institute Postdoctoral Fellow (at the Columbia Water Center). She is currently investigating Defluoridation Treatment Feasibility in India, and she is hosted by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, Nagpur, Maharashtra.



Jennifer Chambers, PhD, recently started as a senior scientist at Schrödinger - a computational drug discovery company - as the Education Specialist, after completing her postdoctoral training in the Department of Biological Sciences. Her role is to create educational content, establish collaborations, and develop science communication outreach programs.



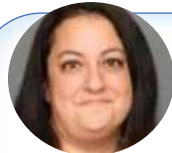
Xi Chen, PhD, recently started as tenure-track Assistant Professor in the City College of New York (CUNY) Science Research Center (ASRC), Nanoscience Initiative, and the Advanced Department of Chemical Engineering, CUNY after completing his postdoctoral training in the Department of Biological Sciences. His research focuses on developing the next generation of sensors, actuators, energy conversion and storage devices by using novel nanostructured and bio-inspired functional materials.



Dan Vatterott, PhD, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Neuroscience, has left Columbia to participate in the Insight Data Science Fellowship, which is a program that helps academics transition from academia to careers in data science. Dan looks forward to applying the skills he learned in academia to problems outside of academia.



Allison Wing, PhD, will be an Assistant Professor Department of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Science at Florida State University starting in 2017, after being a postdoctoral research fellow in the Division of Ocean and Climate Physics at Columbia's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. Her research is on atmospheric dynamics and climate, with a focus on tropical convection and hurricanes.



Leora Yetnikoff, PhD, recently joined the Department of Psychology at the College of Staten Island, CUNY, as a tenure-track Assistant Professor, after having completed her postdoctoral training in the Department of Psychiatry, Division of Molecular Therapeutics. Her research studies the development of reward-relevant neural circuits during adolescence and how their development can go awry after exposure to drugs of abuse.

Thank you and see you later!



Sitharam Ramaswami (Ram), PhD, who was a Postdoctoral Research Scientist in the Department of Systems Biology and one of the editors of this newsletter, has left Columbia. He now works as an Assistant Research Scientist at the Genome technology center at NYU Langone Medical Center. Ram served our community by being a dedicated CUPS member and contributing to this newsletter by managing, copy editing, designing layouts, and writing Career Focus and Special Mention sections. We will miss his reliability, professionalism and keen sense of design and efficiency. We thank him for his many contributions to the postdoctoral community and wish him all the best in his career!



Rory Flinn, PhD, the Director of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs has left Columbia to become Director of Graduate Student Professional Development at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (Worcester, MA). Although his work on behalf of Columbia postdocs needs no introduction, we would like to say that Rory's tenure as OPA director has had an immeasurably positive impact on Columbia's Postdoc community. He started numerous programs and worked tirelessly to provide us valuable career and training opportunities. In addition to his official responsibilities, Rory initiated the formation of CUPS and this newsletter. Rory managed sections such as: New Postdocs, Postdocs on the Move, Funding Opportunities, and Events from OPA. We are extremely thankful for his work enhancing and enriching our postdoc experience. We asked him to say a few things about his experience with us and what his visions are (next page). The current Director (welcome!), Ericka Peterson, PhD, has started organizing excellent postdoctoral programming and initiatives as well as contributed to this issue. We look forward to enjoying the benefits of Ericka's vision for the OPA. Rory: thank you and good luck with everything!

Participate in a study with your Romantic Partner about how couples communicate!

We are conducting a psychology research study on romantic couples (both opposite sex and same sex couples are welcome!), and are looking for participants. If eligible, you and your partner will receive \$25 each for participating in at 75-90 min laboratory session together on the Columbia Morningside Campus. For details and eligibility, contact us at: research.study@psych.columbia.edu

Reflecting on my time at Columbia... From Rory Flinn

I served as the Director of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs from March 2014 until this past January, nearly 3 years. I entered the role straight out of my own postdoctoral training, which at first was quite daunting. I set a vision to build a structured career and professional development program that would prepare postdocs to be competitive for whatever careers they were interested in and to improve the postdoctoral training environment at Columbia. Much work still needs to be done to ultimately reach my vision, but I feel I left Columbia with a lot of the foundation for these improvements in place and an exceptional successor, Ericka Peterson, to continue and augment these efforts. All my efforts will have been worth it if postdocs who take advantage of the programs and policies I created feel that these programs and policies helped them advance in their career or deal better with the stress of being a postdoc. If you are a postdoc who feels this way, please let me know - rjflinn@wpi.edu or write me a recommendation on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/roryflinn/>.

I will be honest, and say that things were not always easy on my side of the fence. There were at times significant funding constraints, insufficient support, and political pressures, that made my job that much harder. I was able to successfully advocate for an increased program budget, the addition of an Assistant Director position, and was able to demonstrate the office's worth to many at the University. That being said, funding for the office has once again come under pressure, though, this a trend for many offices at the University. If you feel that the role of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs is critical for your training, please let your faculty advisor know, tell your departmental chair, or even send a note to the Vice Dean for Research on your campus/division. I ask that if you do so, you do so professionally, without an accusatory tone.

To be clear, I did not leave Columbia because of any ill will or other negative reason. Instead, I wanted to spread my wings and grow more professionally. I wanted a new challenge and I wanted to try my hand at career and professional development work at the graduate student level. I was also looking to exit NYC and return back home to Massachusetts. Thus, when I saw the newly created position as the Director of Graduate Student Professional Development at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Massachusetts I jumped at the opportunity. I am very happy in my new role and the new environment I find myself in. I find myself now very much in the same seat I was when I started at Columbia, and have crafted a similar vision here at WPI. I will spend the next few years realizing my vision here and creating programs that help these graduate students succeed in their careers and I strive to make their lives a little bit easier while they are in training.

Best,
Rory Flinn, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Student Professional Development
Office of Graduate Studies
WPI, Worcester, MA
Website: <https://www.wpi.edu/>

Research Resource Highlights: The Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library

Melissa Mendelson, Programs Director of the Health Sciences Library on the medical campus, does not espouse the conventional shush philosophy of most libraries: "We want this to be a place where our users can collaborate and engage with information in a fun and meaningful way." And the newly renovated study area, re-branded as the Knowledge Center, vividly underscores her assertion. There are bright colors and lots of light everywhere. The all-new furniture is stylish and varied, ranging from comfortable armchairs to group tables, narrow elevated tables with bar stools, and even little booths. The equipment is state-of-the-art: there are two separate areas with computer work stations (nicknamed the Purple Zone – you will understand why when you see it), one with Macs and one with PCs. Power outlets are everywhere, and of course Mercury is providing Wi-Fi access for the whole area. Multiple white boards on wheels are available for group study, and it is easy to imagine animated discussions happening in this space. Despite this strong emphasis on collaboration, the noise levels are reasonably low. But for those who prefer complete silence, there is the Orange Room, a bright space separated from the main area by glass walls under a beautiful skylight. In addition, the Knowledge Center rents out three conference rooms with high-end electronics. To preserve these snazzy new looks, food has been banned from the area and beverages can only be brought in spill-proof containers, such as travel mugs. Beyond the Knowledge Center, the library continues to offer its various other study spaces (with no food restrictions): the ground floor features a quiet room, while LL1 provides two large reading rooms. Private rooms for group study on LL1 can be booked online (<http://library.cumc.columbia.edu/book-group-study-room>) and are available to postdocs. For those who like silence and don't mind (or even like!) the musky smell of old books, the library stacks on LL2 are a quiet, little-known alternative.

However, the library provides more than a quiet work environment to crank out your next paper or grant application. On our tour, Ms. Mendelson repeatedly emphasizes the staff's eagerness to help anyone needing literature assistance. For instance, the library offers classes on organizing information efficiently and advice on how to conduct systematic reviews. Staff can be contacted directly with literature questions in a number of ways, including via email, in person during on-call hours or per reservation with an informationist. Details on these services are easily found on the library's website at <http://library.cumc.columbia.edu/>. The website also serves as a central self-help resource: The Computing & Study Tools (<http://library.cumc.columbia.edu/computing-study-tools>) section offers a handy guide on how to choose (and download) citation management software, while a guide to systematic reviews can be found under Library Classes & Assistance (<http://library.cumc.columbia.edu/library-classes-assistance>). Of course, the website also provides access to Columbia's library catalog CLIO (<https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog>), to inter-library loans (<http://library.columbia.edu/find/request/ill.html>) for hard-to-access papers, and to other conventional library services, as well as a helpful floor plan (<http://library.cumc.columbia.edu/library-floorplan>). All of this is neatly summarized in the brief video tutorial Navigate the Knowledge Center (<http://library.cumc.columbia.edu/navigate-knowledge-center>).

To shake things up a bit, the library has started an event series called Nibbles on Knowledge, where the CUMC community is invited to mingle, eat and learn something new on a different topic each time, most recently on nutrition. Keep your eyes open for the next one. As one of the largest academic medical libraries in the country, the Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library also boasts a special collection with rare and unique books, which document the history of the health sciences in general and at CUMC in particular. And yes – they are happy to give group tours.

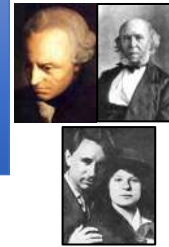
We thank Melissa Mendelson for taking the time to show us around and for telling us all about the library.

Thomas/Mulugeta

Random wisdom and fun

Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life.

- attributed to Immanuel Kant... and Herbert Spencer... and Will Durant.



Did you know...

...the deepest lake in the U.S. (#10 on the planet) is Crater Lake in Oregon? It was created 7,700 years ago by a massive volcanic eruption.

...Jupiter has 67 known moons? All are named after lovers/conquests and daughters of Zeus, the Greek equivalent of the eponymous Roman god.

...the oldest known individual tree is over 5,000 years old and living in California?

...there are an estimated 200-400 billion birds living on Earth, representing nearly 10,000 known species?

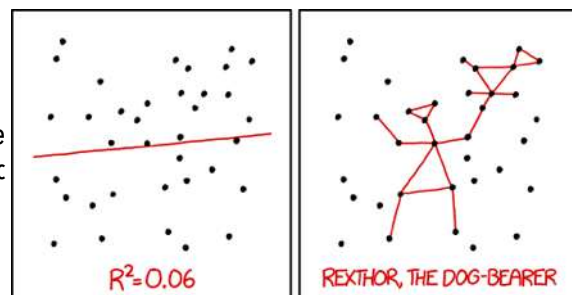
...Venus and Uranus are the only two planets in the solar system that do not rotate "counter-clockwise" along their orbital plane around the sun? Venus rotates "clockwise", while Uranus is tilted by 90°, essentially rolling on its side.

Cartoon Search

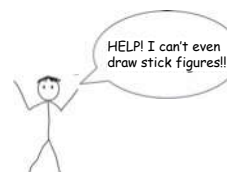
Good with a pencil or Photoshop? Bored? Got the craving to be a contributor to the legendary Postdoc Newsletter?!

You have come to the right place. We are looking for cartoons drawn by postdocs for our next issue! Anything goes. Well, within reason. Until then, we'll just keep poaching from XKCD (<http://xkcd.com/1725/>).

Interested? Shoot us an e-mail at cupostdocnewsletter@gmail.com for more information.



I DON'T TRUST LINEAR REGRESSIONS WHEN IT'S HARDER TO GUESS THE DIRECTION OF THE CORRELATION FROM THE SCATTER PLOT THAN TO FIND NEW CONSTELLATIONS ON IT.



Thomas

Funding opportunities

Postdoctoral fellowships are available from a variety of sources and across nearly every discipline. Please visit <http://www.postdocs.columbia.edu/funding.html> to view resources available to you that will aid in your search for funding opportunities as well as to see an expansive list of specific postdoctoral fellowship opportunities. Below is a list of NIH and NSF postdoctoral fellowships and career development awards with deadlines in the coming months:

NIH K-awards (career development/pathway to Independence awards): Next new applications deadline: June 12th 2017; Next resubmissions deadline: March 12th 2017
<http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm>

NIH F32 (postdoctoral fellowships): Next deadline: April 8th 2017
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-14-149.html>

NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellowships (AAPF): Next deadline: October 11th 2017
<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/servlet/fastlane.pdoc.DisplayProgramType>
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5291&org=MPS&from=home

NSF Mathematical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (MSPRF): Next deadline: October 18th 2017
<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/servlet/fastlane.pdoc.DisplayProgramType>
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5301&org=MPS&from=home

NSF Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Postdoctoral Fellowships (SPRF): Next deadline: October 9th, 2017
<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/servlet/fastlane.pdoc.DisplayProgramType>
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=504810&org=SMA&from=home

NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology (PRFB): Next deadline: November 7th 2017
<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/servlet/fastlane.pdoc.DisplayProgramType>
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=503622&org=DBI&from=home

NSF Earth Sciences Postdoctoral Fellowships (EAR-PF): Next deadline: January 10th 2017
<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/servlet/fastlane.pdoc.DisplayProgramType>
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=503144

Ericka/Rory

Future academic/professional meetings

Columbia events

<https://events.columbia.edu>

Tuesday, January 24 - Friday, May 26, 2017 4:45 PM 2017
Harper & Brothers to HarperCollins Publishers: A Bicentennial Exhibition
Kempner Gallery, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University

Tuesday, May 23, 2017 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Genetics and Development Departmental Spring Seminar Series
Hammer Health Sciences Center, 701 W. 168 St., New York, NY 10032

Wednesday, May 10, 2017 - Tuesday, May 16, 2017 (all day)
Columbia University Film Festival
Lenfest Hall, 425 W. 121 St., New York, NY 10027

Wednesday, June 7, 2017 6:00 PM
Third Annual Laugh to Remember
Gotham Comedy Club, 208 W. 23 St., New York, NY 10011

At the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS)

<http://www.nyas.org/Events/Default.aspx>

Monday, May 1, 2017 | 11:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Lyceum Society May 2017 Meeting

Monday, June 12, 2017 | 11:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Lyceum Society June 2017 Meeting

May 15-17, 2017
13th International Conference on Myasthenia Gravis and Related Disorders

Wednesday, May 24, 2017 | 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Chemical Biology Discussion Group Year-End Symposium

Thursday, May 25, 2017 | 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Targeting Cancer Metabolism and Signaling

Monday, June 5, 2017 | 12:30 PM - 5:30 PM
2017 Ross Prize in Molecular Medicine – Regulating Immunity: Fc Receptor Biology

June 13 - 14, 2017 Neuroplasticity, Neuroregeneration, and Brain Repair

Monday, June 19, 2017 | 1:30 PM - 6:00 PM Genome Integrity Discussion Group

Thursday, November 2, 2017 | 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Mitochondria in Health and Disease

MORE New York Science Conference Events

-from New York Science CareeEvents (NYSCE): <http://newyorkscienceevents.com/>

-from Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/d/ny--new-york/conferences/>

Other events also here:

New York Postdocs <https://sites.google.com/site/newyorkpostdocs/>

National Postdoctoral Association <http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/>

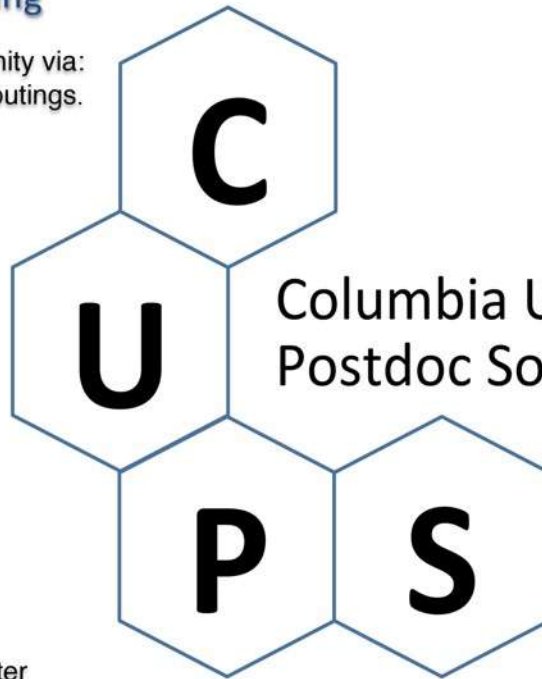
Mulugeta

Advocacy on behalf of postdocs

Participates on university Senate subcommittees to promote positive change in Columbia's policies.

Social and Networking

Builds a sense of community via:
Social events and group outings.



Outreach and Communication

Spreads information and communicates on behalf of CUPS.

Creates quarterly newsletter to keep postdocs in touch.

Professional Development

Organizes training opportunities and events towards advancing postdocs careers.

CUPS is expanding!

We want to grow our team and expand our work on behalf of Columbia's postdocs.

Join us, email joinCUPS@columbia.edu today!

JoinCUPS@columbia.edu

News from Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA)

New policies pave the way for improvements in postdoctoral training at Columbia

New Postdoctoral Fellow Benefits Policy - Postdoctoral Fellows are supported through external funding sources, such as fellowships or NIH training grants. While full-time Postdoctoral Fellows have been able to enroll in University health care plans for the past few years, they have not qualified for subsidized plan rates due to the nature of their appointment, resulting in inordinately high annual health care premium costs. In many instances these costs were offset by fellowship allowances, departmental funds, or support from their PI, however, this was not uniformly the case. To address this inequity, the University recently put in place a new policy that will go into effect for 1/1/17, ensuring that all postdoctoral fellows working in labs or on research projects at the University will have uniform access to affordable health care regardless of funding source, departmental affiliation, or personal financial resources. Specifically, the new policy allows all postdoctoral fellows to enroll in the United Health Care Choice 80 individual, dependent, or family health care plans at a fixed, subsidized rate - \$326 per year for 2017.

www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/docs/postdoc_fellow_benefit_policy_memo_and_FAQs.pdf.

Compensation/Approvals for Postdoc Incidental Career Development Activities

Often postdocs must gain additional experiences beyond their research projects in order to be competitive in today's academic and non-academic job markets. These additional experiences will depend on the intended career path, but may include teaching, outreach, or intellectual property analysis, to name a few. These experiential opportunities often merit additional compensation, and this has created a significant barrier for postdocs to engage in these activities. A new policy at the University now allows Postdoctoral Research Scientists, Scholars, and Fellows to participate in incidental career development activities, such as teaching in the Science Honors Program and Double Discovery Center, or participating in the Columbia Technology Venture Fellows program, with proper approvals and subject to funder regulations. These activities are limited to 10 hours per week and may not occur for longer than a year.

[http://evpr.columbia.edu/files/evpr/pdf/Guidelines for Incidental Career Development Activities for Postdocs 2.pdf](http://evpr.columbia.edu/files/evpr/pdf/Guidelines%20for%20Incidental%20Career%20Development%20Activities%20for%20Postdocs%202.pdf)

A new policy at the University now allows Postdoctoral Research Scientists, Scholars, and Fellows to participate in incidental career development activities ...

... these experiential opportunities NOW can earn additional compensation

Ericka/Rory

Career focus: Medical Writing as a Career



Nathan Yardley Ph.D.
Medical Writer,
Infusion Communications.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/nathan-yardley-4427b436>

Dr. Nathan Yardley, a Columbia University alumni, is a Medical Writer at Infusion Communications, a healthcare company, in Haddam, Connecticut. Dr. Yardley obtained his Ph.D. from Yale University studying the mechanism of neural crest stem cell formation in vertebrate embryos. He was a Morse Academic Teaching Fellow for Human Genetics lecture and taught laboratory classes at New York University. He was also a Teaching Assistant for multiple courses at Yale. Dr. Yardley then went on to becoming a Postdoctoral research scientist at the department of Dermatology at Columbia University Medical Center, studying the causes and treatments for basal cell carcinoma (BCC), before transitioning to a Scientific Associate position at Inventiv Healthcare Communications in New York. Let us find out what he has to say about his transition to Medical writing, and know more about this career as one of the lucrative options available to postdocs.

"I have always liked sharing science with others; being a teaching assistant was one of the most rewarding parts of my graduate experience..." says Dr. Yardley. "Medical writing appealed to me because at its core, it's all about sharing exciting (and not so exciting) results of clinical trials (at least in my current role) with clinicians and the public".

Ram: So, what is being a Medical Writer like?

Dr. Yardley: On average, my days consist of drafting manuscripts, developing posters and oral presentations, and discussing projects with clients, i.e. pharma companies, via email/teleconference. When developing a manuscript or other content, we usually start with a call with the lead author to identify the key messages, and then proceed to developing outlines and first drafts. As a writer it's my job to ensure that the messages are articulated clearly, accurately, and transparently. I have to familiarize myself with the background for a manuscript/poster by reviewing the current literature and the clinical trial protocols. Our clients provide the data we use as a basis for manuscripts, and I often have to develop tables and graphs (one of my favorite parts of the job). Once drafted, I work with the client and the authors to refine the content before submission/presentation. This typically entails managing lots of email communications and keeping track of timelines (especially when it comes to Congress presentations). If I have to split my time doing what I do, about 70% of my time is developing content (maybe 25% of that is making figures); 15% communicating with authors and clients via email; 10% in status update meetings with my team; 5% daily planning/other administrative tasks.

Ram: How's the work culture? What work-related values are the strongest in this line of work?

Dr. Yardley: I decided to come to Infusion because the company culture is very team oriented; everyone works together to make sure that projects are completed successfully. Furthermore, Infusion places importance personal and professional advancement.

Ram

... Career Focus: Medical Writing

We are very collaborative and everyone is willing to pitch in and help when needed. It's a pleasure to come to the office and know that everyone is as invested in your success as you are.

To me the strongest values are variety and independence. Medical writing has pretty decent job security, too, as there is always something to be written about and too few people to do the writing.

...the strongest values are variety and independence.

Ram: Sounds like an excellent work atmosphere and a great place to work! How about flexibility? Is there flexibility related to dress, work hours, vacation schedule, place of residence, etc.?

Dr. Yardley: Yes, it is indeed. And, I love what I do!

There is some flexibility where I work now, though it will vary from company to company. I generally dress business casual (eg, khakis and a polo shirt) though I've seen others that dress up a bit more. We tend to work 9-5, but slight deviations are permitted; my supervisor is very conscious that we may have responsibilities outside of work. I also work from home twice a week (my supervisor works from home 4 days a week). We have 3 weeks of paid vacation plus the office is closed between Christmas and New Year's Day; vacations have to be worked in around projects, so it's good to plan in advance.

I also attended as many networking events as I could at Columbia and beyond.

Ram: Let's go back a few years now. Tell me, how did you get your job, and about your preparations?

Dr. Yardley: Long story short: persistence and networking. I landed my first job as a medical writer at InVentiv Healthcare Communications as a result of many long hours of resume tweaking, cover letter writing, searching the web for open positions, and a few dead-end interviews. InVentiv's website didn't even have an open position listed, just a place to submit your resume/cover letter for them to keep on file, but I received an invitation to interview. After about 6 months, a former lab mate told me a position was open at her company, Infusion, so I applied, interviewed and landed the job.

Long story short: persistence and networking.

The most important thing that I did to prepare was informational interviews. I joined several medical writing related groups on LinkedIn, as well as other post-PhD "alternative" career groups. Through the messaging function of those groups, I was able to contact people who were currently medical writers and ask if they would be willing to speak with me for 15-20 minutes about their current work and how they got started. Most were more than happy to chat, and every person I talked to became an official LinkedIn connection. I also attended as many networking events as I could at Columbia and beyond, from very general alumni events to those focused on "alternative" careers for PhDs. You never know who you're going to meet, and these types of events give you an opportunity to practice your "pitch" and tell people why you're interested in a particular career.

Ram

... Career Focus: Medical Writing

Ram: How much did the graduate degree/doing a postdoc help you in the process?

Dr. Yardley: The whole process of graduate school (PhD or Masters) and working as a postdoc is designed to strengthen critical thinking and analytical skills. These skills are key to making it through the interview process, which typically involves a writing test of some sort. Writing tests vary but generally consist of reading a manuscript or two and summarizing the findings. Sometimes you're asked to draft an abstract for a manuscript. Sometimes tests are given onsite in timed conditions, sometimes you have a week or more to complete it at home. I personally could have had more writing experience; at that time I had only my thesis and one peer-reviewed article to my name. Additionally, I could have used a bit more understanding of the drug development and approval process; knowing how clinical trials operate is very important to my current work.

Working as a postdoc is designed to strengthen critical thinking and analytical skills. These skills are key to making it through the interview process.

Ram: What particular skills or talents are most essential to be effective in Medical writing? What is your advice for someone interested in Medical writing as their career?

Dr. Yardley: Critical reading skills are important; it's essential to know when something is missing from a manuscript, or when something isn't being clearly explained. Project management is also a skill that's important to have; medical writers are always working on more than one project and knowing how to effectively prioritize them is crucial.

The best advice I can give is to practice. Find opportunities to write, develop posters and oral presentations; anything counts, as long as you put it out into the public from blogs to department meetings. In addition to that, network. The key to this industry (as with many others) is getting your foot in the door, after 6 months at a company the recruiters and talent scouts start calling. Having a contact in the industry is certainly one way to increase your chances of landing that job, even if all they do is tell you how they landed their first job.

The best advice I can give is to practice.

Dr. Yardley also points out that this line of work may not be for everyone. "We are in essence a customer service organization, we don't always get to dictate the terms and deadlines for projects. In a similar manner, we are dependent on the clients for revenue, so saying "No" is hard to do and it's very easy to cross the line to having too much work and insufficient resources (i.e., employees)...", he says.

Ram: So, what's the next step in the career and what are your long-range goals?

Dr. Yardley: I am still in the advancement stages. I'm gaining more and more autonomy and actually am positioned to lead projects for two clients in the near future. I've worked closely with my supervisor to identify my career goals and she has helped ensure I get the opportunities I need to meet them. I eventually want to oversee a team of Medical Writers and manage projects for one or more clients.

Ram: Good luck for a bright future and thank you for sharing your experience to our readers.

Dr. Yardley: Thank you. Always a pleasure.

Ram

Recently published

Molecular mechanism for the regulation of yeast separase by securin

Shukun Luo & Liang Tong

Nature 542, 255-259, doi:10.1038/nature21061 (2017)

Cell division is a crucial event for the continuation of life. During this process, one of the pivotal steps is the proper segregation of the duplicated chromosomes, which are held together by the cohesin ring. Separase is a cysteine protease that opens the cohesion ring by cleaving its kleisin subunit at the early stage of anaphase. The protease activity of separase is strictly regulated by the inhibitor securin. This paper demonstrated the high-resolution crystal structures of the yeast separase–securin complex. The results show separase adopts an extended conformation and securin is located in the separase active site, illuminating the mechanism of inhibition. Biochemical studies confirm the structural observations and indicate that contacts outside the separase active site are crucial for stabilizing the complex, thereby defining an important function for the α -helical region of separase. Together, our findings shed light on the molecular mechanism of separase and its inhibition by securin.

Shukun Luo, PhD

Using a relative health indicator (RHI) metric to estimate health risk reductions in drinking water

Katherine A. Alfredo, Chad Seidel, Amlan Ghosh, J. Alan Roberson

Environ Monit Assess (2017) 189:124 DOI 10.1007/s10661-017-5815-8

When a new drinking water regulation is being developed, the USEPA conducts a Health Risk Reduction and Cost Analysis to, in part, estimate quantifiable and non-quantifiable cost and benefits of the various regulatory alternatives. Numerous methodologies are available for cumulative risk assessment ranging from primarily qualitative to primarily quantitative. This research developed a summary metric of relative cumulative health impacts resulting from drinking water, the Relative Health Indicator (RHI). An intermediate level of quantification and modeling was chosen, one which retains the concept of an aggregated metric of public health impact and hence allows for comparisons to be made across “cups of water,” but avoids the need for development and use of complex models that are beyond the existing state of the science. Using the USEPA Six-Year Review data and available national occurrence surveys of drinking water contaminants, the metric is used to test risk reduction as it pertains to the implementation of the arsenic and uranium maximum contaminant levels and quantify “meaningful” risk reduction. Uranium represented the threshold risk reduction against which national non-compliance risk reduction was compared for arsenic, nitrate, and radium. Arsenic non-compliance is most significant and efforts focused on bringing those non-compliant utilities into compliance with the 10 $\mu\text{g/L}$ MCL would meet the threshold for meaningful risk reduction. This work was initiated while Dr. Katherine Alfredo was working at AWWA's Government Affairs Office in DC and was completed as part of her Columbia Water Center work focused on America's water issues.

Katherine Alfredo, PhD

Multivalent Small-Molecule Pan-RAS Inhibitors

Welsch ME, Kaplan A, Chambers JM, Stokes ME, Bos PH, Zask A, Zhang Y, Sanchez-Martin M, Badgley MA, Huang CS, Tran TH, Akkiraju H, Brown LM, Nandakumar R, Cremers S, Yang WS, Tong L, Olive KP, Ferrando A, Stockwell BR.

Cell. 2017 Feb 23;168(5):878-889.e29. doi: 10.1016/j.cell.2017.02.006.

This collaborative effort, coming out of the Stockwell Lab in the Dept. of Biological Sciences, used computational modeling and biochemical approaches to develop a novel small molecule inhibitor of RAS oncoproteins. Activating RAS mutations are common pancreatic, colon, and lung cancers, among others. Welsch *et al* designed small molecules that bind to the surface of the RAS protein, blocking it from interacting with downstream effector proteins that drive cell growth and proliferation. Treatment with their lead molecule, termed 3144, inhibited tumor growth in animal models of RAS-dependent cancer. Since RAS proteins have for a long time been considered “undruggable”, this is an important advancement toward novel therapeutics for RAS-driven cancers.

Michael Stokes, PhD

Events from Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA)

Fall 2016 PhD Careers Networking Event

In the evening of Friday, November 11th, OPA hosted a large-scale PhD Careers networking event featuring data scientists, consultants, government and non-profit researchers and professionals, editors and publishers, financial analysts, technology transfer experts, and research administrators among others. The purpose of the event was for Postdocs to learn about a range of non-faculty careers through meeting and talking to a wide-range of PhD professionals, who come from training backgrounds ranging from the physical sciences, life and behavioral sciences, and earth and environmental sciences. The event was for all postdocs, regardless of field of study or campus affiliation. The session ran from 6-8 PM in Riverview lounge (4th floor Hammer building) on the medical campus and featured a wide-selection of appetizers and drinks.



-----Winter programs from OPA:

Art of Scientific Communication: This 4-part series, February - March 2017: featuring Dr. Peter Fiske, Wiley, KnowScience, and Elsevier.

Nature Masterclass: In mid-March, Postdocs started having access to an online course in scientific writing and publishing. The course is taught by editors from the Nature journals, contains 15 modules, and covers the entire scientific publishing process from writing a paper to publication.

Wellness Wednesdays: Beginning in late March, in response to the mental health and wellness survey, a series of workshops will take place designed to address identified needs, followed by the formation of peer interest groups.

Career Panel Series: This monthly panel series in January-April will feature sessions on careers in consulting, academia, industry, and government and non-profits

Courses on Grant Writing and Responsible Conduct of Research: These two courses, while not organized by OPA, are open to postdocs to audit for free, and run from January-May.

Faculty Career Panel: February 24, 2017 | Vagelos Education Center | CUMC

Former/current Columbia affiliates who have transitioned into faculty careers following their graduate or postdoctoral training shared their experiences and responded to moderated and audience questions. Panelists included:

Matthew Marcello, PhD - Assistant Professor at Pace University

Xi Chen, PhD - Assistant Professor at CUNY Advanced Science Research Center/City College

Scott Lefurgy, PhD - Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Hofstra University

Kenneth Olive, PhD - Assistant Professor of Medicine and Pathology and Cell Biology at CU

Leora Yetnikoff, PhD - Assistant professor of Psychology at the College of Staten Island (CUNY)

Rebecca Haeusler, PhD - Assistant Professor of Pathology and Cell Biology at CU

Moderated by CUPS' own: Revathi Balasubramanian, a Postdoctoral Research Scientist in the Department of Ophthalmology, CUMC

--pictures in the next page

Ericka/Rory/Mulugeta

Events by OPA and CUPS

Faculty Career Panel:
February 24, 2017, CUMC



Postdoc Ski Trip: Sunday, February 5, 2017, Hunter Mountain, NY



Precision Medicine Panel Session

Friday, November 18th, 5pm-7pm

VENUE: HAMMER HEALTH SCIENCE, ROOM: 401



Nick Marcella, PhD
Director of the Columbia Precision Medicine Institute, Columbia University



David Goldstein, PhD
Director of the Institute for Genomic Medicine, Columbia University



Oscar Pung, PhD
Senior VP of Research & Development, Phosphorus WF

by:
CUPS and
Columbia University
Precision Medicine
Initiative



CUPS HAPPY HOURS



Potluck lunch,
July 4th, 2016

Chalk Talk Workshop:
May 2016 CUMC

