Interesting Opportunity: Teaching as a Postdoctoral Fellow

By Aisha Burton, PhD

I have been interested in teaching ever since college. During graduate school, I tutored undergraduate students in introductory biology, chemistry, and math. I also made sure to take courses in teaching pedagogy. When I started my NICHD postdoctoral fellowship, I told my mentor, Dr. Gisela “Gigi” Storz, about my interest in teaching. She encouraged me to explore this career option. As a result, I attended the NIH Community College Day, where I met representatives from Montgomery College. I would scour their jobs lists every so often to look for an adjunct opening, but didn’t know when they would have positions available or if they would match my skillset.

When the pandemic hit, I took the Scientists Teaching Science course offered by OITE virtually. This helped me gain confidence to teach my own course. In August of 2020, a biology position became available at Montgomery College—I applied and was offered the job.

I currently teach the lab section of Principles of Biology I (BIOL 150) at the Montgomery College, Rockville Campus. Previous semesters were virtual, but most students are back to in-person now for both the lab and lecture components. The classes have a maximum of 22 students, and there are 19 students in my current course. My students have an asynchronous lecture component, which they can complete on their own time without going to a live session. Other sections of this course do offer in-person lecture and lab.

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Letter from the Editor

I hope everyone was able to attend at least a few presentations during the multiple NICHD retreats last month. Keep an eye out for the retreat recaps in upcoming issues of this newsletter. If you missed out, you still have an opportunity to hear about 60 years of the institute’s impactful research at the “NICHD 60th Anniversary Symposium: Healthy Pregnancies. Healthy Children. Healthy and Optimal Lives” on Monday, October 17. The agenda includes an exciting line up of speakers, including several of our own intramural investigators—and even a trainee! Aisha Burton, PhD, postdoctoral fellow in the Storz lab, will serve on a panel titled “Cultivating the Next Generation of Researchers” toward the end of the event.

Dr. Burton is a busy fellow, as she also graciously agreed to write an “Interesting Opportunity” article about her experience as an adjunct professor at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland. She shares valuable information about teaching position announcements, expected time commitments, and what helped her prepare for the role. If you’re not interested in teaching, many, many, more interesting opportunities can be found in this month’s Rep Report and announcements and events.

Before I close out my letter for this month, I want to say a personal congratulations to Dr. Triesta Fowler for her many accomplishments while she was the Director of Communications and Outreach in the NICHD Office of Education. In working with Dr. Fowler on this newsletter, I witnessed her incredible passion for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in science. I look forward to carrying on Dr. Fowler’s enthusiasm for DEIA in our newsletter content, as she had an indelible influence that will benefit trainees for years to come.

Your Editor in Chief,
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

This is a newsletter for NICHD fellows, by NICHD fellows. We want to hear from you! Please send your questions, comments, and ideas to our editor at shana.spindler@nih.gov.
Interesting Opportunity: Teaching as a Postdoctoral Fellow
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Through this experience, I learned a lot about the time commitments involved in teaching. Logistically, virtual classes take about the same amount of time to prep, but engaging students virtually can be difficult. For me, the time commitment for the lab class itself is 2.5 hours per week. We have coordinators who set up the labs for us, but I do spend another hour prepping material and grading. I have taught both the lab and lecture (lab 2.5 hours, lecture 3 hours per week). I was grateful for that opportunity, but the time commitment was challenging to manage while completing my research at the NIH.

Being able to teach while a postdoctoral fellow at the NIH has helped me grow professionally as an educator. I have learned how to create a syllabus, generate and grade assessments, and assess the time commitment per course. Most importantly, I feel more confident in my teaching methods. I can meet my students where they are, which might mean that I offer more resources or explain a topic in a different way so that everyone can understand. My current career goal is to be a principal investigator at an R1 institution but being an adjunct has opened my eyes to the different types of teaching positions that are accessible to me. For example, I could work in an industry position full-time while teaching adjunct during my free time; or move towards a smaller institution.

If you are interested in teaching, take the Scientists Teaching Science course, which is offered at no cost to NIH fellows. After taking this course, you will receive job announcements for adjunct and full-time teaching positions. The NIH Foundation for Advancing Education in the Sciences (FAES) also has opportunities for fellows to teach. I also recommend setting a Google search for jobs in your area of interest. Good luck!

Want to hear more from Dr. Burton? She will serve on the “Cultivating the Next Generation of Researchers” panel at the NICHD 60th Anniversary Symposium on October 17, 2022. Check out the event website for more information!
A Fond Farewell to Dr. Triesta Fowler

Dr. Triesta Fowler, former Director of Communications and Outreach for the NICHD Office of Education, continues her work in the NIH Intramural Program as a scientific diversity officer at the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities. We sincerely thank Dr. Fowler for her leadership and heavy involvement in creating valuable additions to the NICHD DIR program, including:

» The NICHD Office of the Scientific Director News Bulletin, a monthly publication that ensures important information is circulated to all NICHD Division of Intramural Research staff and scientists

» A new article series in The NICHD Connection titled "Deconstructing Bias," which provides tools and resources to help you become aware and educate yourself on the issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility

» The NICHD-wide diversity initiative known as STRIVE (Strategies to EnRich Inclusion and AchieVe Equity)

» The NICHD-Howard University partnership program, which links NICHD principal investigators with honors biology undergraduate and medical students

» The guest lecturer series for the Howard University OB/GYN residency program

» A career planning and professional development seminar series for Howard University undergraduates interested in MD, MD-PhD, and PhD paths

» Several new seminars and workshops focused on the academic and professional development of NICHD trainees

To learn more about Dr. Fowler's background and career journey, check out her story on NICHD's #WomenInScience series on Instagram. Please join us in wishing Dr. Fowler the best of luck in her new endeavors!

Triesta Fowler, MD

“I am truly grateful for all my experiences and career growth that has occurred during my 15 years at NICHD. It has prepared me to transition to this opportunity at NIMHD. During my time in the Office of Education, I have come to enjoy all the interactions with the fellows and undergraduate students from Howard University. I am honored to have had the opportunity to impact the trajectory of their education and career. My virtual door is always open, and I look forward to working with all of you in the future.”
The September FelCom meeting included a short presentation by CREx Program Manager Dr. Chris McGinity, NCI Office of Science and Technology Resources. CREx (crex.nih.gov) is the first and only NIH online marketplace for NIH intramural researchers to explore research services. Some of the services catalogued in CREx include:

- 250 NIH core labs
- 74 trans-NIH and collaborative facilities
- 18,000 external vendors

You can log in using your NIH credentials and search for services by keywords. You can also submit custom requests, and the CREx concierge team will help you! Tutorial videos are available on the NCI OSTR website. Feel free to reach out to Dr. McGinity (chris.mcginity@nih.gov) with any questions.

Reminder! The Postdoctoral Research Associate Training (PRAT) application is now open! Postdocs who started their postdoc on or after July 1, 2021, are eligible to apply. Applications are due on October 3. If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to reach out to PRAT liaison Dr. Veronica Ryan (veronica.ryan@nih.gov) or the program director, Dr. Edgardo Falcón-Morales (edgardo.falcon@nih.gov).

The Fellows Safety Committee Listserv is now up and running: FELLOW-SAFETY-COMM@LIST.NIH.GOV. Officers are in the process of planning an open house (likely virtual) to bring in new members, so stay tuned!

The Visiting Fellows Committee (VFC) is looking for VFC representative for each of the 27 NIH institutes. Those of you who are interested, please visit the sign-up form.

The NIMHD NIH Epidemiology and Behavioral Science Trainees group is inviting fellows from all ICs to join the group. If you are interested, feel free to join their Microsoft Teams group. You can also reach Dr. Jessica Renee Fernandez (jessica.fernandez@nih.gov) for more information.

Did you know that all NIH postdocs/fellows can obtain National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) affiliate individual memberships at no cost? Join now! There are 28,500 jobs on the NPA Career Center. Upload your resume/CV for FREE and follow NPA on Twitter and LinkedIn!

Did you know that there are several ways to stay informed on postdoc activities and events? Sign up for the Fellows listserv (Fellow-L) and/or the Visiting Fellows listserv.
October Announcements

HAVE YOU VISITED THE BIO CAREERS® WEBSITE?
NICHD has an institutional membership with Bio Careers®, an online service that provides in-depth information about career paths for life scientists with advanced degrees. For more information, please visit http://www.biocareers.com to access numerous job ads, helpful webinars, and a newsletter to keep you up-to-date with their latest posts.

NCI TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AMBASSADORS PROGRAM ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
Deadline to apply is Tuesday, November 1

The NCI Technology Transfer Ambassadors Program (TTAP) is open to NIH postdoctoral trainees, staff scientists, staff clinicians, graduate students, and postbacs at specific Institutes and Centers, including NICHD.

TTAP is a hybrid training/mentoring program that offers participants the opportunity to augment their current research activities with 5–8 hours per week of hands-on training in biomedical invention development, commercialization, and entrepreneurship. Find more information for the program at https://techtransfer.cancer.gov/aboutttc/ambassadors.

Application &Deadline:
If you are interested in joining TTAP, download the application from the website and return with the requested materials to TT_Ambassadors@mail.nih.gov by Tuesday, November 1, 2022. Questions and inquiries can also be sent to this address.

LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS
We’d love to recognize your great news from 2022—from winning a poster award to landing a new job! Please email a brief description of your accomplishment(s) to our editor, Dr. Shana Spindler (shana.spindler@nih.gov), and we will include them in our December issue.

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SAVE THE DATE: K AWARDS FOR CLINICAL FELLOWS (CLINICAL FELLOWS ONLY)
Wednesday, November 9, 9 a.m. to 12 noon (Zoom)

For those of you considering applying for an NIH K-series funding opportunity, our office (in collaboration with NHGRI, NIAMS and NIDCR) is excited to offer a special grant writing workshop, specifically developed for clinical fellows.

This webinar, led by Dr. Paula Gregory, Associate Dean for Faculty & Educational Development at University of North Texas, is designed to provide support, opportunities, strategies and resources for career development in clinical and translational research. The critical aspects of writing NIH Career Development (K) grants will be covered, including: the NIH review process, how grants are scored, writing clear and concise Specific Aims, writing the Career Development and Training sections.

The workshop also emphasizes the partnership between the candidate, the mentors and the institution that is necessary to make career development award proposals successful.

Please send an email to Ms. Veronica Harker (veronica.harker@nih.gov) to register for this webinar, and the Zoom link will be provided to you a few days prior to the session.

REGISTER TODAY! PREPARING FOR SCIENCE-BASED NON-TRADITIONAL CAREERS (PSNC) WORKSHOPS

Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m. from October 5 to December 7, 2022 (except November 23)
Presentations will be held virtually via WebEX.

The Preparing for Science-Based Non-Traditional Careers (PSNC) workshops will start on Wednesday, October 5th. The PSNC workshops are aimed to help participants learn about the various career opportunities that lie outside of independent academic research. Many of you will be exploring and choosing from various science-based career options in the future. Given these may include unfamiliar roles outside of traditional bench science, we have invited guest speakers from various science-based backgrounds to provide information and insight that will help inform decisions about potential future endeavors.

Please register by October 26, 2022. The course schedule and registration details are available on the PSNC program website. For more information, please contact Dr. Ravi Dhar.
October Announcements
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THE NICHD INNOVATIVE CULTURE STAFF SURVEY—COMING SOON!
*Do you have ideas or creative solutions for making work more efficient or impactful? What is your perspective and experience on innovation at NICHD?*

The Innovative Culture initiative is one of the M&A (Management and Accountability) focus areas that came out of the NICHD 2020 Strategic Plan, and we would like to hear from you! We’re looking at how NICHD can successfully foster an innovative culture within the institute in a way that promotes workforce development, responsive infrastructure, administrative efficiency, and an overall culture that encourages continuous improvement and idea exploration.

Later this month, you will receive an email with a link to a survey. Your anonymous responses will help us gather input on the current culture and hear your suggestions for how we can promote and support innovation.

The survey will be open from October 25th–November 8th and should only take about 5 minutes of your time, so please respond as soon as possible with your honest and candid feedback. Following the survey, we will be asking for volunteers and selecting participants to conduct focus groups that will enable us to further explore the themes and insights gleaned from your responses.

If you have questions for the Innovative Culture Project Team, or are interested in participating in one of the focus groups, please reach out to NICHDInnovativeCulture@mail.nih.gov.

NIH UNITE: ENDING STRUCTURAL RACISM (ESR) ACTIVITIES

The NIH UNITE initiative was established to identify and address structural racism within the NIH-supported and the greater scientific community.

The ESR Intranet includes various resources like the Toolkit, Newsletter, FAQs, and other information.

UNITE Milestones and Progress and the Co-Chairs Corner (public ESR webpages) are other avenues to stay informed on UNITE efforts.
October Events

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1–2 PM
Postbac Seminar Series
Speaking About Science: Giving Scientific Presentations
Public Speaking Coach, Mr. Scott Morgan

If you are interested in joining the class, please email Ms. Katherine Lamb (katherine.lamb@nih.gov) to register.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 9–11 AM
From Postdoc To Faculty: Successful Transitions To Academia
Dr. Paula Gregory, Associate Dean for Faculty & Educational Development in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at the University of North Texas

Are you thinking about a career in academia? Often postdocs spend time crafting their future research program but are not introduced to important steps necessary for the successful transition to academia. Come learn the basics about navigating the academic job search process and important academic interviewing skills. Discover ways to prepare for success in academia once there (grants, mentoring & collaborations) and tips to avoid burnout.

Please email Ms. Veronica Harker (veronica.harker@nih.gov) if you are planning to join.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1–4 PM
NICHD DIR Tenure-Track Investigator Virtual Symposia Series
“Decoding Developmental Signaling”
Hosted by Dr. Katherine Rogers

This series provides tenure-track investigators within NICHD the opportunity to organize a virtual mini-symposium to showcase their area of science to the NICHD DIR and larger NIH intramural community. These symposia are open to all faculty, trainees, and staff at the NIH.


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October Events
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MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 8 AM–5 PM

This virtual symposium will focus on future directions of research related to pregnancy, reproductive health, child and adolescent development, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and medical rehabilitation. We’ll also recognize several major accomplishments of the last 60 years and showcase our efforts to cultivate the next generation of researchers and promote an inclusive scientific culture.

Attendees can tune in virtually through the NIH videocast website for the livestream the day of the event. Learn more about this symposium, view the agenda, and register to attend on the event website.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1–2 PM
Postbac Seminar Series
Interviewing for Professional School
Public Speaking Coach, Mr. Scott Morgan

If you are interested in joining the class, please email Ms. Katherine Lamb (katherine.lamb@nih.gov) to register.

ONGOING EVENTS AROUND CAMPUS

NIH-Wide Office of Intramural Training and Education Events
For more information and registration, please visit Upcoming OITE Events.

NIH Library Training and Events
For more information and registration, please visit the NIH Library Calendar.