ISMMS 7th Annual Postdoc Symposium

INDUSTRY BEYOND THE BENCH
Sept. 23rd 2016

Plenary: Grab the Bull by the Horns
9:30-10:30  Dr. Joanne Kamens  Addgene

Robin Chemers Neustein Fellowship Awardees
10:30-11:00  Drs. Lara Manganaro and Helene Salmon

Postdoc Datablitz
11:30-12:00

Keynote: The Road Not Taken
12:00-13:00  Dr. Lana Skirboll  Sanofi

Industry Panel: EpiBone, Siemens Healthcare, ISMMS, Nature Communications
16:00-17:00  Drs. Tandon, Girard, DeVita and Todorovic

Networking Reception
17:00-19:00
Greetings fellow postdocs,

Happy summer! We hope you’ve had the chance to relax and rejuvenate as we gear up for the fall. The Postdoc Executive Committee (PEC) would like to thank the ISMMS postdoc community for contributing to our most successful Annual Survey ever! We had an outstanding response rate of 67% with representation from over 25 departments and institutes. The PEC uses your feedback on the annual survey to advocate for the postdoc community’s needs and craft our professional and social programing in coming years. You made your voice count; now we’ll make sure it’s heard.

We’d like to extend an invitation for career development, food, and drink at the 7th Annual Postdoc Day “Industry: Beyond the Bench” on September 23rd, 2016. Please register for this FREE event designed by us, for us. During this year’s Postdoc Day, we’ll explore a variety of careers in industry available to ISMMS postdocs including biotech, pharma, and science policy among others. Come and hear from outstanding speakers, panelists, and networking representatives to learn about the exciting career opportunities available to you! Note that the Office of Career Services and Strategy will host a how-to networking prep event on Wednesday September 21st at noon to ensure YOU put your best foot forward (register here).

On another note, the PEC would like to congratulate Dr. Genevieve Galanneau on her successful election as PEC co-chair. Genevieve has great vision and direction for the coming year and we’ll be in good hands with both Genevieve and Delaine at the helm. That said, my term as co-chair will end in October, and I would like to thank the ISMMS postdoc community for the opportunity to serve you over the past several years. It has been a pleasure to serve as the PEC Social Chair, Director of the Future Leaders in Science Education and Communication Training program, and PEC Chair along with Ryan J. Cummings and Delaine. In the past year, we’ve seen tremendous progress for the ISMMS community. We initiated the first ever formal teaching program the Future Leaders in Science Communication and Education, established a 5-year term, created a mistreatment resource panel, successfully advocated to increase salaries, gathered record-breaking Annual Survey results, and went on a food tour of the world through our social events. Keep an eye out for continued progress in the upcoming year including a postdoc alumni career survey, more NYC-wide social events, and an updated postdoc handbook with clarified policies and resources, among many others. I look forward to witnessing continued progress as we carve out our identity and visibility at ISMMS.

Don’t forget to join us for the 7th Annual Postdoc Day on September 23rd, Davis Auditorium in the Hess Building. Find out more about the program, speakers, and panelists for Postdoc Day here.

Cheers,

Alison P. Sanders and Delaine K. Ceholski are your PEC co-chairs

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Efficient Reproduction: The Example of the Australian Pademelon

By Laura Lecce

The pademelon is a marsupial which mainly lives in Tasmania, Australia. Being a marsupial means that an underdeveloped baby is born into the mother’s pouch to continue its development. At 6-8 months of age the youngster spends increasing amounts of time outside of the pouch - following the mother around, learning to eat solid foods, and occasionally still suckling milk from the teat. Interestingly, at this stage mum is likely to already have another joey in the pouch. The reproductive cycle of the pademelon is quite a complicated one. When mum gives birth to a new born (after 3 weeks gestation) the little jelly bean climbs up her tummy and into the pouch where it lives for the next 6 months. As soon as the baby is born, mum is immediately receptive to mating again. If she does and the egg is fertilized, it is put into a state of suspended animation until the current joey exits the pouch. When the pouch is vacated, the blastocyst continues to develop and the newest baby is born. It then climbs into the pouch and attaches itself to a teat for milk. The youngster outside the pouch will still put its head into the pouch for milk (where it meets its younger sibling). Even more interesting is that mum is simultaneously making newborn milk for the little joey and, from a separate teat, toddler milk for the older sibling, while a blastocyst is in suspended animation as a backup. Talk about a very efficient parenting strategy!

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Ways to keep in touch

• Our website: http://icahn.mssm.edu/education/postdoctoral-training
• Follow our Twitter account: @MtSinaiPostdocs
• Join our Facebook page: “Mount Sinai Postdocs”
• Follow us on LinkedIn (Mount Sinai Postdocs and Postdoc Alumni)

The Mount Sinai Postdoc Periodical

The maternity/parental leave benefit afforded to Mount Sinai postdocs is a topic of confusion among fellows in almost every department at ISMMS. The Postdoctoral Executive Committee, Women in Science Group, and Mount Sinai Science Policy Group have been working with Theresa Scarabino in the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs to include a comprehensive description of the policy in the updated version of the ISMMS Postdoctoral Handbook, which will be released this fall. In addition to Theresa Scarabino's contact information, the updated version of the handbook will include the following statement with regard to parental or family leave:

“In the event that a postdoctoral fellow needs to take a leave of absence, up to twelve (12) weeks of leave time is allowed for any of the following: (1) due to the birth, adoption, care for a newborn, or placement of a child; (2) in order to care for a child, parent, or spouse with a serious health condition; or (3) because of the postdoctoral fellow’s own serious health condition. When the need for leave is foreseeable, the postdoctoral fellow must provide at least 30 days written notice explaining the reason for the leave and the leave's anticipated duration. When leave is not foreseeable, notice must be given within two working days of learning of the need for leave, except in extraordinary circumstances. Earned vacation, holidays, free days, and sick time (if personal illness) will be used first during this leave.”

According to Ms. Danielle Tyson, senior HR specialist, postdoctoral fellows should first consult with Theresa Scarabino and their department administration when planning a leave. Theresa keeps records of earned, unused leave for all postdoctoral fellows. For women giving birth, once a doctor has determined the need for medical leave, Mount Sinai will continue to pay the fellow’s salary through the point at which her earned time off runs out. The balance of the required medical leave is paid as short-term disability through Liberty Mutual at the rate that the postdoc chose during open benefits enrollment. Any leave taken in addition to this, if agreed upon by PI/Department, is unpaid. Earned, unused time and short-term disability leave run concurrently, that is, one cannot take six weeks of short-term disability and subsequently use his or her earned, unused time.

While the benefit of having paid family leave is important, especially for postdoctoral fellows who typically have very little expendable income or savings to cover unpaid leave, there is still room for improvement in our policy. Under our current policy, the problem remains that if a postdoc takes the time he or she is eligible for following the birth of a baby, this will leave no more earned days available when either the trainee or the new baby is sick. As a portion of the leave will be covered by short-term disability, fathers and adoptive parents will be entitled to only those days in the bank of earned, unused days. According to the current language, sick days cannot be used in the case of new fathers or adoptive parents because they will not be seeking time off for a personal illness. Also unclear is whether the ISMMS policy will change when the New York State paid family leave policy goes into effect. When fully-implemented, New York State employees will be eligible for twelve weeks of paid leave (up to two-thirds of their salary) when caring for an infant. This policy will be phased in beginning in 2018; however, our human relations department was unsure whether the policy would apply to Mount Sinai in general or postdoctoral fellows in particular.

Increasing transparency surrounding the ISMMS postdoctoral parental leave policy will hopefully eliminate some of the stress and confusion surrounding this aspect of preparing for a new baby.
Dr. Levingston MacLeod is an ISMMS postdoctoral fellow and a Postdoc Periodical alumnus now working at Defiens.

Describe Defiens for us: Definiens is a tissue phenomics company. We are approximately 108 employees, 60% of whom are PhDs!

What is your current title? Consultant and Project Manager.

What graduate degree(s) have you received? I have a diploma in Biotechnology and a PhD in Biochemistry.

What city and state do you work in? Definiens is based in Munich, Germany, and we have an office in Cambridge. Moreover, we can work remotely so I am traveling between Boston, Munich, NYC and London very often.

Did you have any jobs between this one and your postdoc? No, I left the lab on a Friday and started working from Munich the next Monday!

Can you give us a brief (2-3 sentence) description of your current position? (e.g. What is the overall purpose of your job? What are your daily activities like compared to your postdoc?) Definiens is a pioneering company in immunotherapies, also expanding to other fields, and we work with cutting edge technologies to find solutions for biomarker and companion diagnostics development and commercialization. I work in image analysis and managing a variety of projects for different cancer indications and other biomarkers.

What do you wish you had known before accepting your current position? More programming knowledge using R and Python.

What, if anything, do you miss about being a postdoc at Mount Sinai? The view from the 16th floor of Annenberg - sunsets over Central Park are amazing.

What did you learn during your PhD/postdoc that is most helpful to you in your current position? Image analysis, managing projects, and immunology. In addition, my involvement in the Postdoc Executive Committee coordinating seminars and other networking activities was extremely helpful in finding the perfect job.

What was the most important event or factor that contributed to your transition into an alternative career outside academia? Networking, meeting people from different companies, and discovering the possibilities outside of the lab.

How many hours a week do you spend in meetings? I spend 10 to 15 hours per week in meetings, and I am always leaving them with a lot of new knowledge.

Approximately how many hours do you work per week? 40 to 45 hours, depending on the workflow.

How frequently do you work in the evenings and/or on the weekends? Very rarely and never on weekends. Our company is very family friendly and they want you to have a great work/live balance. That been said, we do a lot of after work activities where we actually talk a lot about immune therapies and other work related topics.

On a scale of 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), how much autonomy do you have in your current position? 8

Does your position require that you travel? If/when you travel, how long is your trip? Yes, twice a year the US consultants travel to Munich for the company's events and training.

Do you work with other people and/or in a team? If so, please describe the circumstances and structure of your group work. We work in very dynamic teams that change with each project. Teams might be 3 to 6 consultants headed up by a project manager.

How did you learn to do your job? (e.g., studied materials on my own time, learned on the fly) They have a structured training program and a lot of mentors.

What is the average salary range for your position? 83-100K.

Is a PhD necessary to apply for this type of position? Yes.

Was your publication record important towards getting this position? Yes.

Is it valued to have a PhD in your current position? Yes.

Is it valued to have completed a postdoc in your current position? Not sure.

Did your PhD/postdoc research focus matter to get this position? Yes.

Dr. Jesica Levingston MacLeod