



Issue 1
August 2004

Newsletter

Postdocs@ MIT



MIT Postdoctoral Scholars Advisory Council <http://web.mit.edu/mitpostdocs>

Summer 2004 Activities

Academic Career Panels:

In Building 10-250

◆ *Balancing Family Life and an Academic Career*

Wednesday,
August 4, 4-5:30

◆ *Navigating between Academia and Industry and Vice Versa*

Wednesday,
August 25, 4-5:30

Social Events:

◆ *Summer BBQ*

Postdocs and Families
invited ... FREE ...
at the Kresge BBQ pits
Friday, August 13, 5pm.

◆ *Pizza at the Muddy Charles Pub*

Wednesday,
August 25, 5:30pm

◆ *Postdoc Lunch Table*

At the Biocafe every
Friday.
A chance to meet other
postdocs, socialize
informally, and network.
Drinks and dessert will
be provided! Free!!
So TAKE a BREAK from
the LAB!! Just come to
the BioCafe (1st floor of
Building 68, near the
food trucks) at any time
between 12:00 and
1:30. Look for the **BLUE**
signs.

Who Are We?

The Postdoctoral Scholars Advisory Council was created in 2002. We are postdocs from across MIT and are advised and supported by staff from the Provost's Office and the Office of the Vice President for Research. Our goals are to enrich postdoctoral life for the over 900 postdocs at MIT.

In the Spring of 2003, we conducted a survey of postdocs. Issues highlighted by respondents included:

- Benefits enhancements
- Salary rates
- Career issues
- Mentoring
- Orientation package
- Social functions

What Have We Done?

One of our first initiatives was to improve the orientation experience of postdoctoral scholars. We have drafted an orientation brochure for new postdoctoral scholars, which has been distributed to MIT departments and posted on the Council's web site. Also found on this site are links to useful information from other MIT organizations. We are currently working to establish a minimum salary for postdocs and to equalize health and dental benefits between postdoctoral associates and fellows at MIT. We are also establishing a second mentor program.

To build community among postdocs, we have held several large social events for postdocs at various MIT locations, such as the MIT Museum, Polcari's, the List Visual Arts Center, and the Media Lab. More to come!

The weekly lunch table allows postdocs from across the institute to gather. This is a great opportunity to hear about where to find cheap movie theater tickets and other events, so come and join us every Friday.

We are working with the Graduate Student Council and the Careers Office in hosting an academic career development series every summer.

We are here to help you get the most from your time at MIT. Feel free to contact us with questions or subjects you wish us to feature in following issues.

Jeelan and Penny

Improving Benefits

The 2003 survey showed that roughly one-third of all postdocs at MIT made below the NIH minimum salary of \$34,000 (for 2003). MIT postdocs consist of about 70% associates and 30% fellows. Did you know that the benefit entitlements between the two are not the same?

We are working to equalize this. The Postdoctoral Council Benefits Subcommittee (Marcia, Penny, Dirk, Janet, Marilyn) presented a proposal to Alice Gast, Vice President for Research and Associate Provost, and Claude Canizares, Associate Provost. We proposed to establish a minimum salary for postdocs. We also proposed recommendations to minimize differences in the cost and quality of healthcare benefits between postdoctoral associates and fellows. Our suggested changes, when implemented, will enhance the quality of life for postdoctoral scholars at MIT.

Marcia and Dirk



Postdoctoral Scholars Advisory Council

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Mentoring

80% of postdocs, as highlighted in the survey, feel that they would benefit from interacting with a second MIT faculty member. The goal of the Second Mentor Program is to enhance interaction between postdoctoral scholars and other faculty. Our aim is to foster relationships through the post-doctoral tenure and to provide a forum for setting and attaining career goals, evaluating progress and assisting with

career decision-making and job searching.

The Mentoring Committee (Kirsten, Annegret, Hauke, Janet, Marilyn) recently met with Alice Gast, Vice President for Research and Associate Provost, to develop the program. This program will serve the much-needed purpose of substantiating the postdoctoral experience and will also give a sense of satisfaction and community involvement to the faculty who volunteer as mentors.

Hauke and Kirsten

Our Members

Penny Beuning, Biology
Bingzi Chen, Biological Eng.
Yu Chen, RLE
Kirsten Edepli, CCR
Jonathan Habif, RLE
Marcia Haigis, Biology
Dirk Holste, Biology
Hauke Kolster, LNS
Andy Lawrence, EAPS
Alberto Martinez, Dibner
Jeelan Moghraby, Biology
Magdalena Sauvage, BCS
Anna Schulze Lutum, Biology
Eugenio Vazquez, Chemistry

There are currently openings on the Council. We try to represent postdocs across all disciplines of MIT. If you are interested in joining the Council, please contact our administrators Janet Fischer and Marilyn Smith.

FOND FAREWELLS!

Jianbin Mao, taking a job at Cambridge College as of June 2004

Alberto Martinez, an early member of the Council, taking a job at Caltech in September 2004

Info & Links

Recent useful articles and publications relating to postdocs:

Seven Steps to a Successful Postdoctoral Experience

Seminar at Scripps Research Institute
http://www.scripps.edu/services/postdocs/Seven_Steps.pdf

US Postdocs: Young, Gifted, ... and Broke

Nature **428**, 690-691 (15 April 2004)

