Has it already been 6 months since our last YoUR PostDoc Press? Goodness! Many exciting things have happened since then...

Our monthly webinars are off to a great start with two on alternative careers and one on mentoring. The purpose of these webinars is to highlight what we postdocs need to be aware of as we think about The (sometimes daunting) Next Step!

You may have caught the Mentoring Conference in March put on by the Dept of Faculty Development and Diversity. If you missed it, you can catch a workshop recap, plus other faculty development workshops, at the 2011 Health Professions' Faculty Development Colloquium coming up June 1st.

For more information on careers away from the laboratory bench, we are just about set with the first of our panel discussions on alternative careers. Stay tuned for when you can get all your questions answered about being a science editor, a science policy analyst, a PhD within the military, a patent lawyer, a medical science liaison...and so much more. An unbelievably varied amount of opportunities exist out there – we are hoping to showcase many of them.

We had three URMC PDA representatives attend this year’s National Postdoc Association conference: Sharon McCullough from GEPA, Yeissa Chabrier-Roselló (Social Committee Chair) and Rashmi Ram (Communications Committee). What a great showing from our group! While we realized that our PDA is doing a fantastic job developing our community, showcasing our postdocs, and providing career development opportunities, we also learned new ways to improve our efforts. For example, we identified models to help advance our postdoc benefits reevaluation process and we gained insight into how to make the career transition better for you!

Thank you, most of all, for coming to support our events and offer the help that you can in such a busy and important time in our careers. It has been a blast exploring this with you and I am looking forward to more!

Get Involved in a UR PDA Committee!

Why join a UR PDA Committee?
♦ Be involved at U of R beyond conducting scientific research.
♦ Improve your networking by interacting and collaborating with peers, top-level scientists, and university administrators.
♦ Build your management, leadership, and communications skills—a selling point for your next job search.
♦ Learn about planning and organizing meetings, seminars and other events of your interests while educating other postdocs.

How much time does it take? We realize as a postdoc your time is valuable. The executive committee meets only once a month for an hour. Otherwise, any additional time commitment is completely your decision.

How to get Involved? Determine which postdoctoral issue interests you the most. Find the committee that interests you (executive, career development, communications, international, or social) and email the chair listed above. It is that easy!

Please visit our online version of this newsletter @ www.postdocs.urmc.edu
Getting to know... Dr. Robert Bambara
Alicia Augustine

Need advice from an experienced faculty member? Seek out Dr. Bambara!

Initially intrigued by astronomy, Dr. Robert Bambara always knew he wanted to be a scientist. In a time when many people change jobs 10 times in their career, Dr. Bambara has only held one job: working in the 3-8500 corridor of U of R since 1977. Now a Professor and Chair of Biochemistry & Biophysics (as well as Professor in the Cancer Ctr and Dept of Microbiology & Immunology), you can still find him in room 3-8541.

In 2007, Dr. Bambara was honored with the William H. Riker University Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching! This type of honor truly reflects Dr. Bambara’s ability to effectively lead and mentor aspiring scientists. Dr. Bambara’s significant contributions to the scientific community and dedication to educating younger generations made him a natural choice for faculty advisor to the Postdoc Association.

Fun facts!
1. Dr. Bambara has always loved amateur astronomy. He even owns a Meade ETX-125 telescope!
2. Like a true scientist in search of a creative outlet, Dr. Bambara loves model railroading “because it involves crafts, painting, building design, track layout, mechanical repairs, electrical wiring planning, and community planning. It is a little world where more things go according to my plans than in the real world.”

Significant Scientific Contributions
• Determined how to measure processive DNA synthesis (inventing the term “processivity,” now in Wikipedia!)
• Worked out the mechanisms of lagging strand DNA replication in yeast and humans.
• Worked out the tracking and cleavage mechanisms of FEN1
• Found that the cell uses the p300 histone acetylase to regulate the fidelity of DNA replication
• Characterized most of the steps of reverse transcription and recombination in HIV-1, serving as a basis of new drug development

Dr. Bambara’s reflections on effective mentoring
“The most important quality of a mentor is to equip their student with all of the abilities they need to succeed. In our business this is coming up with imaginative research questions, performing technically clean and informative experiments, reading widely, quality writing of papers and grant applications, speaking professionally, working well with colleagues and learning to be a good mentor too. Poor mentoring is trying to make your student focus only on experimental productivity and denying them the opportunity to learn the other necessary things. If a student writes poorly, the best thing is to make them write over and over, with the mentor adding a little to each draft, rather than just writing it without student input.”
At the 9th annual NPA meeting in Bethesda, MD, ~300 postdoctoral scholars, administrators and faculty convened to discuss issues related to postdoctoral mentoring, immigration policies, PDA sustainability, networking, salary and benefits, and policies impacting postdoctoral hiring and diversity. The “Innovation in Action” series fostered an opportunity to network with other postdocs and administrators to brainstorm new practices and share successful strategies for accomplishing common goals.

Two major ideas were emphasized to achieve effective postdoctoral training. First, successful postdoctoral training requires setting a clear career plan, finishing one significant project, and establishing your identity in the scientific community. In addition, a great deal of commitment, focus, efficiency, and luck are needed. Working efficiently and intelligently with determination enables a balanced work-life relationship. Second, the NPA advocated for Individual Development Plans (IDP) for the postdoctoral scholar and their mentor, outlining training objectives and career goals. The purpose of an IDP is to ensure that postdocs have a process to assist in developing their short- and long-term goals. The IDP also serves as a tool to improve postdoc-mentor communication. Core competency areas include: scientific knowledge, creativity, research skill and development, responsible conduct of research, professionalism, communication, and management/leadership skills.

Additional issues discussed at the NPA meeting included the need to promote diversity and ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for all postdoctoral scholars in the membership, leadership and activities of the NPA. Methods of effectively marketing science, as well as choosing alternate career paths were also highlighted discussions. Overall, the NPA is a great resource for all postdoctoral scholars in fostering a healthy community, providing valuable information on career opportunities, developing toolkits for postdoctoral associations and offices, and importantly improving networking with the national postdoctoral community.

Download a sample Individual Development Plan and read FASEB’s recommendations for successfully implementing one.

Continued Learning: A Postdoc Perspective
Matthew Skerritt

As a Fulbright Scholar, I'll be using the knowledge I've acquired through my postdoc fellowship in Preventive Cardiology to pursue cardiovascular disease prevention research at the United Arab Emirates University in Al Ain, UAE. Currently the UAE, and the Middle East in general, are suffering a significant cardiovascular disease burden. With rising affluence has been the adoption of a more Western-type diet, sedentary lifestyle, and among the highest rates of diabetes in the world. Add to this a formal abstention from alcohol, and the challenge for prevention is formidable. Although the details of my research project have yet to be finalized, it will involve working toward mitigating this burden.

Check out the Fulbright Scholar website for more information.

There he goes, down the hallway 30-something but hair turned all gray. Balancing work-life? Ask that to his wife. A free donut is highpoint of the day. 

St. Patty’s Day Limericks

By: Anirban Roy


May 2011 Volume 1, Issue 2
Seeking A Positive Change for Postdoc Scholars: A Summary of the 9th Annual National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) Meeting Rashmi Ram & Yeissa Chabrier-Rosello

Left to Right: Rashmi Ram, Sharon McCullough, Kris Spaeth (NYS DOH), Darwin Operario (UR graduate), Yeissa Chabrier-Rosello
Career: From Postdoc to a Permanent Position in Private Industry
Betina Lew, Scientist at Procter & Gamble

A few weeks before starting my new job as a Scientist-Toxicologist at Procter and Gamble I had mixed feelings... I was super excited, looking forward to my new job and life, but also very scared of what I was going to face. I was not sure what was the right dress code, or if I was allowed to bring my lunch. Is there a lunchroom in private industry or does everybody eat in the cafeteria? But the most important question was: what should I expect from the people I am going to work with and what do they expect from me?

Of course, it is ok to feel scared, I was moving to a new city, bringing my husband and my puppy, selling my home in Rochester -- above and beyond all these, leaving the only type of environment I knew: “The Academic one”. After a couple months of working at P&G, I felt more comfortable and realized that everybody in my department speaks the language of Science. I found many wonderful people, very willing to help me navigate the mysterious paths of private industry.

“I was super excited, looking forward to my new job and life, but also very scared of what I was going to face.”

I have both technical and non-technical training opportunities all the time. At P&G, we have many internal conferences and meetings in career development, Research and Development, and Product Safety and Regulatory Affairs. I was also pleased to learn that we have affinity groups that include: the Latino Community, African Americans, and other many other minority groups. This is certainly a very diverse and inclusive company and fun to work at. Many times I feel like I am back in college with old friends. I am very pleased with my new job, P&G and my new city.

One of the reasons this job was so attractive to me is because P&G is the type of company a person can grow in. In addition, having the opportunity to work in a global environment and interact with different cultures was also important. I have the chance to work in different business units, experience extended international business trips, and even work in different functions. For example, I have colleagues that moved from Product Development to Regulatory Affairs, and from Product Research to Marketing. I enjoy the global interaction. During those first few months at my new job, I met people from Latin America, Asia, and Europe. Since I am a “people person”, this opportunity for me, is priceless! Now, that I am working at P&G for about 8 months, I feel that here is my home!

My daily work is different from what I used to do, because I do not work at the bench anymore. However, the tasks of literature searching, clinical experimental design, and critically thinking and analyzing data are done exactly the same as before. Sometimes I miss the bench work, the lab and my previous research area; however, I am very happy with my decision and with the opportunity to work here.

I hope this is helpful! Feel free to send me an email if you want to learn a little bit more about my job, Cincinnati or P&G.

Contact Betina Lew @ Lew.bj@pg.com

Before I finish this piece there are a few myths and truths about the transition to the permanent position that I would like to share with you:

Myth # 1: EVERYBODY knows EXACTLY what they want to do after their training. That is a wrong assumption. Some people do. However, many of the trainees that I interacted with didn’t know exactly what their next career step would be. This is very common and the key is to research. Learn about the different opportunities and talk to people that work in different industries. People love to talk about their career choices and lives. In addition, there are many websites that offer free tools to help in identifying your passions and skills. Explore some of those before starting your applications.

Myth # 2: The really good postdoc fellow is the one that spends 60 hours in the lab. Wrong again. ALWAYS use the 80:20 rule. In other words, use at least 20% of your time to network, go to conferences and annual meetings, try to get involved in leadership roles and apply for awards.

Myth # 3: “when I start job hunting, I will be hired and ready to move in a couple of months”. You are special, but job hunting is stressful, difficult and filled up with disappointments. Job-hunting can become a full time job. Therefore, focus on what your goals are. Answer questions like: “Where do you want to live? What type of environment do you want to work? How much money do you want or need to make to live within your expectations?” And target your job hunting on your own objectives.

Truth: “The right job is there, waiting for you”. YES, if you reached this point in your life, had the opportunity to get wonderful postdoc training at U of R, you will find the right job. But you have to be patient, identify your passions, craft the best application package possible (ask for feedback from your peers and your mentors), and make a list of what is essential for you and what are the things that are not ideal but you can compromise. Be a little bit flexible and don’t give up.
Coming to work at U of R as an international postdoc brings a wonderful array of training opportunities, but it also presents significant challenges. The UR PDA, supported by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, recognizes that relocating to a foreign country can be overwhelming, and getting settled can be confusing. Being far from family and friends is also difficult. The International Committee of the UR PDA is committed to helping you meet these challenges and making the most of your time here.

The International Services Office (ISO)

The ISO is located on the 2nd floor of Morey Hall, next to Rush Rhees Library on the academic quad of the River Campus. This is conveniently located near the library bus stop and is within walking distance of most U of R campuses. The ISO provides a variety of resources for international students and scholars.

Yearly Seminar

In response to postdoc anxiety and confusion concerning vital legal matters, the International Committee organized a seminar on Immigration, Visas and Taxation. Mr. Cary Jensen, the Director of the ISO, was very kind to share his expertise at this event. Senior ISO staff including Ms. Kathleen Strout (Associate Director), Ms. Janet Connor (Senior Scholar Advisor), and Ms. Sumie Jacoby (Immigration Adviser) continue to welcome international postdocs seeking advice on various matters. Please contact them for an appointment.

Visas

All postdoc visas are first handled at the department level and subsequently forwarded to the ISO. If you need to apply for or renew a visa, please speak to your department administrators first. They will contact ISO. If you are planning to leave the country for a conference or vacation, please check with your department administrator to see what paperwork is necessary to ensure you can safely return to the U.S. The U.S. government’s regulations continue to change, so check the current requirements before you leave the country.

Housing

From the time you accept a job at the U of R and every subsequent day, housing is the first and foremost concern. To get started, please visit the ISO housing website for various housing options.

English Language Skills

The U of R offers several classes for improving your English Skills through its ESL (English as Second Language) Program. Visit the ESL website for more information about the types of classes offered and how to choose one appropriate for you.

Local libraries and organizations offer some free services. One such organization is ESOL Associates, which offers weekend classes for busy professionals.

International Foods & Markets

Rochester has a variety of international markets and restaurants serving a diverse community. Use the hyperlinks for more information.

National Postdoctoral Association (NPA)

The NPA has an International Postdoc Committee that has put together several resources including news and updates on visas, etc. They have also assimilated an International Postdoc Survival Guide.

Getting involved in various campus groups is a great way to meet other postdocs and students. We hope that the resources above will help you acclimate to the U of R and the Rochester area.

Interested in fun social activities like biking, kayaking, rock climbing, golfing, etc.? Let us know and we can organize these, or better yet volunteer to get a group together yourself!

Postdoc Social

Every month your PDA organizes a social event, fostering an excellent opportunity to share your experiences, network with future colleagues, make international connections, and, importantly, have lots of fun!

Thanks for your participation, it is key to our success. Check out our website for future events.
When is the best time to start a family? There is never a perfect time, but during a postdoc can be appealing for many scientists. As postdocs, we are more settled in our career than graduate students, but not yet worried about making tenure. On the other hand, we are working long hours, building our CV to get that ever elusive faculty job or other permanent position. As a new mom, these were the trade-offs I weighed, but I decided to take the plunge.

Having recently returned from maternity leave, I have a few thoughts to share. First, having a baby definitely reduces your ability to work those long hours in the lab. If an experiment came up that required me to be in the lab for 12 hours, I used to be able to stay, no problem. Now, I have to worry about making it to daycare in time to pick-up my son. On the other hand, I value my time more now. I find I am more efficient and focused at work, so that I can get home to my baby and leave work at work when the day is over.

If you are considering having a baby, find out what benefits are available. In 2008, the NIH revised the NRSA training grant guidelines to allow up to 60 calendar days (8 work weeks) of paid parental leave for the adoption or birth of a child. This leave can be used by either parent but must be approved by the training program director. Postdocs not on a training grant should check with their PIs and the benefits office to inquire about what is available for them. At a minimum, the Family Medical Leave Act allows for 12 weeks of job protected, unpaid parental leave. Postdoc moms returning from leave can also take advantage of hospital grade breast pumps at the Pumping Place, on the 1st floor of the hospital near the green elevators.

Leaving your child and returning to work can be difficult, but a number of childcare options exist near URMC. Parents give high marks to the Children’s School at URMC located on Castleman Dr across from the medical school, although space is very limited. If you are interested in this option, call to be placed on the wait list ASAP. Generations Day care is located nearby Highland Park, within walking/biking distance of the hospital. Care-a-lot is another option, next to RIT’s campus. I was not able to find space for my son in these day cares, so I am not endorsing them, but merely highlighting nearby options. Whatever you decide, it is important that you feel comfortable with whomever you leave your child.

Whether you start a family in graduate school, during a postdoc, while a faculty member, or never at all, it is important to consider the impact this new little person can have on your career and life. For me, my postdoc was the right time to start the next phase of my family life. Coming home to my son every night only serves to remind me of why I sought a career in health science in the first place.
Locating funding opportunities is a breeze with SPINPlus!
Alicia Augustine

Ready to conduct the most vital research project of your career, but your finances are stretched too thin? Time for your own GRANT! Although the task seems impossible, locating appropriate funding mechanisms does not have to be difficult. Using Office of Research and Project Administration (ORPA) resources can make all grant-related processes easier.

The free SPINPlus mechanism is one way to automatically and effortlessly locate funding opportunities. Follow the instructions below to register with SPINPlus and receive emails with up-to-date funding information.

1. Go to ORPA's website
2. Click on Funding Opportunities along the left-hand sidebar. Note: This page contains many other links to grant opportunities
3. Select GENIUS/SMARTS/SPIN WWW from the top of the Funding Opportunities page
4. Select GENIUS/SMARTS REGISTRATION to enter the InfoEd system and create a GENIUS profile
5. Select Create a New Profile and specify:
   - Institution
   - First name, last name, email, dept affiliation
   - Social Security number (not required)
   - Username and password
6. By clicking Submit, your registration will be sent to ORPA for approval
7. Upon ORPA approval (via email), you will need to edit your GENIUS profile to activate SMARTS
   Note: Investigators can upload their CV to GENIUS, but this is not required for SMARTS matching
8. Select General from the Profile Summary Page and answer the 5 questions. Question 3 will allow you to receive SMARTS matches
9. At least one keyword from the Keyword section must be selected in order to receive matches
10. Further specifications to your matching criteria can be made under “Used in SMARTS matching”
11. Enjoy regular emails that outline new funding opportunities related to your project!

What is SPINPlus?

SPINPlus—includes 3 modules: SPIN, SMARTS, and GENIUS.

SPIN™ (Sponsored Programs Information Network) – database of current funding opportunities from >2,500 funding agencies.

GENIUS™ (Global Expertise Network for Industry, University, and Scholars) – searchable, global database of investigator profiles of scientific expertise. A GENIUS profile is created to specify your interests and areas of expertise, which is searchable by industry/university partnering, global partnering, and sponsored funding agencies.

SMARTS™ (SPIN Matching And Research Transmission Service) – utilizes the research interests and areas of expertise of the investigator (in GENIUS) to perform a daily electronic search of current funding opportunities (in SPIN). Relevant opportunities are automatically emailed to the investigator.

For additional assistance, contact ORPA or use the SPIN/GENIUS Quick Reference Card

Grant Writing Seminar
Amy Hein

On January 10, 2011, Dr. Kerry O’Banion presented a seminar on grant writing and funding opportunities. As Associate Chair and Professor in the Dept of Neurobiology & Anatomy as well as director of the M.D./Ph.D. program at URMC, Dr. O’Banion shared his expertise in attaining both training and research grants from government agencies and non-profit foundations, with a focus on funding mechanisms from the National Institutes of Health. Much discussion centered on the K-series or career development awards, as they are particularly relevant to the postdoctoral community. A relatively new and interesting grant is the K99/R00, commonly referred to as the kangaroo award, which provides 1-2 years of mentored funding for the postdoc and then 3 years of independent funding during their first faculty position. Check out the powerpoint slides or contact your ORPA representative for more details.
## Postdoc Accomplishments 2011

### JAMES S. CAVENAUGH
Ctr for Vaccine Biology & Immunology

- **Publication**
  - Cavenaugh JS, et al. Partially Randomized, Non-Blinded Trial of DNA and MVA Therapeutic Vaccines Based on Hepatitis B Virus Surface Protein for Chronic HBV Infection. *PLoS ONE.*

### YEISSA CHABRIER-ROSELLÓ
Dept of Pediatrics

- **Publications**

### SONIA D’SILVA
Dept of Biochemistry

- **Publication**
  - D’Silva, S, et al. A domain of the actin binding protein Abp1p10 is the yeast methyltransferase responsible for 3-methylcytidine modification in the tRNA anti-codon loop. *RNA.*

### JIANG FU
Dept of Biomedical Genetics

- **Publication**

### MICHAEL GLEGHORN
Dept of Biochemistry & Biophysics

- **Publications**
  - Gleghorn, M, et al. X-ray crystal structures elucidate the nucleotidyl transfer reaction of transcript initiation using two nucotides. *PNAS.*

### AMIN ISMAIL
Dept of Surgery

- **Award**
  - American Association for Cancer Research Minority Award Scholar, 2011.

### KOJI IZUMI
Dept of Pathology

- **Publications**

### PETER KOLTZ
Division of Plastic Surgery

- **Publication**

### POORNA KUSHALNAGAR
Dept of Community & Preventive Medicine

- **Publication**
  - Kushalnagar, P, et al. Mode of communication, perceived level of understanding and perceived quality of life in youth who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. *J of Deaf Studies and Deaf Ed.*

### WAY TO GO!!


### TORI MATTHEWS
Dept of Medicine
Division of Nephrology

- **Grant**
  - UNCF/Merck Postdoc Research Fellowships

### ASSAF OSHRI
Mt. Hope Family Center

- **Publications**

### MICHAEL OVERSTREET
Ctr for Vaccine Biology & Immunology

- **Grant**
  - NRSA F32 fellowship from NIH
AMBER RINDERKNECHT  
Dept of OBGYN  
Award  
♦ Science policy fellowship for Reach the Decision Makers Program, UCSF

MATTHEW R. SKERRITT  
Dept of Community & Preventive Medicine  
Award  
♦ Fulbright Scholar award to the United Arab Emirates.

Shian-Jang (John) Yan  
Dept of Biomedical Genetics  
Publications  
♦ Yan, SJ. et al. Unphosphorylated STAT and heterochromatin protect genome stability. FASEB J.

ETHAN A. ROSSI  
Cntr for Visual Science  
Publication  

Kalyan Srivastava  
Aab CVRI  
Publication  
♦ Morrell, CN*, Srivastava, K*, et al. Interferon-β suppresses the development of experimental cerebral malaria. Infection & Imm *equal authorship

Liquan Yang  
Dept of Biomedical Genetics  
Award  
♦ Wilmot Cancer Research Fellowship, James P. Wilmot Foundation

EMIL SCOSYREV  
Dept of Urology  
Publications  
♦ Scosyrev E, et al. Messing EM. The burden of bladder cancer in men and women: analysis of the years of life lost. BJU Int

ISSAC K. SUNDAR  
Dept of Environmental Medicine  
Publications  

Jinjing Zhao  
Aab CVRI  
Publication  

YoUR PDA wishes you a safe and fun-filled summer!

Suggestions for our newsletter?  
Email feedback to YoUR PDA Communications Committee @ Ashley_Whipple@urmc.rochester.edu

ATTENTION all talented postdoc writers and artists  
From the Editor

Share your experience, story, interesting book review, poetry, letters to editor, international column, recipes, jokes, cartoons, drawings, and other informative resources with your fellow postdocs.

Submit your original entries today:  
Ashley_Whipple@urmc.rochester.edu