The 6th Annual Celebration of National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW) will take place September 21-25, 2015. NPAW is meant to bring recognition to the important role postdocs play in research ongoing in the United States, celebrating the achievements and contributions of postdocs. Last year, over 300 NPAW events were held, but you will notice that West Virginia is a blank hole in this celebration. WVU postdocs should participate in this event. The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) lists several activities that occurred during NPAW 2014. This event can be as simple as coffee hour or happy hour at a bar, or as complex as lectures on career development or financial planning. Does anyone want to plan an event for NPAW 2015? Please contact Karen Hayes (kehayes@hsc.wvu.edu). The NPA website has a “NPAW Toolkit” (https://npamembers.site-ym.com/?NPAWToolkit) to aid in the organization of an event.

On June 26, 2016, an organizational Postdoctoral Association meeting was held to discuss postdoc interests and expectations for the upcoming year. Discussion included how we can make our association stronger, next year’s tentative schedule, invited speakers and organization of a postdoc get together/picnic during the National Postdoctoral Association Week (NPAW). We also appointed officers for the upcoming year for President (Karen Hayes), Vice-President (Abhishek Vishnu), Communications Chair (Vishal Yadav) and Social Chair (Pasha Grachev). Congratulations, to the new officers!

NPAW 2015 begins on Sept 21st

Scheduled events for NPAW 2014 (image obtained from the National Postdoctoral Association website)
Upcoming PDA Meetings and Events

August 27th  WVU Biomedical PDA meet and greet social, 8-11pm, Tin 202, High St, Morgantown.

September 25th  Dr. Amy Kuhn and Dr. Melanie Page from WVU Teaching and Learning Commons (TCL) to discuss the workshops and courses available to postdocs through the “Graduate Academy”.

October 23rd  Joan Anson, MS, Director of Career Services in the Office of Student Affairs, University of Pittsburgh, will discuss the importance of maintaining up-to-date LinkedIn accounts.

November 20th  Winabeth Smith, Grants manager for MBRCC and Valerie LeMasters, Grants Processing Director for WVU to discuss postdoctoral fellowship and grant application process for postdocs.

December 4th  Kim Wright, Sr. Sales Representative, Thermo Fisher Scientific/Life Technologies to discuss opportunities for scientists in industry.

* All meetings (except “Meet and Greet” social) will be held in Room 301 Erma Byrd in the Biomedical Research Facility at noon. Lunch will be provided.

If you have suggestions for future meetings please contact Karen Hayes (kehayes@hsc.wvu.edu)

WVU Teaching and Learning Commons

Have you taken on the task of teaching and have no idea of how to prepare for it? Or would you like to learn how to teach effectively? WVU has an excellent resource to help guide you through the teaching process from understanding the technology in the modern classroom to instructional design. The goal of WVU Teaching and Learning Commons (TLC) is to “provide teaching support and resources for faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows”. TLC staff have developed a two-tiered program: iDesign, to aid you in instructional design and technology integration, and iTeach, to enhance teaching skills and core competencies to help individuals achieve career success. Postdocs can participate in the TLC’s “Graduate Academy” which provides workshops and courses to develop a range of core skills for their future careers. Visit the TLC’s website for further information (http://tlcommons.wvu.edu). Drs. Amy Kuhn and Melanie Page will be attending the September 25th monthly PDA meeting to discuss the opportunities and services available through the TLC; mark your calendars.

Postdoctoral Travel Award

The Health Sciences Center Office of Research and Graduate Education announces the availability of travel awards for WVU-HSC postdoctoral fellows to present their work at a professional meeting. Applications will be considered for conference attendance during the fall 2015 (July 1 - Dec. 31, 2015) or spring 2016 (Jan. 1 - June 30, 2016) semesters. The application deadline for the fall conferences is September 30, 2015; the deadline for spring conferences is March 31, 2016. Awards will be up to $500, and may be made retroactively if the actual meeting takes place before the application dates. Fellows who have received a travel award from this Office in the last two years are not eligible to apply. Regular attendance at the monthly Postdoc Association meeting will be taken into consideration as applications are screened. Submit a completed application (http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/resoff/post-doctoral-association/news/postdoctoral-student-travel-award-opportunity-available/) to Dr. Jamal Mustafa via E-mail (sjmustafa@hsc.wvu.edu).
Accomplishments and Achievements

Awards and Achievements:

Hicham Labazi, PhD. (mentored by Dr. Jamal Mustafa) won first place for his poster presentation “The contribution of adenosine receptor subtypes to vascular tone in mouse pudendal artery” at 2015 Van Liere Convocation and Research Day; Elizabeth B. Engler-Chiurazzi, PhD. (mentored by Dr. James Simpkins) came in second with her poster “Adult Behavioral Consequences of Prenatal Nanomaterial Exposure”.

Karen Hayes, PhD. (mentored by Dr. Ivan Martinez) completed the “Leadership Development Institute” course offered by the Mountaineer Leadership Academy in the Spring of 2015.

Vishal Yadav, PhD. (mentored by Dr. Jamal Mustafa) won a travel award from American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics to attend the 2015 Experimental Biology Meeting at Boston, MA in March 2015.

In July 2015, Elizabeth B. Engler-Chiurazzi, PhD. (mentored by Dr. James Simpkins) won first place with her talk “Of mice and men: modeling human behavior with rodent analogues” at the WVU Center for Neuroscience Annual Retreat as part of their Neuroscience Idol competition.

Abhishek Vishnu, PhD. (mentored by Dr. Matthew Gurka) won two travel awards/tuition waivers from the University of Alabama at Birmingham to attend two short courses, “Statistical Genetics” and “Mathematical Sciences in Obesity Research”, in June and July 2015.

First Author Publications:

“Forward masking in the medial nucleus of the trapezoid body of the rat” Gao F and Berrebi AS; Brain Struc Funct. 2015 Apr 29. [Epub ahead of print]


Announcements:

Congratulations to Peng Wang, PhD. who is a proud father of a baby boy born in April 2015.

If you have any accomplishments/achievements please contact Karen Hayes (kehayes@hsc.wvu.edu). Let’s celebrate our successes!

Time to Party, Postdocs!!!

Are you tired of staring at the same four walls in your laboratory? Feeling isolated? Need some human interaction?

Come out and join us. The WVU-Biomedical Postdoctoral Association (PDA) has appointed a Social Chair, Dr. Pasha Grachev, to develop the PDA social events so that postdocs can meet each other, discuss science (or not), and generally get out of the lab. He has planned a meet and greet social from 8-11 pm, August 27th at Tin 202, a bar and restaurant on High Street, Morgantown that offers “unique hand-crafted cocktails and distinctive fresh fare”. Good food and great conversation, it should be a great evening for all who attend. In addition, Pasha will be planning a family picnic at Cooper's Rock for mid October. The picnic is going to be a fun potluck with games and activities.

PDA’s Vice-President Attends 2015 National PDA Meeting

As a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Ivan Martinez’s laboratory in the Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center and a representative of West Virginia Postdoctoral Association (PDA); Karen Hayes, PhD, attended the 2015 National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) meeting at the University of Maryland in Baltimore in March 2015. The funds provided by the West Virginia PDA allowed her to be one of the 230 new attendees. She participated in several workshops concerning issues relevant to today’s postdoctoral scholars as well as attended seminars, networking events, and the new career connection event in which she met with representatives from several different companies. The overarching message of the NPA meeting and workshops was upbeat yet realistic, acknowledging that not all postdoctoral scholars want to or are able to pursue a career in academia. Several workshops addressed the professional training needed to obtain positions in academia, industry, and government. In addition, numerous workshops focused on the necessary steps needed to successfully find and obtain a desired position such as informational interviews and networking. Fortunately for those that were unable to attend the meeting, most of the workshops and sessions are posted online at the NPA’s website (https://npamembers.site-ym.com/?2015AMPres). Karen gave a summary of her experience at the WVU-Biomed PDA meeting in March 2015.

Featured Postdoc: Phoebe Stapleton, PhD.

If anyone knows Dr. Phoebe Stapleton and her accomplishments they would understand why she was chosen as the first featured postdoc for the “Postdoc Pulse”. She received her PhD at West Virginia University in Exercise Physiology specializing in microvascular physiology in 2010 at which time she chose to stay at WVU and joined Dr. Tim Nurkiewicz’s laboratory. This controversial career move was based on her ability to utilize NIOSH’s facilities; a unique asset of Morgantown.

She has recently completed her postdoctoral fellowship focused in cardiovascular toxicology During her postdoc, she has excelled by publishing six first-author articles and received numerous awards for her work in microvascular nanotoxicology. These awards include the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (F32) from National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) in 2013; won first place at WVU’s 2014 Annual E.J. Van Liere Memorial Convocation and HSC Research Day for her poster presentation. At the 2013 Society of Toxicology (SOT) annual meeting, Phoebe was awarded both the “Women in Toxicology” Postdoctoral Fellow Achievement Award and the “Best Publication” from the SOT’s Postdoctoral Assembly for her 2013 article in Am J Obstet Gynecol. Most recently, she has received a coveted K99-R00 award from the National Institute for Environmental Health and Safety (NIEHS), the first at WVU.

Phoebe is actively giving back to the scientific community. She has been an ad hoc reviewer for several Frontiers in Vascular Physiology editorial board. She previously served as the postdoctoral representative for Allegheny-Erie regional chapter (A-E-SOT) and Women in Toxicology specialty section of the SOT and now serves as the President of the A-E-SOT. In addition, she always takes the time to proffer advice and assist other WVU postdocs.

Dr. Phoebe Stapleton has recently accepted a position as a Research Assistant Professor at West Virginia University. Her research aims are to evaluate the microvascular responses and functional vascular alterations associated with xenobiotic exposures in non-traditional models. Phoebe attributes her success during her postdoc to first defining her career goals and always keeping those goals in focus.
LinkedIn: an Important Tool for Networking

Written by Abhishek Vishnu—”Are you ready to move on to a new job? Or just looking to build professional network and connections across your scientific discipline? Have you tried LinkedIn but think you don’t make the best out of it? WVU-Biomed PDA is here to help!

LinkedIn is an online networking platform and has become a de facto tool for professional networking. LinkedIn has 93 million users in the US. Apart from businesses, LinkedIn is increasingly being used by academicians for networking and job search. In addition to the most popular free account, LinkedIn offers options to subscribe for premium features including initiating direct connection with recruiters.

PDA is organizing a seminar on the efficient and effective use of LinkedIn for networking and job search on October 23, 2015 at noon in Room 301 Erma Byrd in the Biomedical Research Facility. Joan Anson, MS Ed, Director of Career Services at University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public Health will give a talk on using LinkedIn for a job search. Save the date!
What did you think of the “Postdoc Pulse”?  

This newsletter is the inaugural publication of the West Virginia University Biomedical Postdoctoral Association’s (WVU-Biomed PDA) “Postdoc Pulse”. The newsletter arose from not only a need to disseminate information about the WVU-Biomed PDA but also to celebrate the accomplishments of WVU postdocs. Postdocs play an important role in the ongoing research at WVU and bring prestige in the scientific community to WVU with their accomplishments. In addition, the sharing of information among postdoc will only aid in others struggling through similar situations. Postdocs shouldn’t have to re-invent the wheel every time they take on a new task such as grant submission, teaching, or loan deferments; so let’s help each other succeed.

What did you think of the first newsletter? Was it helpful? Would you take the time to read a second one? What would you change? I welcome your feedback, send me an email (kehayes@hsc.wvu.edu). Also, if you would like to help in the publishing of the “Postdoc Pulse” by submitting articles, helping with the assembly, or just editing the newsletter send me an email to the above address. The newsletter is currently scheduled to be published quarterly (this can be increase to monthly with enough interest and assistance). Thank you.