

01/12/2001 PSA Meeting

Minutes of the January 12, 2001 Meeting

Postdoctoral Scholars Association (PSA) of UC Davis

Meeting location and time: Memorial Union (Moss Room), Noon

Meeting attendance: 9

Meeting called to order: 12:12 PM, PSA Chair Tom Peavy presiding

- (1) Participant signed-in. Meeting agenda handed out. Draft entitled "UC Davis Postdoctoral Scholars Association Recommendations to Improve Postdoctoral Affairs" handed out.
- (2) Minutes from previous PSA meeting (12/07/2000) approved.
- (3) The following list of recommendations to improve postdoctoral affairs was discussed in the meeting:
 - (i) *Title codes for Postdoctoral Scholars should be integrated so that all Postdoctoral Scholars would be distinguished in a separate category (e.g., Postdoctoral Scholars series).* Participants raised the issue of whether the current titles at UC Davis (postgraduate researcher, visiting postdoc & unclassified) are UC systemwide titles or specific to UC Davis.
 - (ii) *Full-time Postdoctoral appointments should be delineated in a contractual form as such (i.e., 100% time).*
 - (iii) *Postdoctoral Scholars should not receive a salary lower than the National Institutes of Health's postdoctoral fellowship (NRSA) pay scale.* NRSA (National Research Service Award) current stipend levels can be found at <http://www.nih.gov/niams/grants/notice/notod01-011.html>.
 - (iv) *All Postdoctoral Scholars should be offered complete health benefits (medical/dental/vision) with their appointment.* Participants suggested to call it a "benefit package" and not to divide it into medical/dental/vision.
 - (v) *A letter of appointment should be presented to all Postdoctoral Scholars prior to being appointed which explicitly describes the terms and conditions of the job position.* Participants suggested that such letter should be called a "job description" or "offer letter", that it should include a description of the offer (salaries and benefits), and that it should be approved and filed by the hiring Department and/or Graduate Studies.
 - (vi) *Principal investigators serving as mentors should evaluate the Postdoctoral Scholars performance at least yearly.* Participants suggested that such evaluation should be more than a simple formality (as it is the case for most graduate student evaluations), and that satisfactory performance should be the basis to move the scholar up the NRSA pay scale mentioned in item (3), subitem (iii) above.
 - (vii) *The institute should value good mentorship of Postdoctoral Scholars by incorporating this activity into the overall assessment of faculty job performance.* Participants suggested that the term

"letters of evaluation" should be used in lieu of "letter of recommendation", and that such letter could be part of the standard merit review process.

(viii) Participants also asked to include *teaching and other professional development opportunities* in the list of recommendations.

(ix) PSA Chair Tom Peavy will send a revised list of recommendations for review and discussion by all UCD Postdoctoral Scholars through the postdoc listserv.

(4) COSEPUP meeting:

(i) COSEPUP (Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy) is a joint committee of The National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine. COSEPUP will hold a Convocation on "Enhancing the Postdoctoral Experience" on March 2, 2001 in Washington, DC. UC Davis will send a delegation to the meeting, including PSA Chair Tom Peavy and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies Jerry Hedrick. Issues to be discussed include the recognition status of Postdoctoral Scholars, compensation and benefits, and responsibilities of funding organizations.

(ii) COSEPUP will have a simultaneous *webcast* of the meeting, so that campuses nationwide can view and participate in the event. Teresa Dillinger volunteered to put the webcast event together here at UC Davis. This event (on March 2, 2001) will include the live webcast (big screen format), e-mail participation, and other activities. Graduate Studies may contribute some money to put this event together. Teresa needs help setting up the event. Please e-mail Teresa (tdillinger@ucdavis.edu) if you are interested in helping or participating in this event.

(iii) PSA Chair Tom Peavy also announced he will be participating in the "Postdoc Network National Meeting" sponsored by the Postdoc Network of Science's Next Wave. This event will be held March 3, 2001 in Washington, DC, the day after the COSEPUP convocation.

(5) PSA Chair Tom Peavy reported that the UC Systemwide Academic Senate Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA, the Graduate Council of UC System) wants to deal with a single UC systemwide Postdoctoral Scholar organization. Participants mentioned that such organization should be systemwide and therefore must include representation from all UC campuses. Tom also reported that the Dean of Graduate Studies, Cristina González, offered funds to host a meeting here at UC Davis for all UC Postdoctoral Associations. Tom will send letters to all UC campuses (even if they currently do not have a Postdoctoral Association) asking them to send representatives for the UC Davis meeting. Dean González mentioned that Graduate Studies may have funds to allow representatives from other campuses to travel to UC Davis for the meeting. All participants agreed that the idea of a unified Postdoctoral Association is excellent and that such meeting should take place as soon as possible.

(6) Campus Housing. Currently, only registered undergraduate and graduate students at UC Davis are eligible for campus housing. Housing accommodations for non-students, staff, faculty, and other affiliates of UC Davis (including postdocs) are available only in the event that all UC Davis students are accommodated, and by exception. PSA chair Tom Peavy will contact the Dean of Graduate Studies Cristina González and the Graduate Council in an effort to bring Postdoctoral Scholars to a higher priority

(7) Announcements/ miscellaneous:

(i) The issue of access by Postdoctoral Scholars to Unitrans, University facilities such as the Recreation Hall, and health insurance was raised. Such privileges are paid by student fees. However, PSA should look into the possibility of extending such services to Postdoctoral Scholars.

For example, the Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan (GSHIP) covers graduate, professional and international students. Would it be possible to allow Postdoctoral Scholars to purchase such package?

(ii) PSA Secretary/Treasurer Sabine Schmid-Holmes is taking a maternity leave. Paulo Verardi, the alternate PSA Secretary/Treasurer, will be responsible for Sabina's duties until she returns.

(iii) Our next PSA meeting will be held at a date, time and location to be announced by e-mail at a later date.

Meeting adjourned: 1:07 PM, PSA Chair Tom Peavy presiding

Prepared by Paulo Verardi, alternate PSA Secretary/Treasurer