

04/23/2001 PSA Meeting

Minutes of the April 23, 2001 Meeting

Postdoctoral Scholars Association (PSA) of UC Davis

Meeting location and time: Moss Room at the Memorial Union, 5:45 PM

Meeting attendance: 8

Meeting called to order: 5:51 PM, PSA Chair Tom Peavy presiding

- (1) Participant signed-in. Meeting agenda handed out.
- (2) Minutes from previous PSA meeting (03/12/2001) approved.
- (3) Graduate Council Subcommittee report. The subcommittee on "Academic Planning and Development" met on 04/11/2001. PSA vice-chair and representative to this subcommittee, Christine Hotz, together with chair Thomas Peavy, and Teresa Dillinger (Internship and Career Center), reported on the meeting, where the list of recommendations to improve postdoctoral affairs was discussed. Tom Peavy presented the prioritized version of the list to the subcommittee, revised and approved in our last PSA meeting (03/12/2001).

For each of the recommendations, the following issues were brought up by the PSA representatives to this subcommittee for discussion at the PSA meeting:

- (i) *Salaries-- follow current NIH (NRSA) pay scale.*
 - NIH recently announced that "the NIH supports higher stipends for NRSA recipients and therefore announces tentative targets of \$25,000 for graduate and **\$45,000 for entry-level postdoctoral stipends**. Future budget requests will incorporate 10 to 12 percent stipend increases until these targets are reached. After attainment of these targets, the real value of stipends will be maintained with annual cost-of-living adjustments." (for more info see the full report at http://grants.nih.gov/training/nas_report/NIHResponse.htm). If the NRSA scale is to be followed in the future, such level of stipend (\$45,000) for entry-level postdocs could be a burden to principal investigators (PIs). Not all PIs have NIH-funded grants, PIs may not have enough grant money to cover such increase in salary, and other funding agencies may not be able to match this salary level. In addition, such increase may only take effect on newly funded grants.
 - In light of the issue raised above, a suggestion was made to change the wording of the recommendation so that salaries are linked to the current COSEPUP-advised pay scale (and not the NIH/NRSA pay scale). In addition, the PSA should further discuss the issue of salary increases based on years of experience, considering the uneven rate of increases of the NRSA scale. The PSA also has to discuss the issue of cost-of-living differences amongst the different UC campuses (e.g., UCD vs UCSF) if a UC systemwide scale is to be followed.
 - Foreign postdocs should have the same salaries as their domestic counterparts.

- After deliberation, the consensus recommendation of the PSA is: (1) to have an entry salary that is at least the current (fiscal year 2001) minimum salary of the NRSA scale (\$28,260); (2) to link salaries to the COSEPUP-advised pay scale (currently the NRSA pay scale); and (3) to further discuss the issue of cost-of-living adjustments and increases based on the number of years of experience (e.g., the university could link such adjustments to other academic appointment increases, etc.).
- (ii) *Benefits.* The PSA has to consider that there could be a cost increase to some PIs for the medical, dental and vision package. A temporary solution for fellowship recipients without health benefits might be to allow them to enroll in the GSHIP (UCD Graduate Student Health Insurance plan).
- (iii) *Offer letter ("contract").* To be discussed in a later meeting.
- (iv) *Postdoctoral evaluation.* We discussed the idea of a "certification of the postdoctoral experience". Such "certification" would state the experiences of the postdoctoral scholar not only in research, but also in teaching, grant writing, training of students, etc. Such "certificate" would be tailored to each scholar and would be useful for non-academic and non-standard career opportunities. The consensus of the PSA is that such idea should be pursued.
- (v) *Vacation, sick and maternity leave.* To be discussed in a later meeting.

Note: PSA representatives to this subcommittee informed the PSA that the issue of career services for postdocs may have to be addressed with the Provost, Graduate Studies, etc. (and not to the Graduate Council).

(4) Report and discussion on upcoming UC systemwide postdoc meeting (scheduled for Saturday, May 19). Chair Tom Peavy is working on assuring participation of all UC campuses in the meeting. The meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place between 10:30 AM and 3:30 or 4 PM. The PSA will likely have to help with travelling expenses for the attendees from Southern California (perhaps Graduate Studies will help with these expenses). Tom suggested to arrange with Marriott to cater the event, as it is a simpler alternative. PSA meeting members agreed unanimously.

(5) Pathways Career Symposium. Teresa Dillinger announced that the *Pathways Career Symposium* for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars will be taking place on May 5th in Wellman Hall. There will be a table with information about the PSA during the lunch hour. The keynote speaker, Dr. Peter S. Fiske, is the author of "To Boldly Go: A Practical Career Guide for Scientists" and its second edition: "Put Your Science to Work: A Take-Charge Career Guide for Scientists" and co-author of the biweekly column Tooling Up on AAAS's Career website NextWave. The PSA contributed \$200.00 to co-sponsor his workshop, together with the Internship and Career Center.

(6) Announcements/ miscellaneous:

(i) Tom Peavy announced that he mentioned to Graduate Council about the need of administrative support for postdoctoral affairs and the PSA. He will keep us posted on any developments.

(ii) 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: 6:55 PM, PSA Chair Tom Peavy presiding

Prepared by Paulo Verardi, PSA Secretary/Treasurer