May 15th, 2006 saw the inception of a brand new premier academic event for postdocs of Thomas Jefferson University (TJU). Hosted in BLSB, the first ever TJU Postdoctoral Research Symposium (PRS) was an outstanding success. Owing to this success, the symposium will now become an annual event. The PRS was a joint effort by the Jefferson Postdoctoral Association (JPA) and Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) and was designed to showcase as much of the postdoctoral research taking place at TJU as possible. Over 45 abstracts were submitted for poster presentation and of these, 10 were selected for oral presentation. The prizes, which were very kindly donated by the JCGS Alumni Association and Dean Keen, were awarded for the top presenters in each session and ranged from $250 - $500 to be used for professional expenses.

In addition to showcasing postdoctoral research, the day also included a Career and Vendor fair from our sponsors. Several pharmaceutical companies sent representatives to meet with TJU postdocs on site, accept resumés and discuss employment opportunities.

Dr. Robert Barchi, President of the University, addressed a formal luncheon of postdoctoral presenters, their advisors, and guests. He spoke of the importance of the postdoctoral training period, but also its potential for isolation. He noted that this Symposium provided a great community building experience for all postdocs. The Keynote Speaker of the event was Dr. Christopher Austin, Senior Advisor to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs at NIH and Director of the NCGC (National Human Genome Research Institute).

Keynote Speaker: Christopher P. Austin, M.D., Ph.D., Director of NIH Chemical Genomics Center (NCGC) and Senior Advisor to the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) at NIH.
Baby Steps towards Leaps & Bounds

By Ahmad B. Naim (President, 2004-06)

Standing among my peers at our 2nd Annual BBQ in 2005, I wandered back to November of 2003 when 14 of us eager postdocs met with Drs. Grunwald and Kozlowski to discuss forming an association. We were all very excited then and wanted to get started right away. I told everyone, “let’s take ‘baby steps’ first then comes leaps and bounds”. The “steering committee” as we were known started planning the framework of the association, developed and ratified its bylaws, and held elections for the Executive Board. All of this was achieved in a very short period of 10 months. We have made our presence felt at the national level at the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) meeting from 2004-2006 with either a poster or an oral presentation. I am glad to report that JPA is considered among the leading postdoc associations that have successfully taken up the challenge of improving the research experience. We have completed our first ever postdoc survey, results of which are presented in this newsletter. So, I say with these baby steps we have made leaps and bounds to organize and deliver innovative and appropriate programs to build a vibrant postdoc community at Jefferson. What lies ahead are exciting tasks such as the annual PRS, one-stop OPA website, postdoc online database to share scientific information and postdoc specific library resources. The JPA also has set in motion social programs like the Country Buddy Program and the annual summer postdoc BBQ. I am sure that we will continue to successfully make leaps and bounds with your active participation. So, join us and be a trend setter!!!

Our Path To Excellence

By Mani Thiyagarajan (Vice-President for Communications, 2004-05)

In our inaugural issue of the JPA newsletter, we want to spotlight one of the best resources available to Jefferson postdocs – The Scott Memorial Library (SML)! To find out more about resources available to postdocs, I met with Dan Kipnis, Education Services Librarian and a member of the Education Services Department within Academic & Instructional Support & Resources. The SML collection has over 100 databases, 240 e-books, 2,000 e-journals with full-text access and 200,000 books and monographs. With wireless access, users can retrieve many of the resources that they now access from their desktop PCs on their PDAs also. In addition to the scientific and medical journals available at the library, the Current Journals section on the 2nd floor of SML also contains popular magazines like MacWorld, PC Magazine, Science News, and others. The library also provides access to Elsevier's Scopus database, which covers over 14,000 journals across a broad spectrum of sciences; in addition, cited author searching is available dating back to the mid-1990s. Scopus also includes all Medline and Embase records and is especially strong in health and life sciences. The JEFFLINE Forum is another great resource for postdocs. The Forum has many features like tips on PowerPoint and database searches. To sign up for a copy of the Forum go to: http://jeffline.jefferson.edu/Education/forum/05/06/articles/join.html There is even a wireless optimized website for JEFFLINE called Mobile JEFFLINE: http://jeffline.jefferson.edu/mjeffline/ A new resource from the library is RefWorks. It is a web-database and bibliography creator, similar to Endnote and Reference Manager, which is free for Jeffersonians. RefWorks can be accessed by internet both on and off campus and the library offers tutorials on how to use it.

“So, I say with these baby steps we have made leaps and bounds to organize and deliver innovative and appropriate programs to build a vibrant postdoc community at Jefferson.”

“one of the best resources available to Jefferson postdocs – The Scott Memorial Library!”
The year was 2003. The mission was improving the postdoctoral training environment at TJU. The result was the establishment of university-wide policies and the OPA. At that time, I joined TJU as Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs and Recruitment. The policies that have already been implemented include the definition of a postdoctoral fellow, a 5 year term limit as a postdoctoral fellow, establishment of a postdoctoral association, and standardized benefits, regardless of funding source. To read the entire policy, please go to the Postdoc Pulse website. These policies were based on national recommendations made by the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the National Academies of Science Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (COSEPUP) among others. The OPA has helped to implement these policies. I also helped to form the Jefferson Postdoctoral Association and am still greatly involved in their activities. Additionally, I listen to feedback from the JPA and postdocs in general and help bring any concerns to the administration. I also work closely with the human resources department, department administrators, and faculty members to answer questions about postdoctoral needs and to improve the overall training environment at TJU.

What else does the OPA do for postdocs?
- Co-organizes the Postdoctoral Research Symposium
- Organizes relevant seminars with the Office of International Exchange Services
- Provides the Pulse website that includes university policies, funding resources, and career information
- E-mails job ads and other opportunities
- Organizes career seminars on academic and non-academic paths
- Coordinates professional development seminars on networking skills, resume/CV writing, and presentation skills
- Provides an annual Postdoc Orientation to let postdocs know what services are available to them at TJU
- Will provide a Scientific Management Course for senior postdocs this academic year
- Will coordinate English as a Second Language (ESL) classes with the JCHP Department of General Studies, starting in January

What else can the OPA do for you?
- Help with acclimation when postdocs first arrive at TJU
- Help with grievances, such as conflicts in the workplace, if necessary
- Help with career issues, including one-on-one resume review, career path information, and job search strategies

If you have any questions, please contact me at 3-5750, lisa.kozlowski@jefferson.edu, or stop by M-60 JAH.

"With postdocs from over 30 countries, the Jefferson postdoctoral community is a diverse group of scientists that can be of great assistance to incoming postdocs."

Do you remember when you first arrived in TJU? Maybe you moved from another state, country or even continent? How useful would it have been to be able to email or talk to someone from the same region as you? Well that is the aim of the Country Buddy Program. With postdocs from over 30 countries, the Jefferson postdoctoral community is a diverse group of scientists that can be of great assistance to incoming postdocs. Even if moving from another area in the United States, a new postdoc can benefit from talking to a Philly local for tips and advice. At the heart of this scheme is the willingness of you, the current postdocs in TJU, to volunteer your contact information and a little bit of time should a potential TJU postdoc from your country want information. The JPA is developing a comprehensive guide to aid new and existing postdocs in finding services available at Jefferson as well around Philadelphia such as employee benefits, housing, child care, library resources, professional workshops, etc. If you are willing to be contacted by incoming postdocs from your country please email your name, email address, department and home country to jpa@jefferson.edu.
Postdocs are in a unique situation—they are not students, but they are not treated as bona fide employees either. Like students they require career support services and a training structure, whereas like regular employees they require a standardized pay and benefits structure that is in proportion to their existing training and hours worked. Jefferson postdocs work an average of 50 hours per week. In addition, the importance of a happy postdoc population cannot be underestimated—an happy postdoc population undeniably underpins the productivity of the medical research effort. Luckily, there is increasing awareness amongst the scientific and wider communities about their importance, but working to improve the postdoc situation is proving more difficult. The first step has been to acquire “hard evidence” about the specific needs of the postdoc population through surveys such as the recent Sigma Xi National Postdoc survey and our own JPA survey. The data is in and this article summarizes the recent Sigma Xi findings with a sneak-preview of our own JPA survey results.

What are the issues most important to postdocs? Salary? Employment benefits? These issues certainly are important - the median postdoc survey respondent’s salary is $38,000, a measly sum when compared with the national average of $71,000 for people with a doctoral degree of the same age. Indeed, our own JPA survey found that Jefferson postdocs rate salary as the single most important issue they face, with benefits coming in a close second. The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) and JPA are addressing these issues. Lobbying of the NIH by the NPA is apparently yielding results and the NIH is keen to help improve the lot of the US postdoc.

With only 40% of postdocs being US citizens (17% of our own JPA survey respondents were US citizens), the issues particular to international postdocs are also seen as extremely significant. The Sigma Xi survey found that temporary visa holders received an average of $2000 a year less than their US citizen counterparts. This may be partly why the NPA has devoted an entire section of their website to providing international postdocs with valuable information and resources. Perhaps the most important aspect is that postdocs are having to wake up to the reality of their futures. In 1995, only 35% of former postdocs were in tenure-track positions, but since then the number of graduate students has dramatically increased beyond any increase in academic positions available. So the reality is that the majority of postdocs will never attain an academic position. As a recent report in Science suggests, those postdocs who are well-informed and plan well for their future careers are most likely to be successful. With this in mind, the OPA and the JPA arrange regular career seminars to provide postdocs with information on career choices other than academia.

There has never been a better time to help mould the future postdoctoral experience. Expect more JPA surveys during the upcoming academic year on various topics such as benefits, career issues and library resources.

2. Mason, B. “US postdocs: Young, gifted... and broke”, Nature (2004); 428: 690-91
† http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/site/c.eoJIW0BlH/b.1423457/k.2BCB International_Postdoc_Programs__Resources.htm
Jefferson postdocs excel in the laboratory! Below are first author publications of postdocs at Jefferson from 2005 - 2006. First author postdocs are highlighted. Congratulations to all the postdocs who made this list. Email publication information to georgia.anyatonwu@jefferson.edu


contd. on page 6.....
Jefferson Postdoctoral Publications 2005-06

Edited By Georgia Anyatonwu (Vice-President for Career Development, 2006-07)

Patel CA, Rattan S. Spontaneously Tonic Smooth-Muscle has Characteristically Higher Levels of RhoA/ROK as Compared with the Phasic Smooth Muscle. Am J Physiol Gastrointest Liver Physiol. 2006 Jun 8; [Epub ahead of print]


Postdoctoral Fellowship/Awards 2005-06

Edited By Georgia Anyatonwu (Vice-President for Career Development, 2006-07)

Jefferson postdocs excel in the areas of grant writing and scientific presentation. Congratulations to the following postdocs on winning awards and fellowships this year.

• Francesco Del Galdo, M.D., Laboratory of Dr. Sergio Jimenez in the Division of Rheumatology in the Department of Medicine. Dr. Del Galdo represented Thomas Jefferson University at the Finkelstein Symposium competition on autoimmune diseases featuring other PA universities such as Temple, UPENN, Penn State, and Pittsburgh. Dr. Del Galdo won first place and earned a prize of $2000.

• Maria Rosa Lidonnici, M.D., Ph.D., Laboratory of Dr. Bruno Calabretta in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. Dr. Lidonnici was awarded an American-Italian Cancer Foundation (AICF) Fellowship for the academic year 2006-2007.

• Matthieu Boucher, Ph.D., Laboratory of Dr. Walter Koch in the Center for Translational Medicine. Dr. Boucher was awarded an American Heart Association Postdoctoral Fellowship for 2006-2008.

Email fellowships/awards to lisa.kozlowski@jefferson.edu
Announcements

**Fall 2006 Masters in Science courses available to Jefferson postdocs**
- GC 625 Drug Development issues

For more information, including more courses, click on the MS/MPH courses icon at http://www.jefferson.edu/jcgs/

**Postdoctoral Fellowship Application Program (PFAP)**
Are you applying for fellowships this coming academic year? PFAP is a novel program that will assist Jefferson postdocs with preparation of postdoctoral fellowship applications with the aim of increasing chances of success. The program includes a series of seminars on the fellowship application process. To enroll, please contact jpa@jefferson.edu

Upcoming Events

**JPA Open Meetings in Fall 2006** take place at 1pm on:
- September 14th in JAH 307
- October 12th and November 9th in BLSB 105
- December 14th in JAH 207

**Fall 2006 Technical Skills Seminars:**
Quantitative PCR, siRNA and miRNA knockdown and NIH bioinformatics mini-courses.

**Postdoc Social Event of the Year:**

**WE NEED YOU!!**
To contribute to JeffPost, please forward a 200-300 article about your research experience to jpa@jefferson.edu. We are also accepting postdoc publications and research-related jokes. Submission deadline for the next issue is July 2007.

The JeffPost Cartoons

By Tariq Khan

"Roger, we have a problem! Looks like Jefferson postdocs are here before us".

"Soon we will take over the world. We will make transgenic humans. We will knock their genes out! We will..............!"
Postdoctoral Research Symposium '06

the Director for Translational Research at the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), who delivered a very stimulating seminar on exciting projects currently underway at the NIH Chemical Genomics Center. Dr. Austin met with several postdocs and faculty members throughout the day and thoroughly enjoyed his visit to TJU.

In addition to the prize-winning postdocs, special awards were presented to Drs. Dennis Gross and Ahmad Naim. Dr. Gross was a tremendous support to the organising committee through his fundraising contacts and was given the first ‘Friend of the Jefferson Postdoctoral Association’ award. Dr. Naim was the founding president of the JPA. The contributions of Dr. Naim to the success of the JPA are immeasurable and without a doubt, the PRS would not have taken place without his drive and enthusiasm. It was very fitting that it was at the inaugural PRS that Dr. Naim became an Honorary Lifetime Member of the JPA and received an Outstanding Service Recognition Award from the OPA. The day drew to a close with a wine and cheese reception and of course that wonderful martini bar.

If you would like to be involved in organising the 2007 PRS, please email the chairperson of the organising committee, Mark Jones at R_Jones@mail.jci.tju.edu

PRS 2006 Sponsors

**Platinum:** Merck, Freedom Credit Union, GlaxoSmithKline, and JCGS Alumni Association

**Silver:** Hudson United Bank, Roche Diagnostics, Clontech, and Wyeth Research

**Other:** AstraZeneca and TJU Office of International Exchange Services (OIES)

PRS Organizing Committee

**Co-Chairs**
Denise Fitzgerald, Ph.D., and R. Mark Jones, Ph.D.

**Members**
Carol Beck, Ph.D., Cunnigaiper Bhanumathy, Ph.D., Marzena Fabis, Ph.D., Lisa Kozlowski, Ph.D., Liam Loftus, Ph.D., Ahmad B. Naim, M.D., and Xiangdong Wu, Ph.D.

PRS Awards

PRSA is an annual event where the best research postdocs are awarded. The 2006 winners are: Drs. Cunnigaiper Bhanumathy, Satish Sharma, Anastasios Lymperopoulos, and Mattieu Boucher (missing from the photo is Dr. Borbala Daroczi)

PRS organizing committee members—Denise Fitzgerald (l), Mark Jones (m), and Ahmad Naim (r)

PRS wine reception

Postdoc Francesco Del Galdo, M.D., explains his research to Bruce Smith, M.D., Associate Vice President, Research, TJU

Postdocs at the PRS Poster Presentation

James Keen, Ph.D., (l) Dean of JCGS and Lisa Kozlowski, Ph.D., (r) Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs and Recruitment