

The PhD Post

A Newsletter written for YOU by your peers

2016 Fall Edition

Postdocs Get a Raise

Contributed by Sarah E. Clark, PhD

Did you get a raise December 1st? If so, you can thank a recently proposed update to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The update originates from a 2014 directive by President Obama to raise the salary threshold at which 'white collar' workers get overtime pay.

Unfortunately, not all postdocs will see the effects of the FLSA update. A last-minute injunction filed against the Department of Labor has delayed the implementation of the ruling, originally set to go into effect December 1st. Even more troubling, the FLSA update is among the top regulations that House Republicans aim to repeal under the new administration. This means a federally mandated salary increase for postdocs is not likely to happen any time soon.

Why did many postdocs still get a raise this month? Thankfully, many higher education institutions already set into motion salary increases for postdocs above the \$47,476 threshold set in the proposed FLSA update. The NIH also increased stipend levels accordingly, meaning that institutions that follow NIH postdoc salary guidelines should theoretically follow suit. However, individual institutions, departments, or investigators that decide to continue paying postdocs below this threshold will not be violating the federal labor law.

What about CU Denver? Salary increases for all full time postdocs went into effect on schedule. CU Denver joins 25 out of 35 surveyed institutions that increased pay according to the proposed FLSA update, while the remaining institutions cancelled salary increases at the last minute. The postdoc advocacy group Future of Research has been keeping track of who does what at: futureofresearch.org/flsa-and-postdocs.

Even if the proposed FLSA mandate went into effect there are some caveats. For one, every institution would have the choice between raising annual salaries or tracking hours and paying for overtime. Also, while the NIH raised stipend levels for postdocs supported on Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSAs), there is a catch. Instead of the annual 4% stipend increase per year, the new stipend base will only increase by 0.8% per year. Getting a raise this year is great news for many postdocs, but it may be the best one you get for a while.

Bonding Over Brews: The AIA Hosts a Monthly Professional Happy Hour

This summer the Academia Industry Alliance (AIA) launched the monthly Brews and Biotech Happy Hour (BBHH). The AIA was established with the goal of bringing together a community of entrepreneurs, scientists, technology workers, and businesses via major networking events. Importantly, AIA members are especially interested in learning more about how to transition to industry, how to create a company, and how to succeed in the biotech/life sciences sphere. Therefore, the major goal of the BBHH is to foster frequent networking for collaborations, talent- and resource-seeking relations, and to further bridge the gap between academia and industry. Conversing with individuals outside of academia about their experiences in the industry in the casual BBHH setting is invaluable. It provides the opportunity for academics to gain insight about the greater sciences sphere, and also allows non-academics to meet potential collaborators or young talent who could add valuable skills and/or expertise to their company in the future.

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Networking Corner



Contributed by Kelsey Weigel, PhD

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If you'd like to contribute an article please contact us

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Steer Your Career Networking Corner *Continued from Page 1*



Above, academic and non-academic colleagues gathered together at the September BBHH held in Ursula Brewery.

The aim of the BBHH is to provide a relaxed atmosphere where old colleagues can catch up and new partnerships can be formed, ideally providing the framework for exciting idea development and exchange, problem solving, and discovery of resource availability.

Since the event launch in July, the first BBHH events of 2016 have been extraordinarily successful. 76 life science sphere colleagues have been in attendance at one or more events representing various local and national

companies. The AIA has obtained sponsorship from both companies and individuals to contribute towards the cost of the free appetizers provided each month, and occasional free drinks to early arriving attendees.

With continued positive feedback about the event, we look forward to expanding the BBHH in future months. We welcome all ideas, suggestions, and questions to make the BBHH and other AIA events better. Please feel free to reach out to us and/or connect with us on Meetup (<http://www.meetup.com/AIA-BBHH>). Our BBHH events are held the third Thursday of every month at Ursula Brewery from 5-7:30pm. As leaders of the AIA, we believe the BBHH is part of a great foundation that nurtures the ever-expanding collaborative scientific community in our great state of Colorado. We hope to welcome you back or meet you soon!

Event Highlight

Come to the 6th Brews and Biotech Happy Hour (BBHH). The event will be held Dec. 15th, 2016 from 5-7:30pm at Ursula Brewery. Feel free to drop in any time within that window for any length of time!
Details at:
<http://www.meetup.com/AIA-BBHH>



12/12/16
UCD-PDA Monthly Meeting 4 pm,
Academic Office 1, Rm 1601

12/15/16
UDA-PDA Postdoc Seminar Series
12pm RC1-S Rm 5105

For a full event calendar visit the
Postdoc Office website

Networking: Practice Makes Perfect

Many graduate students and postdoctoral fellows attend the Academia Industry Alliance (AIA) Brews and Biotech Happy Hour (BBHH) knowing it is a great opportunity to expand their professional networks. Unlike our life science industry colleagues, however, academics rarely encounter networking opportunities with non-academics. As a result, we kept hearing the same question from academics in attendance: *"Now that we are here, what do we do?"*

The actual act of networking is somewhat of an enigma for most. What does it actually mean to network? How can you do it successfully? What does it take to maintain an effective network, and how can you leverage it to benefit yourself and others? In order to help answer these questions and more, the AIA reached out to partner with Dr. Bruce Mandt, the Director of the Postdoctoral and Career Development Office (PCDO). One of Bruce's primary goals is to help graduate students and postdoctoral fellows develop their communication, leadership, management, and general professionalism skills through a workshop series. Prompted in part by the BBHH events, the BBHH organizers and Bruce developed a new workshop specifically addressing improved and applied networking skills.

Hosted the Monday before the October BBHH, Bruce led networking enthusiasts in a discussion-based lecture that answered key questions related to networking objectives and strategies. Then, the participants were asked to put into motion what they had learned in different "stations" throughout the room centered around topics such as ice breakers, current career challenges, elevator pitches, and more. The workshop concluded with one last major exercise – introduce two people you met during the workshop that would benefit from knowing each other. One point of emphasis in the workshop was that networking is not just about what others can do for you; you must continue to strengthen your network by asking what you can do for others as well.

If you have ever found yourself in a networking setting feeling a bit unsettled or unsure what to do, then the PCDO-AIA networking workshop may be a good fit for you. This workshop will be offered every three to four months, and in the near future we hope to connect with you there!

Contributed by Kelsey Weigel, PhD

The PDA: What's it good for?

Quite a lot actually! Science is expanding exponentially. The number of people earning research doctorate degrees in the US is steadily increasing by 3-4% every year¹. With that comes more postdocs. In 2016, the funding is tight and the competition for jobs is fierce. How do we handle the shifting state of the postdoc? Who speaks for the postdoctoral community? How can postdoctoral fellows at our university stand out in the crowd? These are all questions that we as the Postdoctoral Association (PDA) strive to answer. In this two-part series, we explore what the PDA has to offer.

We are here to promote a sense of community. So the hours are long, the stress is high, and the pay is.... Poor communication can be a detriment during this training period. Indeed, a sense of community and general happiness in the workplace can be a driving force of productivity. One study performed by the University of Warwick showed a 12% increase in employee productivity after given a positive item or reinforcement². Another employee satisfaction initiative set forth by Google evidently improved their productivity by 37%. While we can't give you free laundry, multiple gyms, gourmet kitchens, massage therapists, and bring your dog to work days (sorry folks...that last one really gets me), we *can* and will continue to expand our coffee and happy hours. Our newly restructured Postdoc Engagement Committee has instituted programs like the monthly "Second Saturdays Hikes", and more recently held "Postdocs explore the Science Lounge!". Last month, we had a very successful Postdoctoral Appreciation Week featuring sponsored events each day. We are always taking new suggestions for ways to develop a well-rounded postdoctoral community and we are excited to announce our future events.

We are here to listen. The PDA executive council is not a dictatorship. We are a volunteer collection of postdocs whose primary responsibility is to respond to the needs of our community. Come to one of our Town Hall meetings each month to learn more about the PDA's new initiatives, our budget, and events for the upcoming months. This is an open forum and we will happily take suggestions, listen to concerns, and field questions including those pertaining to the Fair Labor Standards Act. We hope to see you there!

¹ National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. 2015. *Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: 2014*. Special Report NSF 16-300. Arlington, VA. Available at <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2016/nsf16300/>.

² Oswald, Andrew J. and Proto, Eugenio and Sgroi, Daniel, Happiness and Productivity. IZA Discussion Paper No. 4645. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1526075>

*Contributed by Mark Lucera, PhD
Chair- Postdoctoral Engagement Committee*

Mentoring and Outreach Opportunities

Outreach and mentoring are important for our career and personal development. They help demonstrate our communication, leadership, organizational and pedagogical skills. These are all highly sought after qualities in job applicants for academia and industry. Outreach is our opportunity to give back to the community which has invested in us through multiple ways. If you are interested in these opportunities, take a look at the mentoring and outreach programs for students, postdocs, and researchers highlighted below.

Organization	Target Students	Durations and Location	Contact and Application Deadlines
Gates Summer Internship Program (GSIP)	Undergraduates interested in Regenerative medicine/ biomedical research	Summer, 11 weeks at AMC	Dr. Enrique Torchia Enrique.Torchia@ucdenver.edu GSIP website GSIP@ucdenver.edu
Denver STaRS program	Underserved/under-represented high school Jrs. & Srs.	2 months/semester, 2 d/wk, 3 hr/d at AMC	Christian Valtierra christian.valtierra@ucdenver.edu (A. Dir. Pipeline Progs. & Outreach)
Denver Public Schools (DPS) CareerCoach	High school students/ sophomores	2 h/day for 2 d/month/yr. 1 d each at students' school and coach's workplace	Ericka Porter, Coordinator ericka_porter@dpsk12.org DPS CareerConnect website
CU Science Discovery Prog.	5-18 yr olds, teacher workshops, outreach	Summer, location varies w/ program on website	sciencediscovery.colorado.edu Dr. Meredith Tennis, UC School of Med.
Denver Metro Regional Science and Engg. Fair	Mid. and high school students from 8-county Denver metro area	Feb 17-18, 2017, UCD Downtown, additional prior meetings if serving as mentor (see website)	Dr. Jennifer Hellier Jennifer.Hellier@ucdenver.edu Dominic F. Martinez Sr Dir. Inclusion & Outreach (AMC labs access help)

These programs have a positive impact on our community and engage many local students. Christian Valtierra of the Denver STaRS program says "The Denver STaRS program has been serving about 20-25 students each year since 2011, resulting in positive relationships established between the student and mentor, increased knowledge and interest regarding the research field and profession opportunities". Dr. Meredith Tennis of the CU Science Discovery Program shared that "The CU Science Discovery program serves over 3,000 students each summer. The STEM research program provides hands-on research and educational seminars at AMC to high schoolers". The mentorship program for the Denver Metro Science Fair started just last year with about 30 undergrads, graduate students, and postdocs and currently has openings for serving on the scientific review committee and judging in addition to mentoring. With so many options there are many ways to get involved in scientific engagement with your community this year!

Contributed by Rwik Sen, PhD

2016 NIH BEST Consortium Conference: The Future of Career and Professional Development for Students and Postdocs

PhDs are in high demand for the scientific, industrial, and government workforce. The NIH funded program, Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training (BEST) aims to equip each graduate student and postdoc with professional development opportunities, enabling success in competitive careers both at and beyond the bench.



Pictured: Trainee delegates including Dorothy Yamamoto and Heather Clancy of CU Denver

The BEST consortium, a group of 17 universities awarded a BEST grant, meets annually to reflect on the year's events and plan for the future. Sustainability was the theme of this year's event held in Bethesda, MD. Delegates from each institution discussed finding alternative funding to support professional development for the graduate students and post docs when the 5-year BEST funding is finished. One promising solution is a partnership of academic institutions with industries, forming a self-fulfilling symbiotic relationship between academia and industry. Another way to maintain the professional development opportunities fostered by the program is converting select BEST workshops into 1-credit courses, including topics such as 'scientific writing' and advanced analytical and critical thinking'. These credits could result in a certificate, adding marketability to the student or

post doc's CV or resume. University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver|Anschutz) sets the example by currently awarding certificates for completing such workshops.

Continuing the impact of BEST for former, current, and future students and postdocs was another point of discussion at the meeting. To address this, institutions proposed forming alumni networks for students and postdocs participating in the BEST program. This would provide critical connections and networking opportunities as well as career advice, professional insight, and success stories. Look for announcements of alumni visits to campus this next year. As a first step, we have established a group on LinkedIn to facilitate networking and career discussions <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/BEST-Trainee-Network-8575904/about>. Join the group and start expanding your network!

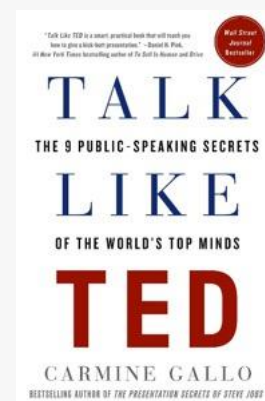
Finally, it is critical to discuss professional development and career options with your PI as early as possible. At CU Denver|Anschutz we have a relatively progressive culture in terms of professional development and career planning; all students and post docs are highly encouraged to start this conversation with their PIs early and create an Individual Development Plan (IDP). They are encouraged to ask about the BEST program and how to be involved in their own career plan and development as a scientific professional whether they want to continue a career in academia or otherwise. For more information about the opportunities offered by the BEST program, visit <http://www.nihbest.org/>. For more information about the BEST program at CU Denver|Anschutz, visit <https://gs.CU Denver|Anschutz enver.edu/best/idp.html>.

Contributed by Dorothy Yamamoto, PhD

Talk Like TED: The 9 Public-Speaking Secrets of the World's Top Minds by Carmine Gallo

If you have watched any TED talks you can't help but notice how powerful and inspirational every speaker is. In the span of just 18 minutes, these talks can provoke you, excite you, and even motivate you. Consider the last seminar you attended. Was it amazing? In the book, the author describes the essence of great talks: emotional, novel, and memorable. He also explains why they work using actual examples from TED talks. Though the book does not directly target scientists, many strategies are applicable to scientific talks.

We all know that communicating our ideas is a vital part of our work. Yet, too often we spend precious last minutes collecting more data instead of refining and rehearsing a talk. Resist the temptation! This book will give you new insights for your next AMAZING talk.



Contributed by Chiharu Graybill, PhD