Jefferson College of Graduate Studies

JeffPOST

The Newsletter of the **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association
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Special Points of Interest:

- 3rd Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium
- 2008 Annual NPA Meeting
- 2008 JPA Survey
- Transferable Skills
- Postdoctoral Awards
- Postdoctoral Publications
- Social Events

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3rd Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium

By Georgia Anyatonwu (PRS Co-Chair, 2008) & Tassos Lymperopoulos (Vice-President for Nominations and Elections, 2008-2009)

On June 24th 2008, the third annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium (PRS) was held. The symposium garnered postdoctoral fellows, both new and seasoned, from across different departments at Jefferson as well as Jefferson's President, faculty, deans, research staff and graduate students. Presentation of multidisciplinary biomedical research and exchange of scientific ideas were the epicenter of the 2008 PRS. Hosted by the JCGS Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) and the **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association (**J**PA), this year's PRS was a bigger event than last year's. Although the research presentations took place in the Bluemle Life Sciences Building, the keynote address and the martini reception were held in the newly unveiled Dorrance H. Hamilton building; moreover, the number of external sponsors increased 21% from last year. With a high percentage of Jefferson postdocs having an international background, PRS also served as an outlet for honing public speaking skills, a crucial skill required of a scientist.

Like last year, twenty-eight postdoctoral fellows, most of whom were international, showcased their research in two simultaneous oral presentation sessions during the morning and afternoon of June 24th. In addition, twenty posters were displayed and presented by postdoctoral fellows.

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Editorial

By Sonia Godoy-Tundidor (Vice-President for Communications, 2008-2009)

Dear Postdocs,

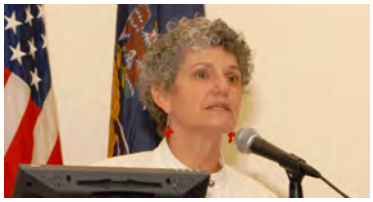
Welcome to a new edition of **Jeff***POST*, the annual newsletter of the **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association! With the invaluable help of Dr. Lisa Kozlowski, Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs & Recruitment, Jefferson postdocs are becoming a thriving community, where postdoctoral training encompasses not only research, but also many aspects of professional development and personal growth.

Please join us as we recapitulate the breadth of activities that have developed as part of Jefferson's postdoctoral programs.

TJU President Robert L. Barchi, MD, PhD, addressing the postdoc community.

From left to right: Drs. Heather Montie, Georgia Anyatonwu & Lisa Kozlowski, Co-Chairs of the 2008 Postdoctoral Research Symposium.

Dr. Robert J. Lefkowitz during his keynote address.



Dr. Fredda London, President Elect of the JCGS Alumni Association.

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President's Corner: **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association, Leaps and Bounds

By Heather Montie (President of the JPA, 2008-2009)

With the advent of the Jefferson Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) and the **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association (**J**PA) five years ago, the postdoc experience at Jefferson has been and will forever be changed. The advice given to the "steering committee" of the **J**PA, by our first **J**PA president, Ahmad Naim, MD, was "let's take 'baby steps' first then come leaps and bounds". We are now in the midst of taking those leaps and bounds. The **J**PA is a leader among postdoc associations, which is exemplified by our association's mentorship of upcoming associations across the country at the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) annual meetings.

Recently, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Science Foundation (NSF) have agreed upon the following definition of a postdoctoral scholar:

"An individual who has received a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and is engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path."

The **J**PA, in conjunction with the OPA, works adamantly to fulfill the needs of postdocs here at Jefferson, and to guide us along those paths. In collaboration, we host various career, technical skills and grant writing seminars, social events and, of course, our premier event, the Postdoc Research Symposium, which showcases the success of our postdocs to the entire Jefferson community.

When I came to Jefferson three years ago, straight from graduate school, my feeling of community and continued structured learning never missed a beat. The OPA and **J**PA are responsible for that and I am forever grateful and hope that the rest of you will feel the same. Becoming involved in the **J**PA executive board and the PRS planning committee have been memorable and valuable experiences for me. They have given me tools off the bench that I need for a successful career in academic research, including collaboration, teamwork and leadership.

It is the main goal of the OPA and **J**PA to give the postdocs at Jefferson a feeling of community and to offer them the best postdoc experience possible. I hope that each of you will consider joining the **J**PA executive board or at least becoming more involved in **J**PA events. It is crucial to your career development and to your growth as a scientist to train also outside the lab. I look forward to the upcoming year, as the **J**PA has many great events planned for us all. I hope to see you there. Good luck with your research and your career development!

-Your **J**PA President, Heather L. Montie, Ph.D.

*"Becoming involved in the **J**PA executive board and the PRS planning committee have been memorable and valuable experiences for me"*

Postdoc Presentation Series: Helping You Get Your Research Across

By Christopher So (Vice-President for Career Development, 2008-2009)

So you've got your research published, you updated your CV and you're now ready to go for that dream academic post at your dream university. Or maybe that dream research job in industry. Or you're in your first few years of your postdoc and you're giving a talk at a national conference or even a research in progress seminar here at Jefferson. Are you ready to go? Not so fast. What about your presentation? Are you effectively getting your message across? Are your slides conveying the greatness of your research?

These issues are just as important as your research itself. This is where the **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association's (**J**PA's) Postdoc Presentation Series comes in. This is a new series started last spring and offered by the **J**PA for you to practice your presentation skills. Attended only by fellow postdocs, it offers an informal setting that allows for positive criticism of your presentation. You can sign up to give a talk that is just 10 minutes in length or a longer presentation for that faculty interview or invited lecture. Even if you don't have a lecture coming up, you can sign up to give a presentation to see what response your work would receive from fellow postdocs.

For further information, contact the **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association at jpa@jefferson.edu.

"Are your slides conveying the greatness of your research?"

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3rd Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium

By Georgia Anyatonwu (PRS Co-Chair, 2008) & Tassos Lymperopoulos (Vice-President for Nominations and Elections, 2008-2009)

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The oral and poster presentations were judged by Jefferson faculty. Winners and their mentors are listed on page 15. Awardees were given monetary awards for professional expenses. The awards were generously provided by the JCGS Alumni Association and the JCGS Dean's office.

Co-Chairs Drs. Lisa Kozlowski (left) and Heather Montie (right) during the invited luncheon at the Mandeville Conference Room.

In addition to the presentations, two highlights of this event were the invited luncheon and the keynote address. At the luncheon, postdoctoral fellows and faculty mentors alike were advised by the President of Thomas Jefferson University, **Robert L. Barchi, MD, PhD,** (pictured on page 1) on the importance of biomedical research training and performance at the postdoctoral level. Also in attendance were **Dr. James Keen**, Dean of the JCGS, **Dr. Michael Vergare**, interim Dean of Jefferson Medical College and **Fredda London**, PhD'87, JCGS Alumni Association President Elect. The much anticipated keynote address was delivered by renowned G protein-coupled receptor scientist, **Robert J. Lefkowitz**, **MD** (pictured on page 1), James B. Duke Professor of Medicine and Biochemistry and HHMI Investigator from Duke University Medical Center. Introducing the keynote speaker were Drs. Walter Koch and Jeffrey L. Benovic, former postdoctoral fellow and graduate student, respectively, in the laboratory of Dr. Lefkowitz. The keynote address on "Seven Transmembrane Receptors: Past, Present and Future" was heard by Jefferson faculty, postdocs, graduate students and research staff in a packed Connelly auditorium.

After the keynote address came the commencement of the award ceremony. Drs. Lisa Kozlowski (Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs and Recruitment) and Fredda London presented awards to the aforementioned oral and poster presentation winners (pictured on page 15). Additionally, Drs. Denise Fitzgerald and Lisa Kozlowski presented the Distinguished Mentor Award (DMA) to **Dr. Theodore Taraschi** for his excellent mentorship skills. More information about Dr. Taraschi and the award can be found on pages 13 & 14 of this issue.

Lastly, the **J**PA and the PRS planning committee presented an appreciation award to **Dr. Lisa Kozlowski for all of her work on behalf of Jefferson's postdoctoral fellows.** PRS was sponsored by internal and external sources that are listed on the postdoc website and in an article on page 14. Of honorable mention is Complete Healthcare Communications Inc. (CHC) who was the event platinum sponsor and bag sponsor. CHC, as well as Merck, Johnson & Johnson, Regeneron, the American Association for Cancer Research, and Sterne Kessler Goldstein & Fox participated in the mini-career fair for postdocs and graduate students.

Dr. Anne Shriner, 2007-2008 **J**PA President, presents the appreciation award to Dr. Lisa Kozlowski, Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs and Recruitment.

The PRS ended with the traditional martini reception. PRS was made possible by the hard work of Dr. Lisa Kozlowski (Faculty Co-Chair), and postdocs Drs. Heather Montie (Co-Chair), Georgia Anyatonwu (Co-Chair), Mayumi Akaki, Ayanna Augustus, Zoe Fonseca-Kelly, Tassos Lymperopoulos, Anne Shriner, Christopher So and Ning Yang (pictured on page 16).

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"Over the past several years, the PRS has continuously grown to become THE day to celebrate the good science produced and all the hard work put in by Jefferson postdocs

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Transferable Skills - Do You Have Them?; Do You Need Them?

By Lisa Kozlowski (Assistant Dean, Postdoctoral Affairs and Recruitment)

Transfer-to convey or remove from one place, person, or situation to another; to move; to shift

Throughout your education, you have learned technical skills that you use every day at the laboratory bench. Those techniques range from PCR to RNAi to flow cytometry to cell culture to…. Some of you may have done clinical work before you came to Jefferson and thus bring those experiences and skills with you. So throughout all of those years, what have you been educated or prepared for? An academic position in a research intensive institution where you run your own lab? Yes.

But what if you decide that's not the career path you want to take? Or due to the economy (NIH funding situation, etc.) you start to look at other positions? If you look at positions in patent law or science policy, do you look and think "I have no skills"? Instead you should be saying "I have lots of skills". You may think that these are mostly the technical skills that I mentioned above, so how do they help?

You need to take a step back and go through a self-assessment process. Sit down one night and list everything that you do. Start with your hands-on bench skills. Then think about what else you do as a research scientist. If you can't think of anything, let me help a little. What about….

- Data analysis
- Problem solving/Trouble shooting (hypothesis, experimental design, equipment)
- Doing statistics
- Giving presentations
- Rapidly picking up a new topic
- Writing papers and grants
- Reviewing articles
- Teaching
- Mentoring
- Leadership
- Teamwork

You also need to think about your activities outside the lab. Have you been an officer with the **J**PA or your graduate or undergraduate student associations? Maybe you have been involved in lobbying Congress for continued research funding (see article on pages 10 & 11). Or maybe you have been the captain of your soccer team. Don't downplay these outside activities. If you have acquired appropriate skills at them, then do them justice. For all of these, think about the specific tasks. Think about what abilities and strengths are needed to be successful.

Then you need to talk to people in the career paths that you are interested in and find out what skills are needed. Take that information and re-design your resume to focus on those abilities and strengths. It might mean shrinking your 5 page CV to a 2 page resume. Or presenting your numerous publications as a 2 line summary. As I left the lab bench in my career path, I summed up my PhD work into 1 bullet item that included the number of first author publications, chapters, reviews, and presentations. The first time I did this it was difficult to see what those years of my life had boiled down to. But that was the scientific side. On the transferable skills side, I had written and reviewed papers and grants, I had learned how to problem solve, I had given presentations, and I had even written for our PhD program's newsletter. I had also done activities outside the laboratory that had enhanced my communication skills. At that point, I realized how many more bullet items I had acquired.

So don't think "I have no skills". You all have many more skills than you can ever imagine.

"So don't think " I have no skills". You all have many more skills than you can ever imagine"

"As I left the lab bench in my career path, I summed up my PhD work into 1 bullet item […] The first time I did this it was difficult to see what those years of my life had boiled down to"

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National Postdoctoral Association: A Voice for the Positive Postdoc Experience

By Christopher So (Vice-President for Career Development, 2008-2009) & Archana Mukherjee (Secretary, 2008-2009)

"What's a postdoc?" Have you ever been asked that question? Most certainly, you probably have. The answer to that question has changed in recent years. Gone are the times that a "postdoc" was a transient position that a PhD graduate took until a faculty position opened up. More recently, highly qualified individuals are postdocs for 5 years or more with no real opportunity for a transition to an academic position. It has been estimated that only 20% of postdocs will transition to faculty positions in their careers and, with the current situation of funding in the US and Canada, this percentage will only decrease in coming years. Also, because of the perceived "transient" nature of postdocs, many universities have not adapted to this new situation and have not extended benefits that are available to university employees to them.

So, what becomes of the postdoc?

The goal of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) is to address this issue. The mission of the NPA, which is comprised of postdoc leaders from many different disciplines at universities in the US and Canada and postdoc office administrators, is to develop an action agenda to advocate for policy changes in the following areas (source: www.nationalpostdoc.org):

- a standard definition for the postdoctoral appointment
- uniform policies and procedures governing the treatment of postdocs
- adequate compensation and benefits
- a greater emphasis on the mentoring and training of postdocs, which fosters professional development and the transition to independence

Sounds great, right? But is it really working? Has the NPA actually been able to lobby for these changes? Is their message being heard by the right people?

That's what we wanted to find out. As a recipient of a travel award from the NPA, I (Chris) was invited to attend their annual meeting this past year in Boston, Massachusetts (April 25-27, 2008).

My first impression of this meeting was the diversity of those in attendance, from postdocs in a variety of different disciplines to university administrators. All of them had one common goal - to improve the postdoc experience. This meeting was well-organized and was a forum for information exchange amongst those attending, as evidenced by the variety of workshops available. The topics covered included how to start postdoctoral associations, improving meeting attendance and improving postdoctoral career counseling. Also, it provided a platform for an exchange of diverse ideas on improving the postdoctoral experience. For instance, there was a presentation by a group from Harvard whose research proposed the development of an agency to better match postdocs with researchers in the US. The keynote address was given by Sharon Hays, PhD, Deputy Director for Science in the Office of Science and Technology Policy, who iterated the position of the US government to improve the conditions of the postdoc workforce.

From its inception in 2003, the NPA has been an advocate for change. In particular:

- An official postdoc definition that was proposed by the NPA was adopted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). This definition helps to recognize postdocs and allows for future policy formation. A postdoc is now defined as "An individual who has received a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and is engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path".
- Lobbying the NSF successfully to require that all principal investigators intending to support postdocs on their research grants must address the issue of mentoring in their proposals. This will create a better postdoc training environment and will help stem any potential conflicts. The NIH has not yet adopted this requirement.

In addition to these changes, the NPA has made significant strides in fostering strong relations with policy makers within the NIH, NSF and other government agencies. Recommendations to these agencies have already been

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"Jefferson is a flagbearer for a positive postdoctoral experience and a forerunner for recognizing the achievements of postdocs"

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National Postdoctoral Association: A Voice for the Positive Postdoc Experience

made on the creation of a centralized appointment process, the establishment of a curriculum for training and a timeframe for transition to independence. More positive changes are forthcoming.

I personally left the meeting with a greater understanding of issues that postdocs are facing. Also, it made me realize that Jefferson is a flagbearer for a positive postdoctoral experience and a forerunner for recognizing the achievements of postdocs. Many postdocs in attendance tell horror stories of poor postdoctoral training and work conditions at their respective universities. Things can always be improved here, and definitely elsewhere, and the NPA is an important voice for a positive postdoctoral experience.

The next annual meeting will be held March 27th to 29th, 2009 in Houston, Texas. The 2010 meeting will be held here in Philadelphia on the grounds of the University of Pennsylvania, March 12-14. The NPA is always looking for new members and volunteers. For further information, visit the National Postdoctoral Association website at www.nationalpostdoc.org.

Technical Skills Seminar Series (TSSS): Bringing New Scientific Methodologies to your Doorstep

By Christopher So (Vice-President for Career Development, 2008-2009)

Is there a better way of doing your experiments? Odds are there is. From easier and faster ways to analyze your data to detecting difficult-to-work-with proteins, the JPA's technical skills seminar series presents these topics and more. Given by experts from industrial and academic realms, these technical skill seminars are highly informative and suitable for all members of the Jefferson research community.

Previous technical skills seminars include those given by industry leaders Invitrogen, Sigma Aldrich and Abcam on topics as diverse as RNA isolation, RT-PCR, using phosphospecific antibodies and mass spectrometry. In the coming year, seminar series topics will include flow cytometry and direct sequencing of the genome.

If you have any suggestions for future topics, please e-mail the **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association at **jpa**@jefferson.edu.

Upcoming Technical Skills Seminar

Wednesday, January 21, 2009. 1:00-2:00 pm. **Invitrogen Corp.** More details to be announced shortly.

Tuesday, February 17, 2009. 1:00-2:00 pm. **Operon**. More details to be announced shortly.

Jefferson Postdoctoral Publications 2007-2008

By Sonia Godoy-Tundidor (Vice-President for Communications, 2008-2009)

One of the biggest rewards for a postdoc is to have his/her research featured in a peer-reviewed journal. Often those publications are the long expected harvest of many little seeds watered, nourished and taken care of for a long period of time. It is through hard work, perseverance, patience and hope that such publications see the daylight. Congratulations to all the Jefferson postdocs that had the joy to publish this year! We present here a sampling of the terrific research achievements of TJU postdocs, as determined by manuscripts in which they were first or last author **(postdocs in bold case)**.

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Jefferson Postdoctoral Publications 2007-2008

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"Jefferson postdocs publish extensively in all areas of research"

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Jefferson Postdoctoral Publications 2007-2008

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"Jefferson postdocs see the fruit of their efforts published in high-impact journals "

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Social Corner

By Nicole Willmarth (Vice-President for Social Affairs, 2008-2009)

The mission of the **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association (**J**PA) is to foster professional development as well as social interaction. This past year in particular has been fruitful with social activities for the Jefferson postdocs. The fun began with last December's trip to Longwood Gardens where postdocs were able to see the winter light show amongst the plants and flowers, as well as the decorations for the holidays. It was a beautiful sight to see!

On February 1, we held our annual Winter Bash and this time it was a Mardi Gras theme complete with masks, New Orleans style food and raffle prizes straight from "The Big Easy". Then in mid-February, the postdocs joined the Graduate Student Association (GSA) on a ski trip to the Poconos.

Bowling night, which was held in March, is always a popular event and it gives our postdocs a chance to show off their off-the-bench skills!

In July, Jefferson postdocs took part in an Atlantic City trip where they traveled by train and enjoyed a fun day at the beach, casinos and restaurants. Then in August, the **J**PA hosted the 5th Annual Summer BBQ with a zoo theme entitled "A WILD night at the Zoo". At this party, over 120 postdocs and their families came to enjoy food and drinks as well as games and raffle prizes. As a bonus, the Philadelphia Zoo on Wheels set up a booth where everyone could see live animals such as an owl and a sugar glider. This was a HUGE hit for the kids as well as the adults!

In addition to these larger events, the **J**PA has also hosted monthly social hours as well as a joint "coffee break" with the OPA that had free coffee, tea and sweets at Joe Coffee Bar. So as you can tell, there are many exciting events going on with the **J**PA! If you haven't had the opportunity to attend one of these **J**PA social events, don't worry….there are many more coming up in the near future. We hope you can join us!

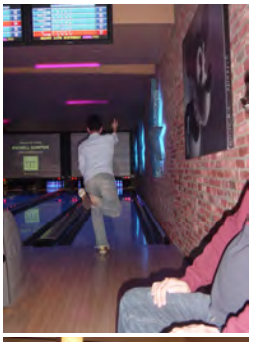
Bowling Night

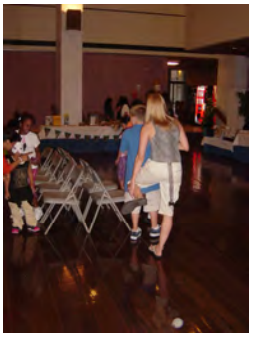
2008 Summer BBQ

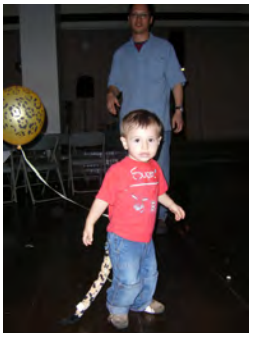
Atlantic City Trip

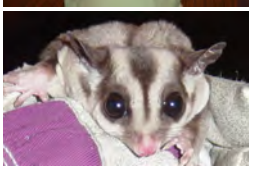
Winter Bash

JPA Social Hour









JeffPOST

Science Advocacy on Capitol Hill

By Sonia Godoy-Tundidor (Vice-President for Communications, 2008-2009)

As postdoctoral fellows in the biomedical field, we are aware that research funding is pretty tight. We see our PIs writing numerous grant proposals year round mainly addressed to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). We even write grants ourselves. However, the President's Budget Request for the NIH for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 was flat funded at $29.5 billion, constituting NIH's sixth consecutive sub-inflationary budget[1]. This funding situation is posing a serious threat to promising ongoing biomedical research projects and, by extension, to your scientific career. Is there anything you can do to help research stay afloat?

The answer is yes! You may not be familiar with the procedure but the development of the US federal budget is a dynamic process that can be reshaped along the way. Typically, the President sends budget proposals to Capitol Hill in early February[1]. The US House of Representatives and the US Senate pass their own budget resolutions, agreeing on a common one by the middle of April[1]. After passing their joint resolution, the appropriations process takes off[1]. In this phase, funding allocations are made to several committees and subcommittees within the House and Senate, and both the full House and the full Senate vote on their own bills[1]. Around September, the House and Senate negotiate between the two versions of the bill and vote on the final combined version[1]. In October, the President signs or vetoes the final version of the bill[1]. Thus, in such a lengthy process, there are multiple opportunities for scientists to intercede in favor of the continuous support of Congress to research, by encouraging fair and adequate funding to the NIH and NSF (National Science Foundation). Science advocacy is one of the ways by which you can help research have a voice in Congress.

On May 7, 2008 I accepted an invitation from Lynn Marquis, Director of the Coalition for Life Sciences (CLS), to advocate for biomedical research on Capitol Hill. The Nobel Laureate Dr. Harold Varmus, President of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and former NIH Director, stands as the Chair of the CLS. CLS is an alliance of six renowned scientific societies: the American Society for Cell Biology, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the Genetics Society of America, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Society for Neuroscience and the Society for Science & the Public[1]. Together, these non-profit, professional organizations represent over 60,000 researchers, clinicians, teachers and advocates in various research and medical disciplines[1]. Our goal was to lobby to increase NIH funding by $1.9 billion for FY 2009, up to a total of $31.1 billion.

Our day started with a hearty breakfast at the Bullfeathers on Capitol Hill. Lynn Marquis welcomed us, a group of researchers from different universities and research backgrounds: professors, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students from institutions in Maryland, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Texas. Our fields of research were as diverse as immunology, genetics, cancer, neuroscience and orthopedic surgery. On our agenda: meetings with several representatives of the Senate and House from our districts. Two or three researchers would meet with one representative for 15-20 minutes. Our mission was to explain, in lay terms, how our research impacts people's lives and why the benefits of maintaining well-funded research outweigh, in the long run, the costs associated with healthcare that could be prevented by research discoveries. Underfunding research will make the USA lose its competitive edge, generating job losses and decreasing economic growth. Furthermore, the poor funding situation is forcing established scientists to downsize or close labs and young researchers are giving a second thought to pursuing an academic career, which is regarded as a risky business. While the representatives we talked to were very bright, competent and friendly, it is important to remember that most of them do not have a scientific background. That is the reason why science advocacy is important, since it provides a channel of communication between the scientists and the people who have a direct influence on how science is going to be backed up by the government.

During a delicious lunch, we had the great honor of attending a scientific seminar by Dr. George Daley, a Howard Hughes Medic-

Cont'd. on page 11…

"Science advocacy provides a channel of communication between the scientists and the people who directly influence how science is going to be backed up by the government"

JeffPOST

Science Advocacy on Capitol Hill

al Investigator at Children's Hospital in Boston, on the topic "Do we still need research on embryonic stem cells?" Dr. Daley presented the difference between embryonic stem cells and adult induced pluripotent stem cells. He explained the purpose of research on each cell type and expressed his views to the multitude gathered there, which included researchers, advocates and members of Congress. His talk was part of the 2008 Congressional Biomedical Research Caucus (CBRC) Briefings. The Caucus works to transmit key scientific information to members of Congress to help them make informed and accurate policy decisions[1]. They also keep Congress up-to-date in biomedical research advances and their translation to human health[1].

After the afternoon meetings at The Capitol, we celebrated the end of the day enjoying a drink and talking about our encounter with science advocacy. I have to say that I had a terrific time and I also learned a lot. Before I went to the Capitol, I had no idea about how decisions were made with respect to US research funding. Now I know that our participation as researchers can help make the current situation better. It surprised me to see the degree of involvement of researchers: in just ten people we had a representation of the whole academic rank. I think Lynn did a wonderful job in organizing a very productive and fun Capitol Hill Day and I would definitely recommend the experience to everybody. CLS kindly supported the attendance to the meeting with travel grants. There was also some homework to do afterwards: Capitol Hill Day is the initial step, but following up with the representatives you have talked to is equally important. Send them a "thank you" note and remind them of giving a special thought to research when they need to vote for funding allocations.

Sonia Godoy-Tundidor (front row, second from the left) with some of the biomedical researchers who advocated for science on Capitol Hill Day in Washington, D.C.

If you would like additional information about science advocacy on Capitol Hill, please contact Lynn Marquis at LMARQUIS@jscpp.org. You can also contact me (maria.godoy-tundidor@jefferson.edu) or Dr. Lisa Kozlowski, (lisa.kozlowski@jefferson.edu) for more information. I leave you with a picture of our happy group on that beautiful Capitol Hill Day.

1. Source: Coalition for the Life Sciences 2008.

JPA Executive Board, 2008-2009

Front row, left to right: Archana Mukherjee, Secretary & Judy Zhang, Treasurer. Back row, left to right: Christopher So, Vice-President for Career Development; Heather Montie, President; Sonia Godoy-Tundidor, Vice-President for Communications; Nicole Willmarth, Vice-President for Social Affairs & Anastasios Lymperopoulos, Vice-President for Nominations and Elections. Missing from picture: Steve Pedrini, Senior Vice-President.

"The mission of the Congressional Biomedical Research Caucus is to transmit key scientific information to members of Congress to help them make informed policy decisions"

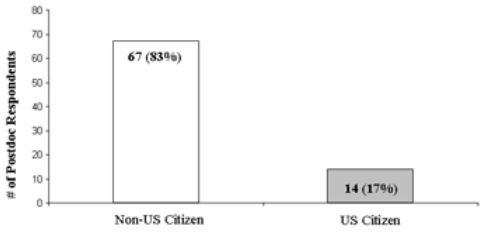
"Dr. George Daley, a Howard Hughes Medical Investigator at Children's Hospital in Boston, presented his scientific seminar "Do we still need research on embryonic stem cells?"

JeffPOST

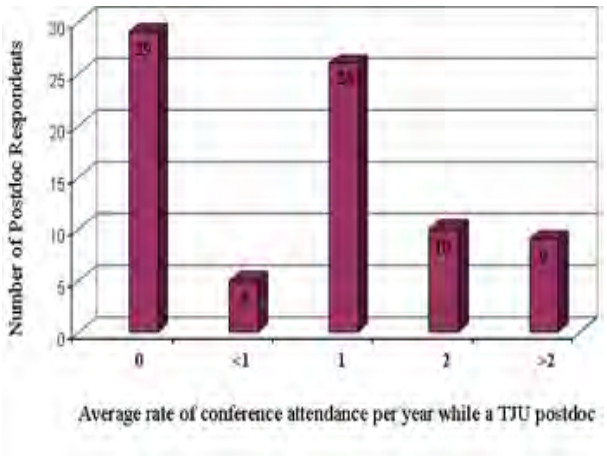
JPA Survey 2008

By Steve Pedrini (Senior Vice-President, 2008-2009) & Marzena Fabis (Treasurer, 2007-2008)

For the third year, the **Jefferson** Postdoctoral Association performed a survey to determine what the needs of TJU postdocs are. Of the 153 postdocs on campus, 81 participated in the survey (53%). The graphics shown below are representative of their answers, with results being stratified according to citizenship into US and non-US citizens.



As reported above, the vast majority of the postdocs who took the survey (77%) were non-US citizens. With regards to their presence at conferences (see figure on right) most of the postdocs attended one or less conferences per year.



Current Benefits to be Improved

Non-US Citizen	%	Most important	US Citizen	%
Vacation days	68.7		Voluntary tax-deferred savings plan (403b)-for retirement	35.7
Dental insurance	50.7		Public transportation subsidies	35.7
Vision insurance	43.3		Sick days	35.7
Health insurance	40.3		Vacation days	35.7
Sick days	40.3		Dental insurance	28.6
Family leave (maternity/paternity)	37.3		Family leave (maternity/paternity)	28.6
Public transportation subsidies	37.3		Health insurance	7.1
Voluntary tax-deferred savings plan (403b)-for retirement	32.8		Credit union	7.1
Tuition reimbursement for courses	26.9	Least important	Life insurance	7.1

Which benefits would you like to add ?

Non-US Citizen	%	Most important	US Citizen	%
Personal days	57.1		Discounted gym membership	53.8
Discounted gym membership	54.0		Subsidized parking	53.8
Subsidized housing	50.8		Personal days	38.5
Pension plan	46.0		Pension plan	38.5
Child care subsidy	42.9		Child care subsidy	23.1
Subsidized parking	31.7	Least important	Subsidized housing	15.4

Taking citizenship into consideration, it appears that the needs of these groups are slightly different. US citizens would like to see an improved retirement plan, along with increased sick days and public transportation subsidies. Non-US citizens prioritized vacation days and dental, vision, and health insurance. As for the benefits postdocs would like to have, gym membership at a discounted rate seems to be a very high priority for both categories, relegating to last place subsidies for parking, housing and child care.

In data not shown, 80% of US citizens consider their presentation skills as a scientist adequate, compared to only 50% of non-US citizens. More than 50% of the postdocs consider their mentoring adequate compared to the 25% who doesn't. The rest were neutral on this question.

As for social activities, the summer barbeque, winter bash and museum exhibits have the lead as social events postdocs would like to attend. Longer trips (Atlantic City, New York City, Washington D.C. and Longwood gardens), though receiving votes, ranked at the bottom of this category.

"Among postdocs, US citizens would like an improved retirement plan, more sick days and greater public transportation subsidies. Non-US citizens prioritized vacation days and dental, vision and health insurance"

"More than 50% of postdocs consider their mentoring adequate"

JPA surveys are carried out every year. We hope to have a bigger response in order to provide a better service that matches your needs.

JeffPOST

Postdoctoral Mentoring & Distinguished Mentor Award

By Denise Fitzgerald (President, 2006-2007)

The impact of positive mentoring on the development of a scientist is invaluable and can significantly contribute to the advancement of science as a whole. Mentoring of early-career scientists during the postdoctoral period, however, doesn't often receive the needed priority – in part because of the unique stage and responsibilities of a postdoctoral scientist. Postdocs have left the structured environment of graduate programs but are not yet fully independent scientists. In general, the structure of graduate training programs ensures sufficient mentorship for the candidate even in cases where adequate mentorship by the candidate's PI may be lacking. This is facilitated by thesis committees and regular interactions with other faculty. In addition, the common goal and commitment to completion of the thesis provides incentive to mentors and mentees to establish and be receptive to a constructive mentoring relationship.

The postdoctoral fellowship training period differs significantly from graduate training programs. Without the organization of an individual development plan (IDP), (http://opa.faseb.org/pdf/idp.pdf), clear goals beyond publishing papers can be lacking. What is now evident is that postdocs wishing to transition to independent research positions need to acquire a broad range of "soft skills", such as grant writing, time management, networking, leadership, teaching and mentoring skills, in addition to a solid publication record. Postdocs preparing to leave academia and/or bench research also need additional skills, beyond their lab techniques supported by publications, to demonstrate that they were productive during their fellowship. Indeed, the decision of what career path to pursue is an area in which postdocs often need the advice of their mentor.

An added difficulty in appropriate mentoring of postdocs is over-supervision. While some postdocs need close supervision, others need to be able to spread their wings in their development towards independence. This is often a timing issue, particularly for those adventuring into a new area of research. Strong guidance by the mentor at the beginning of a project may not be necessary once the postdoc is on a productive streak and generating novel intellectual aspects of the project. Common goals and good communication between mentors and mentees can aid in this natural progression. This is also true of reaching the goals of an IDP. If this plan has been written with a particular career goal (which may not be academic research) agreed upon by both mentor and mentee, then addressing such goals, which may involve time away from the bench (e.g. attending a seminar on interviewing skills), will be easier.

It is important to recognize that not all PIs are automatically good mentors. So besides your current PI, you can find mentorship from past advisors, other faculty members, a dean for postdoctoral affairs or even an online mentor (www.mentornet.org). You may have more than one mentor; for example, a scientific mentor, a career mentor, and in particular for those planning to move to another city/country, a local mentor who can advise you on your future plans.

Recent data collected in a survey of TJU postdocs revealed that approximately 47% of them agreed that they were receiving adequate mentoring. This data shows that there is definitely room for improvement. Current funding limitations impose greater pressure on PIs to fulfill and renew their grants, and as such, publishing papers is the easiest goal for both mentor and mentee to focus on. However, if a comprehensive professional development of postdocs is neglected to achieve this, it is a disservice to the "training" and "fellowship" ethos of what a postdoctoral fellowship should be.

With these concerns in mind, the **J**PA/OPA chose to address the issue of postdoctoral mentoring by recognizing and commending TJU faculty that have excelled in their role as postdoctoral mentors. To this end, the Distinguished Mentor Award (DMA) was established by the **J**PA/OPA in 2007. The inaugural awardee was Dr. Gerald Grunwald, who spearheaded the development of the OPA and **J**PA at TJU over 6 years ago. By virtue of the support that the OPA and **J**PA provide to the training of postdocs in TJU, Dr. Grunwald has positively influenced the training of all current and future

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"Postdocs have left the structured environment of graduate programs but are not yet fully independent scientists"

JeffPOST

Postdoctoral Mentoring & Distinguished Mentor Award

postdocs of TJU. In 2008, nominations were solicited from TJU postdocs. Dr. Theodore Taraschi, who was nominated by his postdoc Dr. Mayumi Akaki, was chosen by the selection committee as the 2008 DMA recipient. In her essay describing his mentorship, Dr. Akaki noted that when she came to Dr. Taraschi's lab she didn't have experience in some of the techniques needed. Dr. Taraschi organized collaborations with labs that had strength in the field so she could receive additional guidance. He also let her do her own work from the beginning because he said that "If someone else does the work for you, that is not good... because you cannot learn." She says that he provided good career guidance, and she noted that his joyful attitude towards science had a good influence on the lab. In addition, postdocs submitted wonderful accounts of the mentorship of Drs. Walter Koch, Hilary Koprowski, Marja Nevalainen, and Hallgeir Rui. We are very grateful to those faculty members and to the postdocs who nominated them. More information and an online application will be available soon. We urge those of you with great mentors to please nominate them for the 2009 DMA!!

Dr. Theodore Taraschi (middle) received this year's Distinguished Mentor Award at the PRS. He is pictured here with his nominating postdoc fellow, Dr. Mayumi Akaki. In addition, Dr. Lisa Kozlowski presented honorary awards to Dr. Walter Koch (left), Dr. Marja Nevalainen (right), Dr. Hilary Koprowski (not pictured), and Dr. Hallgeir Rui (not pictured).

2008 Postdoctoral Research Symposium Sponsors

By Sonia Godoy-Tundidor (Vice-President for Communications, 2008-2009)

The PRS Committee would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following sponsors:

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Sigma-Aldrich
Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein, and Fox

THANKS ALSO TO:
JCGS Alumni Association
JCGS Dean's Office
OPA & JPA
TJU OIES

Upcoming Events

Winter Party!!!!!! Watch out for announcements. Tentative date: Friday, February 27, 2009.

Fourth Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium 2009. To be held in May or June. If you are a postdoc and would like to be part of the 2009 PRS Planning Committee, please e-mail the committee at prs@jefferson.edu

JeffPOST

Postdoctoral Awards 2007-2008

By Sonia Godoy-Tundidor (Vice-President for Communications, 2008-2009)

Postdoctoral Travel Awards
As part of their mission to foster the development of postdoctoral fellows, the JCGS Dean's Office and the OPA established a fellowship program to support the attendance of postdocs to scientific meetings. These fellowships constitute a great means to encourage the participation of Jefferson postdocs in national and international conferences and are available throughout the year. The following postdocs were awarded travel grants to present their research at different scientific meetings:

Dr. Mai Chen, Laboratory of Dr. Raymond Regan, Neuroscience 2007.

Dr. Hye Hin Chung, Laboratory of Dr. Andrzej Fertala, American Society for Matrix Biology 2008.

Dr. Jose De Santiago-Castillo, Laboratory of Dr. Manuel Covarrubias, Joint Meeting of the Biophysical Society 52nd Annual Meeting, and 16th International Biophysics Congress 2008.

Dr. Mohamed El Behi, Laboratory of Drs. AM Rostami & Bogoljub Ciric, Keystone Symposia, TH17 cells in health and disease 2009.

Dr. Marzena Fabis, Laboratory of Dr. D. Craig Hooper, American Association of Immunology/Experimental Biology 2008.

Dr. Lan Huang, Laboratory of Dr. Laurence Eisenlohr, Viral Immunity, Keystone Meeting 2008.

Dr. Dong Soo Kang, Laboratory of Dr. Jeffrey Benovic, The American Society for Cell Biology 48th Annual Meeting 2008.

Dr. Hongmei Li, Laboratory of Dr. AM Rostami, American Association of Immunology/ Experimental Biology 2008.

Dr. Xingguo Liu, Laboratory of Dr. Gyorgy Hajnoczky, The Biophysical Society's 53rd Annual Meeting 2009.

Dr. Kengo Shimono, Laboratory of Dr. Masahiro Iwamoto, 55th Annual Orthopedic Research Society 2009.

Dr. Thai Tran, Laboratory of Dr. Hallgeir Rui, Prolactin and Growth Hormone Family Gordon Research Conference 2008.

Dr. Je-Wook Yu, Laboratory of Dr. Emad Alnemri, 5th International Conference on Innate Immunity, 2008.

"A variety of awards and distinctions are granted every year to Jefferson's postdocs in recognition of their achievements"

Dr. Christopher So, from the laboratory of Dr. Jeffrey Benovic, received a travel award from the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) to attend the NPA's 6th Annual Meeting in Boston, MA, in April 2008.

Postdoctoral Research Symposium Winners

Congratulations to this year's winners!

Back row, left to right - Dr. Tassos Lymperopoulos (oral session I, laboratory of Dr. Walter Koch), Dr. Ana Romero-Weaver (honorable poster mention, laboratory of Dr. Marja Nevalainen), Dr. Edita Aksamitiene (oral session III, laboratory of Dr. Jan Hoek) and Dr. Kerstin Kandler (oral session IV, laboratory of Dr. Laurence Eisenlohr). Front row, left to right - Dr. Thai Tran (best poster, laboratory of Dr. Hallgeir Rui), Dr. Kathleen McClendon (oral session II, laboratory of Dr. Erik Knudsen), Dr. Marie-France Langelier (honorable poster mention, laboratory of Dr. John Pascal) and Dr. Denise Fitzgerald (honorable poster mention, laboratory of Dr. Abdolmohamad Rostami)

JeffPOST

3rd Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium

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The 2008 PRS was a tremendous success thanks to the enormous effort and talent of its committee members, but it essentially owes this success to the large participation and attendance of the postdocs and grad students from across all the various departments of Jefferson. All the lectures and posters were very interesting and were characterized by great science. They gave a taste of the vigor and aptitude of Jefferson's postdoc researchers.

The interest and attendance of postdocs and the research community at-large made the PRS one of the biggest (if not the biggest) single-day events held at Jefferson this year. Over the past several years, the PRS has continuously grown to become THE day to celebrate the good science produced and all the hard work put in by Jefferson postdocs during their tenure here. Its ongoing success depends absolutely on the interest that Jefferson postdocs embrace it with. Therefore, all Jefferson postdocs, no matter how new or senior, are encouraged to participate in any way they can in next year's PRS. Each and every one of you can help make the 2009 PRS a really memorable event.

The poster session was well attended.

Dr. Anne Shriner, 2007-2008 JPA President (left) and Dr. Lisa Kozlowski, Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs and Recruitment (right), with "Friend of the JPA" awardee Dr. Carol Beck (middle).

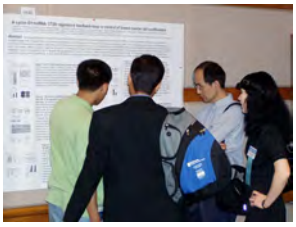
The 2009 PRS planning committee is hard at work. However, there is always a need for more participation by postdocs. We encourage all postdoctoral fellows interested in becoming part of the committee to contact the PRS Committee at prs@jefferson.edu.

2008 PRS Committee Members: Back row, left to right: Drs. Anne Shriner, Christopher So, Tassos Lymperopoulos, Heather Montie, Georgia Anyatonwu and Lisa Kozlowski. Front row, left to right: Drs. Mayumi Akaki, Ning Yang, Zoe Fonseca-Kelly, and Ayanna Augustus.

Drs. Steve Pedrini, Marzena Fabis, Raihana Zaka, Georges Lahoud, and Georgia Anyatonwu enjoying the reception at the Hamilton Building.

In a full Connelly auditorium, participants enjoyed Dr. Lefkowitz's talk on 7 transmembrane receptors.

Dr. Robert Lefkowitz (left) talks to Dr. Jeffrey Benovic (right).



Postdocs gather with interest around their fellow presenters at the poster presentation session.

Dr. Lisa Kozlowski, Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs and Recruitment, listens attentively to Robert Barchi, MD, PhD, President of Thomas Jefferson University.