A Letter from the President - Boobalan Pachaiyapan Ph.D.

Dear MUSC Postdocs,

It is never too late to say the right thing. So, Happy New Year 2014!!

We started off this year with a bang by organizing the 2nd Annual Postdoc-exclusive Town Hall. This meeting provided a vantage point and brought the PDA officers and the greater postdoctoral community a step closer to understanding each other.

It was so gratifying to witness a room filled with a vibrant audience, sitting in a relaxed environment, eating Subway sandwiches and discussing the ongoing concerns of PD training. I received over 16 questions in a confidential manner, but read about 8 because some of them were repetitious. Questions focusing on campus childcare, the PDA website, settlement of new Postdocs, career development and The Postdoc Press were addressed with dexterity. Tough ones such as a standardized pay scale, the functioning of Postdoc Affairs Advocacy Committee (PAAC), and promotion of senior Postdocs to Staff Scientists did make everyone think for few minutes.

It is not as though we, the Postdocs, are not to blame for some of the concerns we face today. As Dr. Edward Krug rightly pointed out, “a Postdoctoral training is not a career in itself.” It is important that we tell this to ourselves every day. Data hunting is good, but don’t make yourself a ‘data-producing-humanoid.’

One person asked whether the institution wants to buy more time by creating PAAC. I think we should give PAAC a chance, but at the same time the Graduate Council must be kept in the loop. As you all remember, the Graduate Council is the governing body of the institution and in the end they are the ones who implement any policy changes that benefit MUSC and its members.

In my view, the 1st Annual Town Hall was no different than the 2nd Annual Town Hall meeting because the issues that arise now appeared previously as well. The PDA can only act as a liaison and delineate the areas that the institution must act upon immediately. It is up to the institution to play the role of a Godfather, or not? But, I have no doubt, intervention from the institution would definitely “turbocharge” PD training (see my article about The Postdoctoral Training: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly on page 6).

I strongly believe the PAAC and the Graduate Council will step forward and bring a positive change to the MUSC Postdoctoral experience. Because it is never too late to do the right thing.

Best regards,
Boobalan Pachaiyappan, Ph.D.
The idea of starting a postdoctoral training in the United States of America is a dream come true for most international Ph.D. scholars. The situations that an international postdoc encounters are very different from that of a “local” postdoc. I would like to share some of the experiences that have made my postdoc life eventful and exciting.

For most internationals the first step is to obtain a visa for entering the country. The international office at MUSC does a great job of getting all the paperwork for the internationals. However, the process of getting a visa, renewing it and keeping all associated documentation updated is a tough task. Visa renewals can be a pain, often with long wait times leading to further complications with regards to paid time off.

After getting here, I had the toughest time of my life trying to understand the various nuances associated with employment at an institute in this country. I had to deal with words like “deductible”, “co-pay”, “401(k)” on the first day. I had no clue as to what any of them meant or what implications they had in my life as a postdoc. Understanding the intricacies of health insurance and benefits has been an uphill task, made easier only with the help of people at the human resources office.

“Credit history,” a term very simple and obvious to most people in the US, is a nightmare for first year international postdocs. Most of them do not know what it means and others have vague ideas which have been thrust on them by their colleagues in the lab. My experience with credit and its associated problems forced me to draw a parallel to the “chicken before the egg situation”. A person with no previous credit history cannot be given any money on credit (i.e. NO CREDIT CARD), and a person cannot develop his credit worthiness without borrowing money. Paradoxical as it may be, this is a situation most international postdocs face.

Apart from all of these administrative aspects there are instances where cross-cultural issues make lab life a challenge. Often work norms and expectations are not similar to those in the home country. These and other cross-cultural differences make life as an international postdoc more challenging.

All that being said, in my journey as a postdoc, I have had to deal with difficult situations, most of which seem mundane to residents of this country. However, it has been a great learning experience in how to adapt to difficult situations, meet expectations, and overcome these obstacles while still pursuing the primary objective of doing better science.

For similar stories from other postdocs throughout the country go to: http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/publications-5/international-postdoc-resources/international-postdoc-survival-guide/163-been-there-done-that.

They also have lots of tools to guide international postdocs on their journey!
Tips For Successful Networking by Peter Vento, Ph.D.

As 2014 rolls on, it means another year of attending research conferences and sharing your hard-earned data with the rest of the research community and, of course, new opportunities to network. We have all been told of the importance of making connections with other researchers whenever possible. Networking can help develop collaborations that can advance your research. It can foster relationships that greatly improve your chances of finding a job when you leave your postdoc position. Still, many of us find it difficult and uncomfortable to approach PI’s or other researchers with whom we are not familiar. Even when we do get introduced, it’s not always easy to make a positive and lasting impression. Whether your hands get cold and clammy at the thought of walking up to introduce yourself to Professor X, or if you are already a savvy schmoozer, here are some tips to ensure that you leave the conference this year with some strong new connections. And who knows, maybe you’ll even get a job some day!

You have to show up!

- Being present is more than simply a physical act, and often the biggest challenge is to be present mentally. Pay attention to people, look them in the eye, ask questions, listen, and help when you’re able. Advertised job openings are only the tip of the iceberg, and most jobs in science are gained through networking. Now is your time to shine. Make it a point to sit next to someone you don’t know, be mindful of your body language, and stay positive.

Be memorable (in a good way)

- Approach each situation with the primary goal of being helpful and friendly instead of trying to get something out of someone else. Always aim to have a person walk away from a conversation knowing the following pieces of information: your name, your institution, and roughly what you work on. Aim to do this with everyone you meet.

Make sure you have a series of “elevator pitches” prepared.

- These should be the 30sec, 1 min, and 5 min versions of what you’re currently interested in or working on. If you’re looking for jobs, you should also prepare a quick outline of what you’d like to do in the future and the ideal place you’d like to work.

Be interested, instead of trying to be interesting

- Networking is more about listening to what people say than saying the right things. Most people love to talk about themselves, so being a good listener and asking easy, open-ended questions can be a great asset.

Don’t hijack the conversation

- Some people who dislike networking may overcompensate by commandeering the discussion. Don’t forget:: the most successful networkers (think of those whom you’ve met) are good at making other people feel special. Look people in the eye, repeat their name, listen to what they have to say, and suggest topics that are easy to discuss. Be a conversationalist, not a talker.

Ask for introductions from others. Cool people generally know other cool people

- Find someone you know and get them to introduce you to everyone they know. This person may be your supervisor, but postdocs and other Ph.D. students can be just as helpful.

Damage control

- As many of you know, cocktail hour and research conferences go hand in hand. One or two drinks can help loosen you up and get the conversation going. Know your limit, however, and stay well below it. It’s better to watch someone else do the worm across the dance floor in a three piece suit than to hear the stories from your friends the next day and realize that person was you.

Do your homework beforehand

- If there are particular people that you intend to meet, read some of their publications and learn a little about them first. This will give you a launching point to strike up a conversation and allow you to be more relaxed when you bump into the big name in the field.

Be sure to follow up, but keep your emails short and focused

- You should generally follow up within 48 hours of meeting a contact with whom you wish to keep in touch, either by phone, e-mail, or text. Social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter can all help you to maintain connections and get face time.

Did you fail? Try reaching out in a different way

- Persistence pays off, but don’t be too pushy. People are busy and funding is tough. Even if your connections don’t immediately pay off, be sure to stay in contact because those relationships can pay off in meaningful ways down the road. Don’t be afraid to go beyond your specialization either. Just because someone doesn’t study the same G protein-coupled receptor as you doesn’t mean you can’t learn something from one another.

Adapted from Entrepreneur.com and Paul Recchia Ph.D., writer for Science magazine.
The hours and schedule of a postdoctoral fellow are rarely 8-5, Monday through Friday. The responsibilities of many postdocs do not begin and end when we leave the lab, but continue into the wee hours of the night and begin again early in the morning. This is because we have the privilege of being parents. I cannot speak for everyone, but I don’t think I am alone in saying that I struggle with the work-family balance. I feel guilty on nearly a daily basis because I am away from my children from nearly sun up to sundown or because I am not working long or hard enough. I believe it would help to have a nurturing on-site daycare.

There is a current initiative to start an on-site (or at least close to campus) childcare facility spearheaded by a small group of MUSC employees. Some months ago, a childcare needs assessment survey was conducted with monies supplied by the provosts’ office with an unprecedented 92% completion rate. The survey was sent to 2,518 employees. The results of the survey demonstrated that there is a clear preference for full-time childcare near work/school. Additionally, there are a sufficient number of employees with young children under the age of 5 to make this endeavor worthwhile (1443). Although there are childcare options on the peninsula, there are very few choices available for infant care. If on-site childcare were offered, MUSC could expect to see lowered costs due to recruitment, retention, better attendance and higher job performance, as has been demonstrated at Centrastate Medical Center in New Jersey and New York Presbyterian Hospital.

Numerous institutions have made such facilities available to their employees/students. Those close to MUSC are Roper Hospital, College of Charleston, Greenville Hospital System and the University of South Carolina. Although MUSC cares deeply about its employees and students, the financial situation is tight and therefore they are unable to financially support the requirements to start a childcare facility. The MUSC Childcare Committee is looking into alternative financial means, either through private childcare companies or the city of Charleston, for initiating a full-time facility. We are in the early stages of initiating contact with potential childcare vendors who have already established effective business models, and supplying them with our needs assessment survey. Much work has yet to be done, but the Childcare Committee continues to pursue this endeavor.

I am currently on the Childcare Committee not only for my own interests, but also for the interest of fellow postdocs and students whom I know would greatly benefit from a convenient childcare option. If you have any questions or would like to assist the committee, please contact Michelle Nelson (nelsonmh@musc.edu).

Epilogue of Perspectives

Just when you think you should have entitlement, stop…
When you are down in monotony, breathe…
Ever thoughts of “I deserve this, or that”, think lightly…
Inward distress of those pulling strings…with you at the ends

Our trappings which seem pressed within earth, who is in control…really
Pathways intermingle and cross, some to no avail, some to higher ideals
Take hope in the opening tunnel, though light may fail yet to shine
Pay your toll quickly and perhaps often through your journey…remember…who is really in control

By John Sieverdes

John Sieverdes is a Postdoc with the College of Nursing
No one, except possibly me, likes difficult conversations and conflict, but they are inescapable both in one’s life and career. It isn’t that I particularly enjoy the mechanics of difficult conversations, but it represents an opportunity to clarify misunderstandings and assumptions that all too often derail productivity and satisfaction. There was an interesting survey by Science Careers a few years ago that indicated faculty ranked “communication” as the top attribute contributing to a successful postdoc experience. Interestingly, postdocs viewed communication as #7.

While faculty ranked “communication” as the top attribute to a successful postdoc experience, postdocs viewed communication as #7.

While there are common “wants and needs” of most all postdocs, e.g. salary, time off, authorship issues, “next experiment” issues, career goal advice/assistance, lab environment issues, and letters of recommendation, our individual experiences contribute a vastly different set of assumptions and prior history. Judy Ringer, author of Unlikely Teachers: Finding the Hidden Gifts in Daily Conflict, provides some excellent tips for preparing for a difficult conversation:

1. What is your purpose for having the conversation? What do you hope to accomplish? What would be an ideal outcome?
2. What assumptions are you making about this person’s intentions?
3. What “buttons” of yours are being pushed? Are you more emotional than the situation warrants?
4. How is your attitude toward the conversation influencing your perception of it?
5. Who is the opponent? What might they be thinking about this situation? Are they aware of the problem? If so, how do you think they perceive it? What are their needs and fears? What solution do you think they would suggest?
6. What are your needs and fears? Are there any common concerns? Could there be?
7. How have you contributed to the problem? How have they?

Remember that the communication remains unfinished until you have verified what was discussed and the bottom line. Make sure that you clarify any unspoken issues and have articulated a common goal.

“I would be remiss in the worst way if I didn’t bring up the fact that people can have dramatically different preferences for mode of communication. It seems that most scientists prefer written communication - “just the facts” - it is great for putting the obvious front and center and documenting a discussion, but there are several reasons why it can cause serious problems in obscuring important unspoken issues. First of all, email is overused. I, like most faculty, get 50 or more emails a day, many of which require a significant response or action on my part and need to be triaged. Your message could languish for days if there is a firestorm of other issues. Secondly, emails are devoid of our humanity (unless you count “emoticons” as useful for science communication). Some sources contend that body language accounts for nearly two-thirds of communication - hard to fit that into an email. There are a variety of tools available for assessing preferences of communication, but one that I like is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. One comparison in that survey is “Introversion” (I) vs. “Extraversion” (E). I’s tend to prefer the written word while E’s tend to prefer oral means. Also, I’s tend to express conclusions, while E’s tend to develop ideas out loud. Sound like any difficulties you have encountered in communicating with others?

Some take home suggestions
- listening is not the same as hearing
- be aware of potential for misunderstanding (more than being understood, strive to not be misunderstood)
- get in the habit of confirming communication
- timing is important
- non-verbal communication can be as important as the words spoken
- different personal preferences for communication (MBTI, gender, race, ethnicity)
- focus on the core issue, not the “tentacles”

References:
http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2009_08_28/science.opms.r0900076
http://www.judyringer.com/resources/articles/
Humanmetrics.com has a free version of MBTI (Jung Typology Test)
Postdoctoral Training: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly  
By Boobalan Pachaiyappan, Ph. D.  

Prologue: It is widely believed that postdoc (PD) training matters only to the incumbents. However, the transient nature of today's economy, coupled with the highly competitive nature of science, continuously expands the "sphere of influence" of PD training, and affects PI's and the institution, in addition to affecting the postdoc. Only when the "chemistry" matches between these three parties can an effective PD training be envisioned. In the past, I highlighted how a postdoc can avoid becoming a data-producing-humanoid (Issue 3) and delineated five scenarios to caution both current and wannabe PDs (Issue 4). In this article, I offer my perspectives on how these three parties impact PD training goals.

The Data Hunter (aka The Postdoc)

The Good: The single greatest thing about being a postdoc is that the PD training presents an opportunity to reevaluate career choice in a "safe mode." Other good things include, establishing a trademark for oneself as the training continues beyond 2 years, filling-in gaps in CV to obtain the next job, and routinely building communication and networking skills.

The Bad: Creating data is good, but a lot of postdocs fall prey to the habit of "perennial data hunting," and when this happens the PD training goals take a heavy beating.

The Ugly: Almost every PD training comes with an element of inexactitude that only gets progressively more ugly as the years of training increase. A few elements include encumbrance to gain independence, slow publishing rate, unable to attend conferences, etc. Continuing as a PD beyond 5+ years must be dealt with extreme caution because this is a "double-edged" sword. It kills the very purpose of PD training.

The Bounty Seeker (aka The PI)

The Good: Having a postdoc in Lab is like having an in-house consultant for a principle investigator (PI). Not only the graduates and technicians are routinely helped to kick start or troubleshoot procedures, it also sets high standards to evolve a good laboratory practice. Schmoozing with postdocs helps labs save time, difficulty and MONEY!

The Bad: Efficient mentorship is the bedrock of any PD training. Any lack of it will have a strong negative influence which not only affects a postdoc (short term), but also affects how the lab is looked upon by others (long term). A PI must study the pulse of a postdoc and help realize his/her career dream through open dialogue. A PI must not look at postdocs only as a data producing machine in order to eternally renew grants.

The Ugly: The endpoint of any PD training is the birth of research independence for a postdoc. This can be achieved through a transparent communication between the two parties not only about the goals of the Lab, but also about the future career of a postdoc. If a PI knowingly keeps a postdoc >5-6 years, then it is a "Labor's lost" in visualizing the training needs!

The Godfather (aka The Institution)

The Good: A strong PD training program helps institutions to signal the influx of bright scholars to the campus. Its downstream effects include representation at science conferences, obtaining grants, and educating the local community which can lead to greater investment in science as well as the institution.

The Bad: Many institutions leave postdoc training to the discretion of the PI. While it is true that a PI's grant pays the postdoc, none of the funding agencies give money to a PI who is not affiliated with an institution. Therefore, I suggest that the institution must play the role of the Godfather by protecting and overseeing treatment of postdocs in order to realize the fullest potential of a PD's training.

The Ugly: Establishing a framework of accountability by an institution is what is expected by any postdoc. Merely having a PD program without clear policies and regulations will only result in more victimization of postdocs. Implementing myIDP, and enforcing salary and benefits set by NIH standards, are areas most institutions can work on.

Epilogue: The dynamics between a postdoc, corresponding PI, and the academic institution, play a stellar role in making any postdoctoral training meaningful. It is not too late to realize that PD training can make or break the good name of a PI or the institution. The traditional postdoctoral training model that places the onus on the incumbents is no longer applicable to the current scenario. A "Good Postdoctoral Practice" is the need of the hour to envision the PD training goals.

"The institution must play the role of a Godfather by protecting and overseeing the treatment of postdocs in order to realize the fullest potential of a PD's training"
Pictures from our PDA Hockey Night January 25th with the Stingrays!!!

Calendar of Events: March 2014 - May 2014

March


April


4/12. Second Saturday (Postdoc & Family) Social Brittlebank Park @ 11am.


5/10. Second Saturday (Postdoc & Family) Social Brittlebank Park @ 11am.

May

5/3. 7th Annual Charleston Dragon Boat Festival Brittlebank Park http://www.charlestondragonboatfestival.com


Recent advances in technology and the increasing commonality of whole-genome sequencing are beginning to show that, in contrast to the earlier ‘one person, one genome’ dogma, many people may actually possess different genomes in different tissues of the body. This information would have been particularly helpful for Lydia Fairchild, a Washington State mother of three, who was required to submit to genetic testing before the state would grant financial assistance to her and her children. As reported by Liberty Voice this past January (http://guardianlv.com/2014/01/pregnancy-no-proof-of-motherhood-woman-was-her-own-twin-and-the-twin-was-the-mother-of-her-children/), to Lydia’s surprise the test results indicated that she shared no genetic link to two of her three children! Moreover, she was facing charges for defrauding the state of Washington by attempting to collect assistance on children that weren’t hers. As it turns out, the children that she had carried in her womb actually came from Lydia’s fraternal twin, who is actually her. No, this is not science fiction. In fact chimerism, as it has come to be known, is more common than you may think. In Lydia’s case, early in development her mother had two fertilized eggs, and at some point the two genetically distinct embryos merged and developed into one person. The cells from Lydia’s twin became incorporated into the tissues that formed her ovaries, causing her eggs to carry a different set of genetic information than the rest of the cells in her body. As researchers begin to more systematically search for the incidence of chimerism in people, it is becoming apparent that many people have groups of healthy cells with genetic mutations that are not found throughout the body, and some individuals even carry genes from other people. A Canadian study from 2012 found that approximately 63% of autopsied brains from mothers of boys found neurons containing Y chromosomes, presumably originating from their sons while in utero. These findings, along with others, are summarized in a New York Times- Science article from September 2013 (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/17/science/dna-double-take.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0). Findings like these stress just how much still remains unknown about our genetics since Watson and Crick first proposed the structure of DNA over 60 years ago, and this raises many interesting questions for the future of human health research as well as forensic science.
Publications:

**Vitria Adisetiyo, Ph.D.** (Department of Radiology and Radiological Sciences)


**Ningfei An Ph.D.** (Department of Medicine, Hematology & Oncology division)


**Pratik Y. Chhatbar, Ph.D.** (Department of Neurosciences)


**Hyacinth I. Hyacinth, M.D., M.P.H.** (Department of Neurosciences)

Hyacinth, H.I., Gee, B.E. Voeks, J.E., Adams, R.J., Hibbert, J.M. Frequent red cell transfusions reduced vascular endothelial activation and thrombogenicity in children with sickle cell anemia and high stroke risk. American Journal of Hematology 2013 (In press)

Hyacinth, H.I., Capers, P.L., Archer, D.R., Hibbert, J.M.. TNF-, IFN-, IL-10 and IL-4 levels are elevated in a murine model of human sickle cell anemia maintained on a high protein/calorie diet. Experimental Biology and Medicine 2013 (In press)

**Andaleb Kholmukhamedov, M.D.** (Department of Drug Discovery and Biomedical Sciences)

Angela M. Malek, Ph.D., M.P.H. (Department of Neurosciences)


Sudarat Nimitvilai, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)


Boobalan Pachaiyappan, Ph.D. (Department of Drug Discovery and Biomedical Sciences)


Manjeet Kaur Paintlia, Ph.D. (Department of Pediatrics)


Won JS, Kim J, Paintlia MK, Singh I, Singh AK. Role of endogenous psychosine accumulation in oligodendrocyte differentiation and survival: implication for Krabbe disease. Brain Res. 2013 May 1;1508:44-52

Paintlia MK, Paintlia AS, Singh AK, Singh I. S-nitrosoglutathione induces ciliary neurotrophic factor expression in astrocytes, which has implications to protect the central nervous system under pathological conditions. J Biol Chem. 2013 Feb 8;288(6):3831-43

Christian Rossmann, Ph.D. (Department of Pediatrics)


Nishant Saxena, Ph.D. (Past Affiliation: National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), Tsukuba, Japan. Current Affiliation: Department of Pediatrics, MUSC, USA)


John C. Sieverdes, Ph.D. (College of Nursing)


Jessica E Thaxton, Ph.D. (Department of Microbiology & Immunology)


Stephen Mahler, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)

Elena Vazey, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)

Jacob Beckley, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)

Jennifer Kauffling, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)

David Moorman, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)


Michael S. Valerio, Ph.D. (Department of Craniofacial Biology)

Valerio MS, Herbert BA, Griffin lli AC, Wan Z, Hill EG, et al. MKP-1 signaling events are required for early osteoclastogenesis in lineage defined progenitor populations by disrupting RANKL-induced NFATc1 nuclear translocation. (2014) Bone 60: 16-25.

Valerio, M., Awad, A. B. β-sitosterol modulates TLR-4 receptor oligomerization and intracellular NF-κB activation through modulation of lipid raft composition – Cellular Immunology 285 (2013) 76–83

Yu, H., Valerio, M., and Bielawski, J. Fenretinide Inhibited de novo Ceramide Synthesis and Pro-inflammatory Cytokines Induced by A. actinomycetemcomitans J Lipid Res. 2013 Jan;54(1):189-201

Peter J. Vento, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)

Vento, P.J., and Daniels, D. The anteroventral third ventricle region is critical for the behavioral desensitization caused by repeated injections of angiotensin II. Behavioral Brain Research 2013 Jan. 1;258: 27-33
Abstracts:

Vitria Adisetiyo, Ph.D. (Department of Radiology and Radiological Sciences)


Pratik Y. Chhatbar, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)


Mara L. Lennard Richard, Ph.D. (Department of Rheumatology & Immunology)

Abstract selected for a poster presentation at the American Association of Immunologists Annual Meeting, Immunology 2013, Honolulu, HI (May, 2013). Mara L. Lennard Richard, Tamara K. Nowling, Xian K. Zhang Fli-1 drives transcription from the MCP-1 gene promoter, which may provide a novel mechanism for cytokine and chemokine activation.

Angela M. Malek, Ph.D., M.P.H. (Department of Neurosciences)


Sudarat Nimitvilai, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)

Nimitvilai S, Arora DS, McEvain MA, Brodie MS, and Woodward JJ. Comparison of the actions of toluene and ethanol on dopaminergic neurons of the ventral tegmental area. Society for Neuroscience Annual Meeting, San Diego, 2013. (poster)

Boobalan Pachaiyappan, Ph.D. (Department of Drug Discovery and Biomedical Sciences)


Boobalan Pachaiyappan, Shannon Nowotarski, Wang Bo, Melissa Sokolosky, Steven Holshouser, Robert Casero, Yong-Mei Zhang, Patrick Woster. Oligoamines Containing 3-5-3 Carbon Backbone Architecture are Endowed with both Anticancer and Antibacterial activity. Selected for poster presentation at The Perry V. Halushka MUSC Student Research Day, Nov 8, 2013.


Manjeet Kaur Paintlia, Ph.D. (Department of Pediatrics)


Christian Rossmann, Ph.D. (Department of Pediatrics)


John C. Sieverdes, Ph.D. (College of Nursing)


Michael S. Valerio, Ph.D. (Department of Craniofacial Biology)


Peter J. Vento, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)


Awards, Fellowships, and Grants:

Stephen Mahler, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)

K99/R00, awarded Apr. 1, 2013: National Institute on Drug Addiction DA035251: Role of Ventral Pallidum projection to VTA in reinstatement of cocaine seeking.

Michelle Nelson, Ph.D. (Department of Microbiology and Immunology)

American Association of Immunologists $1500 Travel Award to present at the International Congress of Immunology Perry Halushka Research Day 1st Place for an oral presentation

Melissa Branham-O’Connor, Ph.D. (Department of Cell and Molecular Pharmacology)

2013 American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET) Washington Fellow

2013 Experimental Biology Annual Meeting ASPET Travel Award

2012-2013 SC EPSCoR/IDeA Postdoctoral Academic Career Development (PACD) Fellow

Invited member: American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Advisory Committee (GSPAC)
Boobalan Pachaiyappan, Ph.D. (Department of Drug Discovery and Biomedical Sciences)

$200 award; 2nd Place Winner in Innovation Category at The Perry V. Halushka MUSC Research Day (2013)

$200 award; 2nd Place Winner in Oral Presentation Category at The Perry V. Halushka MUSC Research Day (2013)

Christian Rossmann, Ph.D. (Department of Pediatrics)

Society of Thermal Medicine, Annual Meeting 2013, $600 Travel Award.

John C. Sieverdes, Ph.D. (College of Nursing) (Sponsor: SCTR/CCHP)

Community Engaged Scholars award. MUSC/Donate Life. To assess the barriers, attitudes of dialysis patients on the transplant wait-list about healthy lifestyles using face-to-face interviews (phase 1). Then use these results to develop and pilot a mhealth promotion program (phase 2) to improve physical activity and dietary behaviors. $10,000.

Jessica E. Thaxton, Ph.D. (Department of Microbiology & Immunology)

AACI Translational Cancer Research Fellowship External Submission Applicant
Hollings Cancer Center, Medical University of South Carolina, 2013.
*The contribution of MDSC-TGF-β axis in breast cancer metastasis to bone.*

Travel Award European Society for Medical Oncology, Brussels, Belgium, 2013. IMPAKT 2013 Breast Cancer Conference $1,000

Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, Postdoctoral Fellowship

Michael S. Valerio, Ph.D. (Department of Craniofacial Biology)

Invited Speaker and Honorarium Recipient at the Penn Periodontal Conference, Regeneration/Repair Session, Philadelphia, PA (2013)

James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine 3rd Annual Scholars Day Competition, 2nd Place in the Postdoctoral Fellow Research Category (2013)

AADR Hatton Award Finalist, 3rd place (2013)

Peter J. Vento, Ph.D. (Department of Neurosciences)


**Congratulations to MUSC Postdocs for Many Outstanding Achievements in 2013!!**