

Postdoctoral Scholars Association



**POSTDOCS
NEWSLETTER**

FEBRUARY 2008

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sat 2/16** Davis Emergency Preparedness Day (9:00-4:00), Davis Teen Center (corner of 3rd and B Streets, next to the Farmer's Market)

- Thu 2/21** Swing Dance for Beginners (12:00-1:00), Cabernet Room, Silo

- Fri 2/22** PSA February meeting (12:00-1:00), Weir room, Meyer Hall

- Thu 3/13** Food safety (12:00-1:00), Cabernet Room, Silo

- Wed 3/19** PSA March meeting (12:00-1:00), Foster room, Meyer Hall

GETTING TO KNOW PSA

By Abhinav Bhushan, PSA chair

The Postdoctoral Scholars Association (PSA) provides resources, information and representation for postdoctoral scholars on the UC Davis campus. The PSA strives to create a stronger sense of community through an e-mail listserv, web site, and social activities. The easiest way to get started is to visit the PSA website at <http://postdocs.ucdavis.edu/>

There is information about Awards, Professional Development, the listserv, and a lot of other information. To sign up for the listserv, send an email to listproc@ucdavis.edu with the text "subscribe postdocs your firstname lastname"

In case of any problem subscribing, please send an email to abhushan@ucdavis.edu

There are many opportunities to participate in on the Davis campus. These include the Laboratory Management Program Training Program, Professional Development workshops, the Center for Entrepreneurship, seminars at the various departments, to name a few. Along with the PSA website, the Campus Events calendar is an excellent source to keep abreast of the activities on campus. Please check out <http://calendar.ucdavis.edu/>

I would like to thank Rita Mehta, Joanna Friesner, and Joy Sirikanchana for being the force behind putting this newsletter together.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Davis Emergency Preparedness Day

In response to the heavy January storms experienced in Davis and the surrounding area, the Davis Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) has teamed up with the local Red Cross and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to host an Emergency Preparedness Day. This is a hands-on community event designed to prepare residents and their families to be self-sufficient for up to 72 hours in an emergency. Learn how to create an emergency plan and prepare a 72 hour personal disaster kit. Kit contents will be demonstrated and instructions given on how to create your own, or purchase pre-made kits. There will also be vendors present with pre-made kits available for purchase.

Date, time, and location:

Saturday, February 16th, 2008 (9:00 am-4:00 pm) at the Davis Teen Center (corner of 3rd and B Streets, next to the Farmer's Market).



BROWN-BAG presentations

'Brown-bag' lunchtime presentations are sponsored by the UCD Staff Development and Professional Services. They are open to members of UCD including postdocs, sessions are free and enrollment is not required.

Feel free to bring your lunch while listening to presentations!

(1) Swing Dance for Beginners

Instructor: Barbara Nicholas

Swing line dancing is fun, great exercise, and will free the dancer in you! No partners necessary so come join this workshop and learn basic swing footwork and dance moves all put together in a line dance format. A skilled dance instructor will have you practicing the triple step swing, the Charleston and the lindy hop. This will be an energetic and upbeat session so dress comfortably and be ready to dance!

Pre-enrollment is not required for this brown bag presentation.

Date, time, and location:

Thursday, February 21st, 2008
(12:00 pm-1:00pm) at Cabernet Room, Silo.

(2) Food Safety 101

Instructor: Christine M. Bruhn, Ph.D.

Many people do not think about food safety until a food-related illness

affects them or a family member. However, with over 7 million Americans falling ill to food borne illness annually, you will want to do everything you can to keep your kitchen safe. In this workshop you will learn how to handle, store and cook food properly. In addition, recent food safety concerns, new technologies for enhancing food safety and where to turn for accurate information will be discussed.

Pre-enrollment is not required for this brown bag presentation.

Date, time, and location:

Thursday, March 13th, 2008 (12:00 pm-1:00 pm) at Cabernet Room, Silo.



Updated Postdoc Handbook

By Joanna Friesner

The current UCD postdoc handbook is several years out of date. This means it is very likely that not only are postdocs misinformed about new and updated regulations and policies, but so are the staff members that work with postdocs in individual campus departments. Dr. Joanna Friesner, a postdoc in the Section of Molecular and Cellular Biology, contacted Kathleen Smith, UCD's postdoc benefits representative about developing an updated handbook. Joanna volunteered to assist Kathleen by providing feedback on the topics of importance to UCD postdocs. She

developed a draft outline of topics and distributed it to UCD postdocs in December via the email listserve.

To view the draft outline, please go to this PSA website:
<http://postdocs.ucdavis.edu/advocacy/handbook.html>.

For consideration into the working draft, please send comments to **Joanna Friesner** at jdfriesner@ucdavis.edu no later than **February 22nd, 2008**. After receiving additional input from postdocs, Joanna and the PSA chair and vice chair plan to first discuss the document with Jeffrey Gibeling, UCD Dean of Graduate Studies, and then with Kathleen Smith to facilitate updates to the handbook.



2008 Award for Excellence in Postdoctoral Research

Call for Nominations

Nominations are invited for the 2007 Award for Excellence in Postdoctoral Research. This award is offered to recognize the vital role that Postdoctoral Scholars play in maintaining the reputation of excellent research at the University of California, Davis. A certificate and \$500 will be conferred to each awardee. Up to five awards will be made.

Eligibility: Currently-appointed UC Davis postdoctoral scholars who have a minimum of one year of postdoctoral study at UC Davis, and

less than five years total postdoctoral experience, may be nominated.

Who May Nominate: UC Davis faculty and postdocs are invited to nominate a distinguished postdoctoral scholar for this award.

Qualifications: Nominees should have outstanding research accomplishments. Criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Innovation in research and impact on the field.
- Research productivity and quality as a UC Davis postdoctoral scholar, as demonstrated by publications, presentations, awards, etc.

Application guideline and materials can be found at -
<http://postdocs.ucdavis.edu/awards/awards.html>

The deadline for nominations is **5 pm Friday, April 11th, 2008**, and the deadline for submission of applications is **5 pm Friday, April 25th, 2008**.



ARTICLES NEEDED!!

By Joy Sirikanchana

Postdoc fellows, we are looking for contributors to submit articles for the UC Davis Postdocs Newsletter. Articles of any topic are welcome, but should be of interest to postdoc community. These can include, but are not limited to, hot topics in research and industry, personal

development, professional development, career advice, your interesting experiences, hobbies, tips, and even your favorite recipe.

The article should not exceed 300 words. If the article is a summary of copyrighted work, please provide a reference to the original article. Please submit the articles, or any questions, to **Dr. Joy Sirikanchana** at joysiri@ucdavis.edu. The due date for submitting the articles to be included in the March issue of the newsletter is **Wednesday, February 27th, 2008**.



MEETING THE PSA CHAIR

By Joy Sirikanchana

In this issue, we want to introduce you to the chair of PSA 2007-2008, **Dr. Abhinav Bhushan**, and learn more about what he does both in his research, and in his free time.



Q: What department are you from and who is your PI? Could you also tell us a little bit about your research?

Abhinav: I am from the Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering. My PI is Dr. Cristina E. Davis. I am fortunate to be working

on a couple of different interdisciplinary projects in my lab. One of them is to develop instrumentation and techniques to analyze breath for diagnosing diseases. Another part of my research is involved with the Northern California Nanofabrication Center (NC2), where we are developing novel sensors. All these projects go on at the same time, but there are times where one project is more urgent than the others. Usually I try to work on each topic in big blocks of time. Both of the projects also involve undergraduate and graduate students. This work is exciting especially because I get to interact with people from other disciplines like biology, chemistry, clinicians, and engineering.

Q: Other than lab work, what else is your postdoc position involved?

Abhinav: I work with and train undergrads and grad students in the lab. Also, last quarter I gave a couple of lectures in my PI's class on bioMEMS (Biomicroelectromechanical systems) class.

Q: How long have you been a postdoc at UC Davis?

Abhinav: I joined UC Davis in July 2007, after getting a Ph.D. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Louisiana State University (LSU) in December 2006. During the last 1.5 year of my Ph.D. study, I also worked full-time as a researcher at LSU. After I got my degree, I

continued working as a researcher there for another 6 months.

Q: What do you do for fun here at UC Davis?

Abhinav: Out of my research time, a part of the time goes towards working for the PSA. I am also participating in the Little Bang competition, which is an excellent way of learning how to communicate my idea and convince others that the idea is worth their time. Outside of the university, exploring the market for faculty positions and learning about the economy and the financial markets eat up my time.

Q: Let's talk a bit more about PSA. How did you become a PSA chair of this year? What kind of work is it involved?

Abhinav: I first got involved in PSA by attending the monthly meeting. And when it was time for new PSA chair and committee, I had a great opportunity to become the new chair. My main goal for working with PSA is to increase the participation of postdocs in the PSA. The fact that UC Davis is a premier research university makes postdocs become a very important part to the university. PSA therefore wants to increase awareness in the university regarding postdocs. UC Davis has a good focus on students, both undergraduates and graduates, and also faculty, but postdocs are somehow not very well represented. PSA is also trying to inform postdocs on what programs and benefits are being offered to them. Being the chair, I also have good interaction

with Office of Graduate Studies, which gives me a good opportunity to learn about the university and also bring issues important to postdocs to their attention. This has been a wonderful experience for me, as I got involved with activities early, which one will have to participate later on when he/she becomes a faculty.

Q: For postdocs who are interested in being a part of PSA, but they are too busy, what should they do?

Abhinav: A lot of times postdocs look for opportunity for joining PSA, but they are afraid that it will be a big time commitment. Yes, it will take a bit of time. You won't get anything for free. However, I would say since a lot of "burden" for postdoctoral affairs is taken by the Office of Graduate Studies, so for PSA it really depends on what you want to do. If you want to put in a lot of time, and you want things to be changed, you can do it. For me being a chair, I would say it takes about a few hours a month and I do a lot of PSA work at home in the evening, e.g., sending out emails to PSA mailing list. And it takes about 2-3 hours to prepare for a monthly meeting. Some months there are many things going on, but there also are times when things are slow.

As a good start getting involved in PSA, I would suggest you try attending the monthly PSA meeting. If you cannot attend the meeting, then please send me an email to let me know you are interested to get involved. One doesn't need to be an office holder in the PSA in order to get involved. If you have an idea to make a difference, for example, an

idea to hold a seminar or workshop on a special topic, PSA can help you do it. Since the office positions including the committees for next academic year will start around July or August 2008, now is a good time for postdocs who are interested in contributing/participating in those positions to start learning about them.

Q: Since this is still the beginning of the new year, do you have New Year's resolution you want to share with other postdocs?

Abhinav: I have quite a few, and one of them is that I want to be more proactive in keeping in touch with past friends and colleagues.

PSA CONTACTS

PSA website

<http://postdocs.ucdavis.edu/>

PSA chair

Dr. Abhinav Bhushan

abhushan@ucdavis.edu

PSA secretary/treasurer

Dr. Rita Mehta

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Questions, comments, or contributions to the Postdocs Newsletter can be sent to Dr. Kwanrawee (Joy) Sirikanchana at joysiri@ucdavis.edu

