



Issue 4
January 2006

Newsletter Postdocs @ MIT



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

IAP 2006 Activities

POSTDOC BOOT CAMP

Second annual State of the Union for MIT Postdocs! Come hear MIT authorities from several different offices discuss employment classifications, benefits, and what they mean for you. Questions welcomed! The event will take place on Thursday, January 12th, 12-1:30, in Building 68-181. PLUS - light refreshments!

OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE THE LAB FOR PHD'S

IAP Series sponsored by MIT Career Services – no registration necessary. Come to as many sessions as interest YOU!

All talks are from 3-4:30, with room numbers indicated below:

January 10th
FINANCE
10-250

January 13th
MANAGEMENT CONSULTING
10-250

January 18th
PATENT LAW
2-105

January 20th
POLICY ANALYSIS
3-270

January 24th
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING
4-270

What's New?

The Postdoctoral Scholars Advisory Council has stabilized this Fall, with several new members, and a new commitment to monthly meetings to plan events and activities. I have chosen to highlight some of the primary initiatives that captured our attention during the Fall meetings. First, the Postdoc Mentoring pilot that took place in 2004-5, will be continued as an ongoing program, with a presence on the postdoc website, and an expansion of the pool of faculty mentors. Second, the Advisory Council continues to partner with MIT Career Services, to get the word out on important career related opportunities and workshops, including a late January panel and discussion co-sponsored by AAAS. Finally, a Spring Workshop Series is in development, to be focused on lab management and primary issues of career development for those in the academic track.

Janet Fischer

New Features on PD Website

The postdoctoral scholars website has some new features for the new year! Look for a new page on the mentoring program, as well as a renewed effort to feature the News, Photos, and Links that showcase the exciting work being done at MIT by postdocs.

At the moment, some exciting research conducted by Dr. Benjamin Kirkup is on display on the site. Ben works in the Polz Lab within the Parsons Lab, where he and others are interested in the characterization of communities of bacteria in the water, including how they feed, how they work together, and how they compete. Ben's work (illustrated by a familiar logo culture in Petri dishes) has been featured on the MIT homepage spotlight, and he has been kind enough to allow us to share his work with the postdoc community, as well.

Our goal is to spotlight the work of one or more postdocs each month on the website, so if you have something interesting to show and tell, please be in touch!

Brain and Cognitive Sciences

SPOTLIGHT

It has been an exciting Fall for those in neuroscience, with the consolidation of three major brain-related activity centers in the new complex at the corner of Main and Vassar Streets. The Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, the Picower Institute for Learning and Memory, and the McGovern Institute for Brain Research all share space within the massive building that straddles the train tracks. Three distinct celebrations marked the grand opening of each entity, with Nobel Laureates, politicians, and celebrities, joining ranks with MIT faculty and students to highlight leading research initiatives.

In addition, the Martinos Imaging Center opened this fall within the new McGovern Institute for Brain Research facility. The Institute's imaging center forms a joint "center without walls" with the Martinos Imaging Center at MGH, and the faculty will continue to collaborate with MGH researchers. Investigators and students from MIT's Brain and Cognitive Science Department and the Picower Institute for Learning and Memory, as well as the MIT community at large, will also conduct studies using the McGovern's magnets.

It is interesting to note that MIT's Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences had humble beginnings. As part of the Psychology section in the Department of Economics (who would have guessed?), the fledgling department occupied space in the barracks-like structure known as Building 20. This building stood for over 50 years, until it was razed in 1998 to make way for the Stata Center.

Nearly 100 postdoctoral scholars are working at MIT in the field of neuroscience, and undoubtedly many of them are enjoying their new workspace.

Postdoctoral Scholars Advisory Council

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Did you know . . . ?

- ◆ The Postdoc Mentoring Initiative, that was a pilot (program) in academic year 2004-5, is now ongoing as a permanent offering. Postdocs can find some guidelines and resources on the NEW mentoring page of our website, as well as a list of faculty who are the current pool of mentors. This list continues to grow.
- ◆ Communication with a "second" mentor is intended to supplement the relationship a postdoc has with his or her PI.
- ◆ Thanks to postdoc ALUMS Kirsten Edepli, Hauke Kolster, and Anna Schulze Lutum for their hard work in administering the pilot, and thanks to Kathryn Jones and Yongting Wang for maintaining the initiative beyond the pilot phase.

Forward to Professorship

The FORWARD to Professorship workshop, held at MIT on Sept 30-Oct 1 and sponsored by the Graduate Students Office, is aimed at women who intend to become tenure-track assistant professors in science, engineering, and mathematics (SEM) fields. The original workshop was developed as part of an NSF ADVANCE Leadership grant. The workshop brought together women graduate students and postdocs from across MIT to learn the skills and strategies to help them succeed in academic careers.

The program examined the three main responsibilities of academic careers: research, teaching, and service, and highlighted the importance of developing a personal plan including short- and long-range goals in each area. Prof. Charlene Sorensen from Gallaudet University addressed the service component and gave suggestions for choosing service contributions for maximum impact without maximum time commitment. Prof. Rachele Heller from George Washington University gave a sample lecture that incorporated several teaching styles and some examples of simple ways to incorporate active learning in the classroom. Program directors from NIH and NSF were on hand to give information about applying

to their programs and to answer questions about each agency. Sara Laschever gave a talk based on her book, "Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide." An important point was that more issues are negotiable than people typically appreciate. Time management and the tenure process were also addressed.

Workshop participants critiqued each other's cover letters, teaching statements and research proposals. There was also plenty of time for meeting peers and the presenters, as well as administrators from local institutions. Several members of the Postdoctoral Scholars Advisory Council attended the workshop and found it to be extremely valuable.

Getting There & Getting Started

This Spring, the Postdoctoral Scholars Advisory Council will sponsor a series of seminars for postdocs interested in academic careers. The first one will address issues of how the faculty role varies among different types of institutions. A second seminar will address setting up and staffing a laboratory, including recruiting and interviewing personnel, and managing a start-up budget and projects. Both seminars will include time following the panel for socializing and refreshments. Watch for announcements from the Council - the seminars are planned for February/March and April.

Contributed by Penny Beuning, Kathryn Jones, Michael Moore, and Yongting Wang

Our Members

Penny Beuning (*Biology*), Yu Chen (*Research Lab for Electronics*), Peter Chien (*Biology*), Marcia Haigis (*Biology*), Kathryn Jones (*Biology*), Shiva Kalinga (*Biological Engineering*), Sheryl Krevsky Elkin (Center for Cancer Research), Anurag Maheshwari (*Biological Engineering*), Michael Moore (*Chemical Engineering*), Amanda Mower (*Picower Center for Learning & Memory*), Rory O'Shea (Sloan School of Management), Luis Vives de Prada (*Sloan School of Management*), Yongting Wang (*Chemistry*). We try to represent postdocs across all disciplines of MIT, as space permits. If you are interested in joining the Council, please contact us at the email address at left.

Upcoming Events:

- ◆ **Interview Skills for Scientists and Technical Professionals Entering Industry, Panel and Networking Reception, 3-5 PM in MIT 10-250.** Co-sponsored by AAAS, the MIT Careers Office, and the Postdoc Advisory Council.
- ◆ **Monthly Postdoc Gatherings - "happy - or however you are feeling - hour" at the R&D Pub in the Stata Center.** Generally the first Thursday night of each month, although in January this will be Thurs. Jan. 12th. Beverages for purchase, with food provided by the Advisory Council. Time is 4:30 to 6:00 PM.

The Postdocs@MIT Newsletter is published by the

MIT Postdoctoral Scholars Advisory Council

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