



Postdoctoral Scholars Association NEWSLETTER

“MAY” the Force be with you ☺

Chancellor May's message for the UC Davis Postdoctoral Scholars Association

I'm honored to share a message in this inaugural newsletter and to express my appreciation for the many contributions of our postdoctoral scholars. Your research helps to move UC Davis, our region, our nation and the world forward.

You are at the heart of UC Davis' mission as an R1 research university, from being part of prevention and other solutions related to COVID-19, to innovating new technologies and deepening our understanding of the world. The record-setting high of \$968 million in sponsored research funding this past year is a testament to your excellent work and the unwavering commitment of our UC Davis community to address important societal needs.

Our postdoctoral researchers are a critical part of the Bodega Marine Laboratory and Bodega Marine Reserve, where they work side by side with world renowned experts to support a more sustainable future for our oceans. They are postdoctoral scholars at the UC Davis MIND Institute/Psychiatry department who focus on how race and disabilities affect health and mental health outcomes. They contribute to the unique work done at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center. And they do so much more.

In fact, UC Davis is home to more than 1,000 postdoctoral scholars. They come to us, often with their families, from all around the globe to create a new home and further our academic mission. Their cultures, backgrounds, perspectives, ideas, areas of expertise and priorities enrich our university's capacity and potential for scholarly inquiry and discovery.

We are among the best public research universities in America and an excellent choice for postdoctoral scholars looking to further their research and launch the next phase of their careers. - and far beyond - I'm proud of the sheer volume of excellence that's found across so many disciplines.

In return, postdocs greatly enrich our UC Davis community through their work, ideas, perspectives, experiences and backgrounds. They are part of the reason why UC Davis has been named number one in the nation for campus diversity, inclusiveness and internationalization.

I encourage you to explore how you can add to the UC Davis culture that values, champions and reflects the community we aspire to be. Our university is better because you're here.

Gary S. May
Chancellor

Highlights

1. Meet the PSA Team
2. PSA Events and Services- "All great things we provide"
3. PSA Foundation Stones by Dr. Teresa Dillinger
4. The Star Postdoc
5. Alum Chat on Tap
6. Publications, Awards and Recognitions by UC Davis Postdocs

*This issue is compiled by the
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*To join our team, submit an
article or your publications,
awards or recognition to be
highlighted in the next issue
by sending an e-mail
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Meet the (coolest) team
(ever)



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All great things we provide

Travel Awardees Summer-2021

Dr. Santiago Tamagno

Dr. Labin Huang

Dr. Hefei Zhao

**Dr. Mohammad Ali
Kazemi Lari**

Dr. Vanessa Carvalho

Dr. Gaurav Jha

Dr. Oryl Tonkykh

*Congratulations to the
awardees and thanks a
MILLION to our
beautiful judges to
provide their time and
efforts.*



PSA Travel Grants

The PSA Travel Grant is a \$400 grant for current UC Davis postdoctoral scholars who need financial assistance to present their work at conferences. Keep an eye for our quarterly calls. For details e-mail psatreasurer@ucdavis.edu.



Research Symposium

PSA organizes this event to showcase the contribution of postdocs to the advancement of science on-campus. Email psavicechair@ucdavis.edu. Symposium 2022 is on March 18. Submit abstracts and share all you do. HOOORAY!



Excellence Awards

This award is offered to recognize the vital role that Postdocs play in maintaining the reputation of excellent research at the University of California, Davis. Nominations are open and invited. Email psachair@ucdavis.edu.



Career Development

...So, we feel Ph.D. is not enough and we help you achieve the goals through mentoring, workshops and training for academic and industrial jobs. For events and ideas-

psarelations@ucdavis.edu.



PSA Foundation Stones



Dr. Dillinger oversees professional development programs for postdoctoral scholars at UC Davis and co-directs the Professors for the Future program. She also serves on the leadership team for Leaders for the Future, a program designed to cultivate entrepreneurial thinking in graduate students and postdoctoral scholars at UC Davis. Dr. Dillinger is also the nationwide project lead for Imagine PhD, an online career exploration and planning platform. She has over 20 years of experience in career and professional development advising and is passionate about partnering with graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to help them envision and achieve their career goals.

Dr. Teresa Dillinger

Director, GradPathways Institute for Professional Development,
Graduate Studies, UC Davis and Project Lead, ImaginePhD

**Dr. Dillinger
founded the UC
Davis PSA and here
comes her Story!!**

The PSA was founded in 1999 at UC Davis and Professor Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Jerry Hedrick was a driving force for behind it. I received an email from him inviting all postdocs to meet to discuss forming a community. As a new postdoc, I was excited about the possibility of meeting and working towards a more supportive environment for postdocs. I imagined the room would be overflowing with like-minded postdocs, but as I turned the corner to enter the conference room, I was surprised that Professor Hedrick and another postdoc, Sarah Partan, were the only ones there. But we had a great discussion and Sarah and I went on to co-found the Postdoctoral Scholars Association. We subsequently organized a series of meetings that proved to be much better attended. With the burgeoning interest in the organization, we were even able to form subcommittees and create a community that met regularly both on and off campus for meetings and social activities.

Wisdom and more...

Seeing others succeed is a huge motivator for me. That is one of the reasons I pursued this career which really came about as a direct result of my activities with the PSA. One of my first meetings on behalf of the PSA was with the Internship and Career Center to learn more about what they were doing to support postdocs. In that meeting, I learned they were seeking someone to develop more services for grad students and postdocs and I was encouraged to apply for this position. I would never have known about the position at all had I not started down a path of advocacy for postdocs!

Go Aggies 🍷

My memories are both from being in the PSA and now being an administrator who helps support the PSA. My favorite memories are of the people, so I won't just select one. But I've been struck by the generous spirit of so many of the UCD postdocs who have worked hard to make UC Davis a great place for all postdocs. I think about the events that they have created such as the annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium and the founding of the Postdoctoral Research Excellence Award and quarterly Travel Awards – we have all of these because UCD postdocs themselves stepped up and made them happen.



STAR Postdoc Lights, Camera, Shine...

Currently shining at
Calisi Lab at UC
Davis

First generation
graduate...Woohooo!!



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
Alumni

Ph.D. in
neuroscience and
environmental
toxicology

Science
Communicator

Dr. Alexandra Colón-Rodríguez

Department of Neurobiology, Physiology, and Behavior

Research Focus: understanding if and how single parenting is changing the main emotional center of the brain, the amygdala, on the single parent and the offspring.

MOTIVATION

As a graduate student, I pursued the research questions that I was interested in that aligned with the laboratory's main research topic. I was also able to pursue professional development opportunities and gain experience as a mentor, project manager/coordinator, and science outreach. The skillsets I learned in research and effective communication, time management, mentoring, and project management have allowed me to have a good postdoctoral experience.

EXPECTATION

My expectations from my employer when interviewing for a position are for them to be honest and transparent about the culture of the place, their managing style, the expectations for the job, the salary, the benefits, and their vacation/sick leave policies, among other things. However, when recruiting, I know from experience that not all recruiting employers will be honest. Thus, after learning this from experience, I now ask other employees from the team/organization for feedback on the things that are important for me, and it has worked well.

ADVICE

My advice for those interested in pursuing careers outside of academia would be to research before pursuing a postdoc because most positions will not require postdoc experience. In general, I would say that a postdoc is an excellent opportunity to gain skillsets that we did not get as graduate students, which will help us for our next professional steps. Still, it is only worth pursuing if the individual believes it is needed.





Alum Chat on Tap...



UC Davis provides the best resources for professional development to excel in both academia and industry. I wish you all the very best and proudly say that you are in right place to do your postdoc.

Dr. Debanjan Mukhopadhyay

National Institute of Biomedical Genomics, Kalyani, India

UC Davis is the best and Debanjan will tell you why?



UC Davis provides me an opportunity to train myself on cutting-edge molecular biology techniques, in vivo mouse model development to study infectious disease. This immensely helped me to set up my new lab in India where I am utilizing this expertise of immunology and molecular biology to achieve my research objectives as an independent PI. Besides, working with diverse team in Prof. Saeij's lab helps me in improving the communication skills and establishing the collaborations with other labs. Interesting fact that my previous lab moved from MIT to UC Davis and following the process helped me a lot in setting up my own lab. UC Davis has unlimited resources and it provided me the training regarding the grant writing and excelling in academia. In fact, it is the help that I got from the grant writing sessions with which I was awarded the American Heart Association Fellowship from July 2018 to June 2020.

UC Davis is constantly working in improving the quality of life for its post-docs. For all the international students, we used to have a weekly meeting with coffee. Apart from that various event including Picnic Day, pie day and many others that helps in improving the social interactions between students themselves along with their PIs.

Well, I felt very proud as post-doc when I got two awards during my tenure at UC Davis

1. American Heart Association Post-doctoral Fellowship (July 2018-June 2020)
2. Postdoctoral Award for Excellence in Research in Microbiology and Immunology-2018

Social life and achievements as Proud Aggie?





Publications Awards and Recognitions

Dr. Bharti Singal, postdoctoral scholar in Dept. of Molecular and Cell Biology was nominated among top 5 nominees for *Nature Outreach Awards* 2021. Dr. Singal is a strong advocate of women in STEM and has started new initiative to promote interdisciplinary science through BioXSpace. Read more about her at <https://magazine.ucdavis.edu/a-positive-force-for-women-in-stem/>

Dr. Sandipan Samaddar, postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Land Air and Water Resources published FIVE peer reviewed journal articles.

- Samaddar, S., Schmidt, R., Tautges, N. E., & Scow, K. (2021). Adding alfalfa to an annual crop rotation shifts the composition and functional responses of tomato rhizosphere microbial communities. *Applied Soil Ecology*, 167, 104102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apsoil.2021.104102>
- Samaddar, S., Karp, D. S., Schmidt, R., Devarajan, N., McGarvey, J. A., Pires, A. F., & Scow, K. (2021). Role of soil in the regulation of human and plant pathogens: soils' contributions to people. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, 376(1834), 20200179. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2020.0179>

Dr. Gaurav Jha, postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Land Air and Water Resources published FOUR peer reviewed journal articles and received TWO research grants.

- Jha, G., Sihi, D., Dari, B., Kaur, H., Nocco, M., Ulery, A. L. & Lombard, K. (2021). Rapid and Inexpensive Assessment of Soil Total Iron Using NixPro Color Sensor. *Agricultural and Environmental Letters*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ael2.20050>
- Jha, G., Mukhopadhyay, S., Ulery, A. L., Lombard, K., Chakraborty, S., Weindorf, D. C., VanLeeuwen, D., & Brungard, C. (2021). Agricultural soils of the Animas river watershed after the gold king mine spill: an elemental spatiotemporal analysis via portable x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy. *Journal of Environmental Quality*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jeq2.20209>
- **2021 California League of Food Producers Research Grant**
Deficit irrigation and salinity impacts on processing tomato nutrition and quality Grant amount- \$34,760
Objective of this research is to develop a monitoring guideline for deficit irrigation using commercially available wireless sensor technology in processing tomato in order to maximize yield, quality, and human nutrition under increasing groundwater salinity and water scarcity.

Dr. Marwa Zafarullah, newly minted postdoctoral scholar in UC Davis MIND Institute published a research article in *Frontiers of Psychiatry*.

- Zafarullah, M., Durbin-Johnson, B., Fourie, E. S., Hessel, D. R., Rivera, S. M., & Tassone, F. (2021). Metabolomic Biomarkers Are Associated With Area of the Pons in Fragile X Premutation Carriers at Risk for Developing FXTAS. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 1403.

Dr. Rebecca Schomer, postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics received USDA NIFA Postdoctoral Fellowship (Agriculture and Food Research Initiative- Education and Workforce Development) Award for two years to study the chemical specificities of plant-pathogen chemoreceptors involved in host selection and pathogenesis.