

# The NICHD Connection

## December 2014

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meet Our New NICHD Postbac Reps	1
Letter from the Editor	2
MCAT 2015: The New Test and How to Prepare	4
NICHD Exchange Recap: Translating Animal Model Studies into Human Health Advances	6
Lunchtime Career Session: Science Policy Recap	10
How to Make a Teaching-Based Professorship Application Stand Out	12
NICHD DIR Year in Review: 2014	14
December Announcements	16
December Events	18

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## Meet Our New NICHD Postbac Reps

*The NICHD Connection* would like to introduce NICHD's new postbac Institutes and Centers (IC) representatives, Annie Altschul and Jackie Picache. Postbac IC reps serve on the NIH-wide Pre-IRTA Committee on behalf of the institute's postbac fellow population. They also work closely with the Office of Education in NICHD to plan events of interest to the postbacs, whether academic or social. NICHD currently has over 40 postbacs who are conducting both clinical and basic science research.

### MEET ANNIE ALTSCHUL:

I grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina, and I graduated from the University of North Carolina (UNC) Chapel Hill in 2013 with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health in Nutrition. My interest in research began as an undergraduate, during which time I was an intern at the UNC Center for Excellence in Eating Disorders. During my first year out of college, I worked as a study coordinator and research assistant at the UNC Diabetes Care Center in Durham, North Carolina. I now assist with two protocols in Dr. Jack Yanovski's lab in the Section on Growth and Obesity. The first study—Children's Growth study—is a 15-year longitudinal study exploring how children gain weight over time. The goal of the second study is to find the right dose of niacin, a B vitamin, to decrease circulating free fatty acids in overweight children.



Annie Altschul

I am excited for the opportunity to serve the postbac community as a postbac representative for the NICHD. I look forward to planning events for postbacs and to delivering information about various career development and volunteer opportunities available on campus. If you have any questions about ways to get involved or if you have suggestions for postbac gatherings or activities, please reach out to me or Jackie Picache (the other Postbac Representative). We are here to serve you! (Annie's e-mail: [annie.altschul@nih.gov](mailto:annie.altschul@nih.gov)).

(continued on page 3)

## Letter from the Editor

“Something for everyone” is the theme of this month’s issue:

- » For our postbacs, we have [introductory bios from our new postbac reps](#) followed by important changes to the [Medical College Admission Test \(MCAT\)](#).
- » Dr. Payal Ray [recaps the latest NICHD Exchange meeting](#) on animal models in biomedical research, a relevant topic to many of our trainees.
- » And for those graduate students and postdocs who are looking for interesting career opportunities, we present a [recap of the November lunchtime career session](#) on science policy and outline helpful tips from last month’s [Academic Jobs Workshop on teaching-based professorship applications](#).

To round it out, we have compiled our annual [Year in Review](#), a fun summary of NICHD fellow and mentor accomplishments throughout 2014. But don’t let me take up any more of your time—go enjoy, learn, and be merry!

Your Editor in Chief,  
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

Questions, comments, or ideas? Please send them to [Shana.Spindler@gmail.com](mailto:Shana.Spindler@gmail.com).

## Meet Our New NICHD Postbac Reps (continued from page 1)

### MEET JACKIE PICACHE:

Hello! I grew up in Fort Lee, New Jersey, which is five minutes outside of New York City. Though I consider myself a city girl, I graduated from the University of Notre Dame and have come to think of the Midwest as another place to call home. At Notre Dame, I majored in Science Preprofessional Studies and minored in Science, Technology, and Values. During my undergraduate career, I became heavily involved at Notre Dame's Boler-Parseghian Center for Rare and Neglected Diseases. It was there that I got a taste of translational research. I followed this interest to the NICHD, where I now work in Dr. Forbes Porter's lab in the Section on Molecular Dysmorphology. We investigate the molecular mechanistic changes, symptom manifestations, and potential therapies of the rare diseases Niemann-Pick Type C (NPC) and Smith-Lemli-Opitz (SLO) Syndrome. In the few short months I've been here, I've already learned so much.



*Jackie Picache*

The opportunities here are incredible, but sometimes it's difficult to navigate them all. Annie and I are here to help out! As an NICHD postbac representative, I will be spearheading the ExploreINN volunteer program in which postbacs can spend an hour a week playing with and teaching fun science experiments to children staying at the NIH Children's Inn. Annie and I also have other great opportunities for NICHD postbacs in the works, like career development, social events to get to know other postbacs, and more. If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach to me at [jackie.picache@nih.gov](mailto:jackie.picache@nih.gov). Cheers!

## MCAT 2015: The New Test and How to Prepare

By Yvette Pittman, PhD

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) has made some major changes to the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), which they will introduce in the spring of 2015. I recently attended an informative session about the revised MCAT (MCAT2015), led by the AAMC at the University of Maryland, College Park. Several aspects remain the same, such as computer-based testing and the evaluation of general science knowledge. MCAT2015, however, tests several additional concepts within psychology and sociology, asks test takers to use critical analysis and reasoning skills to solve problems from multiple disciplines, and is two hours longer than the previous version.

### ABOUT THE NEW EXAM

The new exam consists of four sections, each scored separately, including:

1. Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
2. Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems
3. Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior
4. Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills

The first three sections each have 59 questions and are based on ten foundational concepts in the sciences. The content tested in these sections is typically taught in introductory psychology, sociology, biology, chemistry, organic

chemistry, physics, and biochemistry college courses. The critical analysis and reasoning skills section consists of 53 questions with no disciplinary knowledge required. Since there are more questions for each section, the seat time will be longer, totaling 7.5 hours, with built-in breaks. The [AAMC's website](#) provides a detailed breakdown of the test day.

The revised MCAT includes a new scoring system as well. Examinees will receive five scores with percentile ranks: one for all four sections and a combined score. The scoring scale for each section will range from 118 to 132, and the total score from 472 to 528. Confidence intervals are also included for all five scoring results to account for variables that may affect scores, such as test anxiety, fatigue, test room conditions, or timing of exposure to topics.

In mid-February, the MCAT2015 registration will open. The AAMC will offer 18 dates to take the exam between April and September. Although there are less exam dates, the number of available seats will remain the same and there will be more college campus testing locations. To support the longer day of testing, the registration cost increased slightly to \$300. And to encourage students to join the first exam group in April, AAMC is offering all test takers a \$150.00 Amazon.com gift card as an incentive.

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## MCAT 2015: The New Test and How to Prepare (continued from page 4)

### MCAT2015 RESOURCES

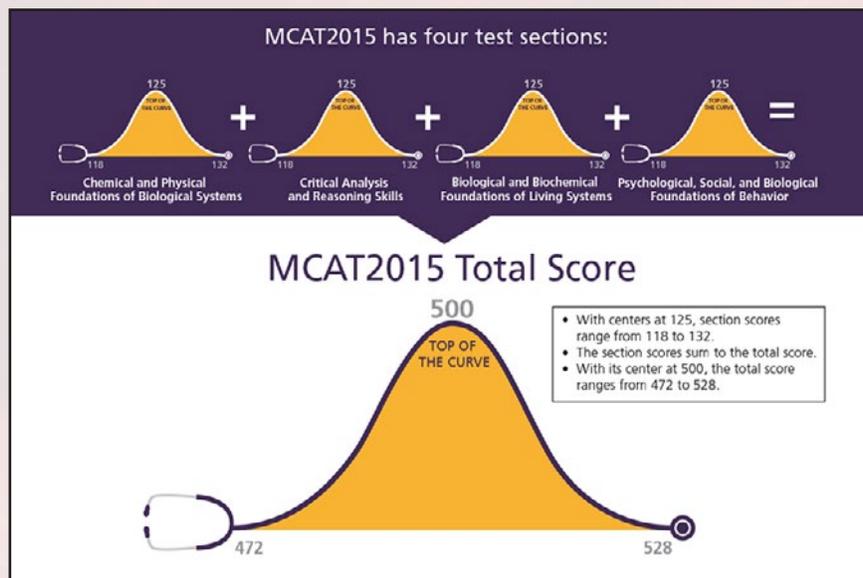
To prepare for the new exam, the AAMC had created several low-cost resources. **“What’s on the MCAT2015 Exam?”** is a free online interactive tool that provides an overview for each section and informs which scientific concepts and reasoning skills will be on the new exam. It also contains video tutorials that cover test material with sample questions and explanations. The AAMC also released **“The Official Guide to the MCAT® Exam (MCAT2015), Fourth Edition.”** It includes everything you need to know about the test, from information about registration to what to expect on your test day (for \$30). And for five dollars more, you can even opt to include 30 online sample questions for each section.

If you’d like to experience the entire test ahead of time, the **“Official MCAT2015 Sample Test”** is available for purchase (\$25). Written by the test developers,

this full-length test has 230 questions and allows you to practice in timed and untimed settings. The program identifies patterns in your test-taking skills and provides you with an answer assessment for all four sections.

For study materials, Khan Academy and the Pre-health Collection within MedEdPORTAL’s iCollaborative offers a large collection of free **video tutorials** with review questions covering all of the new MCAT foundational concepts. Early in 2015, the AAMC will release hundreds of official MCAT questions in addition to the first practice test that offers you an estimated score at the end. Practice questions will have the feature of indicating which foundational concept or skill is being tested for each question.

Want to learn more? Check out the **AAMC website**—it is full of information regarding the MCAT2015!



<https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/mcat2015/mcat2015scores/>

## NICHD Exchange Recap: Translating Animal Model Studies into Human Health Advances

By Payal Ray, PhD

Biomedical research has come a long way in the last 50 years, and we owe much of this advancement to the use of animal models. The recent NICHD Exchange meeting highlighted several NICHD laboratories, including those using fruit flies, zebrafish, and non-human primates, and facilitated a discussion on the use and benefits of animal models.

Dr. Lorette Javois, co-chair of the Trans-NIH Zebrafish Coordinating Committee, began the event with an introduction to the main benefits of animal models. First, evolutionary processes have led to similarities within genomes of various animals. Humans show 90 percent sequence conservation with mice, 60 percent with fruit flies, 70 percent with zebrafish and 96 to 98 percent with non-human primates. Therefore, it is reasonable to extend the knowledge gained from animal studies to humans. Second, even the most sophisticated *in-vitro* system cannot replicate the interactions within a biological system. Third, model systems like fruit flies, worms, and zebrafish can be grown in the lab with relatively low cost of maintenance. These organisms have

short generation time, a large progeny size, simple chromosomal structure, and researchers can use them to generate inbred strains.

The bulk of the meeting included several talks about animal model use at the NICHD. Dr. Stuart Moss, program director of Male Reproductive Health in the Fertility and Infertility Branch, reported on the latest studies on human fertility and contraception using the fruit fly as a model system. In the United States population, about 10 to 15 percent of couples are infertile, and about one-third of the cases are due to problems arising in males. A detailed understanding of the mechanisms of spermatogenesis will accelerate the development of therapeutics needed to address infertility. Much of the current understanding of spermatogenesis comes from studies using *Drosophila* gonads, given their conservation of developmental and metabolic pathways with mammals.

A lot of the research on spermatogenesis focuses on spermatogenic stem cells (SSCs), the



NICHD  
EXCHANGE

*(continued on page 7)*

## NICHD Exchange Recap (continued from page 6)

progenitor cells that differentiate and mature into functional sperm. SSCs maintain fertility by critically balancing self-renewal and differentiation. A wide range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors tightly regulate this program. Dr. Moss reported that non-primate stem cells can be transplanted into mice to study the early development of sperm. An extension of this technique could potentially be used for preservation of fertility in infertile patients (e.g., pediatric patients undergoing chemotherapy).

Animal studies on spermatogenesis have also uncovered transgenerational epigenetic effects—changes that are passed on from a parent to child without any physical modification to the DNA (epi=outside, genetic = DNA). Research has shown that offspring of male mice fed a high fat diet had an adverse health outcome later in life. There are several conditions that have been ascribed to transgenerational epigenetic inheritance, such as obesity,

diabetes, stress, and fertility; however, the exact mechanisms are unknown. According to Dr. Moss, future studies on spermatogenesis using animal models are critical to uncovering these mechanisms.

The next speaker was Branch Chief Dr. Brant Weinstein from the Program in Genomics of Differentiation. His group uses zebrafish to study blood vessel development, with clinical implications such as:

1. Therapy for Ischemia (to grow blood vessels)
2. Anti-angiogenic therapy (for targeting vascularization of tumor)
3. Treatment for vascular malformations, which can be debilitating or life threatening

Unlike humans, the zebrafish embryo develops outside the body and is optically clear. Researchers can follow developmental processes and examine mutant phenotypes

(continued on page 8)

## NICHD Exchange Recap

*(continued from page 7)*

using a standard light microscope. Most importantly for Dr. Weinstein's work, zebrafish embryos can survive without any circulation for three to four days. During that time, they can live without a heart or blood vessels—a great asset for identifying and studying mutant animals.

Dr. Weinstein described the results from a study in which they coupled genetic screens with next generation sequencing techniques to identify genes important for vessel development, heart development, and anatomical patterning of vessels. Using such screening methods, researchers have identified a key player in the pathogenesis of hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia (a multi-systemic vascular disorder).

Studies from zebrafish have also helped to uncover mechanisms that lead to hemorrhagic stroke (or intercerebellar hemorrhage, ICH). This condition, which accounts for 13 percent of stroke cases, occurs when a weakened vessel ruptures and bleeds into the surrounding brain. The resulting blood accumulation compresses brain tissue and can be life threatening. Zebrafish carrying genetic mutations in the vessel development pathway can be easily screened for due to embryo transparency. Analyses of such mutants are yielding new insights into the etiology of ICH and vascular function and maintenance.

The final speaker of the event, Dr. Stephen Suomi, presented a talk titled "Modeling Human Developmental Processes in Monkeys." His group uses the Rhesus monkey to correlate behavioral outcomes with underlying genetic differences within a species. He took the audience on an interesting journey, starting with the discovery of a single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) in the serotonin transporter (a target of anti-depressants). A SNP is a single nucleotide variation in DNA that is common in a population and does not necessarily cause an overt change or problem. The discovery of a serotonin transporter

*(continued on page 9)*

## NICHD Exchange Recap

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SNP led to a culmination of studies that eventually proved that behavioral issues in humans can have a genetic cause.

During one such study in the early 1990's, researchers observed that peer-reared monkeys (i.e., those that were not reared by their moms as infants) were not able to adjust to stress as well as the mother-reared controls. Amongst the peer-reared group, individuals who expressed a particular isoform (called the short isoform) of the serotonin receptor showed higher levels of aggression when stressed. The monkeys carrying this short isoform of the serotonin receptor also ingested more alcohol as compared to the control group. Parallel studies in human subjects showed that mothers who came from an underprivileged background and had low levels of education were at a higher risk of post-partum depression if they carried the short allele.

Ongoing animal studies are examining how an individual's genetic architecture can influence behavior and sensitivity to social environment. Dr. Soumi's presentation was a great example of how animal and human studies can go hand-in-hand to propel the field of behavioral genetics forward.

More and more similarities between model systems are coming to the forefront due to genomic sequencing efforts. As a result, model organisms are being characterized at increasing resolution, giving researchers the opportunity to harness the full potential of these systems to make inroads into complex biological problems.

## Lunchtime Career Session: Science Policy Recap

By Libby Barksdale, PhD

In the October installment of the NICHD lunchtime career series, former NICHD fellow Dr. Katherine Donigan spoke about her experiences navigating from a career at the bench to one in science policy, and she offered plenty of advice for those considering following in her footsteps.

Dr. Donigan came to NICHD as a postdoc in the Woodgate lab in 2011. Soon afterward, she joined the NIH Science Policy Discussion Group (SPDG) (<https://www.training.nih.gov/spdg>) and became active writing for its blog (<https://sciencepolicyforall.wordpress.com>). In 2013, she applied and was selected for the Genetics and Public Policy Fellowship, sponsored by the American Society for Human Genetics (ASHG) and the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI, NIH). Dr. Donigan has already accepted a position with the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) for when her 16-month fellowship ends this coming December. What a lovely story, *right?* But it wasn't actually that simple; it involved a lot of hard work and foresight. So let's dig a little deeper and see how she positioned herself for success.

First, Dr. Donigan sought out a position at the NIH—she was aware of the opportunities available to NIH postdocs

for science policy exploration. While interviewing, she was upfront about her desire for a career in policy, not academia, and chose a lab where the PI was ok with that. When the yearly call for new SPDG members went out (usually in August), Dr. Donigan applied. This invitation-only group exposes members to a wide variety of policy issues relevant to the NIH through readings, roundtable discussions, and interactions with speakers. Furthermore, she took advantage of the SPDG blog, "Science Policy for All," to bolster her writing experience.

You don't need to replicate Dr. Donigan's experiences to achieve similar success. Demonstrating an interest in science policy by participating in other discussion forums, like science policy happy hours (sign up via [www.sciencepolycareers.org](http://www.sciencepolycareers.org)), or writing for other outlets (i.e., *NIH Catalyst*, *NICHD Connection*, other blogs) are good alternatives. There is also the possibility of detailing\* in a policy office, which is something Dr. Donigan said she would have done had she been at the NICHD longer. You can find information about details through the NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education or the NICHD Office of Education.

Second, despite her own misgivings about her qualifications, Dr. Donigan

*(continued on page 11)*

## Lunchtime Career Session: Science Policy Recap (continued from page 10)

applied for a policy fellowship. You'll never know unless you try! A number of professional societies offer fellowships (see <http://www.genome.gov/27554538>), but the Genetics and Public Policy Fellowship is unique in that fellows rotate through the NHGRI Policy and Program Analysis Branch, a Congressional office or Committee, and the administrative offices of ASHG, giving them insight into the various arenas of policy formation and advocacy. Dr. Donigan spent her time at NHGRI working on issues related to privacy and human research subject protections, among others. Now at ASHG, she contributes to lab-developed test regulation policies. During her stint in Senator Elizabeth Warren's office, Dr. Donigan found herself working on whatever issues needed attention—from antibiotic use in agriculture to Medicare fraud—in addition to taking meetings with constituents, writing memos, and staffing hearings. Her nine months on The Hill were hectic and stressful, but totally worthwhile in that it was her legislative experience that helped Donigan land her job at the FDA.

Dr. Donigan has three key pieces of advice for postdocs considering applying for policy fellowships:

1. **READ!** Read the science sections of newspapers, science and/or policy blogs, and newsletters from your professional society to familiarize yourself with current, relevant issues.
2. Make contact before you apply. This is a great way to answer any questions you have about your eligibility or about the fellowship itself, and it helps with name recognition!
3. Finally, network, network, **NETWORK!!!** You hear it all the time, but networking really is the best way to meet people of importance in careers/positions you're interested in and to make sure they remember you. When you meet someone at an event or through an informational interview, make sure to get his or her business card and follow up with a short email...this way, even if you didn't proffer YOUR card (and really, how many scientists have business cards?) he or she will have your contact information should future opportunities arise.

For more information about policy-related opportunities and activities, please contact Brenda Hanning ([hanningb@mail.nih.gov](mailto:hanningb@mail.nih.gov)) or Dr. Yvette Pittman ([Yvette.Pittman@nih.gov](mailto:Yvette.Pittman@nih.gov)) in the NICHD Office of Education.

*\* Editor's note: A detail is a short-term rotation in another area of the organization, either part-time (e.g., two days per week) or for a one- to three-month period, typically.*

## How to Make a Teaching-Based Professorship Application Stand Out

*Adapted from the “Applying to Teaching-based Professorships and How They Differ from Research-Based Job Applications” workshop by Dr. Sydella Blatch, November 7, 2014*

For those who want to focus on teaching science to undergraduate students more than running a research-focused laboratory, a teaching-based professorship may be the right fit. But once you find a teaching opportunity, what does a teaching application include, and how does it differ from a research-centered application? Below, we highlight the key elements of teaching philosophies and teaching-based research statements from last month’s academic jobs workshop by Dr. Sydella Blatch, assistant professor of biology at Stevenson University.

A teaching-based application typically consists of the following:

- » Cover letter
- » Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- » Teaching Philosophy
- » Research Statement
- » Three or four letters of recommendation

While all five sections are important, the teaching philosophy and research statement are unique for teaching-based positions compared to those that are research-centered. The following excerpts from Dr. Blatch’s workshop highlight important points to keep in mind while creating a standout application package.

In your **teaching philosophy**, you should:

- » Describe **how you teach**
  - Paint a picture of what your classroom is or will be like
- » Include
  - **Interactive** teaching technique(s), such as...
    - Active learning, Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL), case studies, group quizzes, etc.
    - There are tons of activities for biology courses on the Web
  - **Assessment** of students and yourself
    - For ideas, search the Internet for “formative assessment techniques”
    - How you help students when they need help
  - **List of courses** you can teach (that the school has and that you could create)
- » Include **institution-specific** connections, as much as possible
  - Addressing the student body, typical student needs
  - Particular missions, philosophies of the school
  - This is part of why we *dissect* the job ad and research the institution!

*(continued on page 13)*

## How to Make a Teaching-Based Professorship Application Stand Out (continued from page 12)

A teaching-based **research statement** will focus on:

- » Overview
  - *Student-centered* (main goal is for students to learn, not to advance the field)
  - **Focus** on *future projects* with students, not on past research or your field
    - Primary goal is **not** to educate about your field and why we must advance it.
    - Primary goal is **not** to elaborate too much on your past research accomplishments.
- » Focus on how **students** fit into your future research plans
  - Describe how much training students need to work with you
    - coursework, level in college, previous lab experience?
  - Describe how long (number of semesters) students need to work with you in order to complete their own project
  - What skills will students gain?
  - How will you mentor and train them?
  - Institution-specific information where applicable
- » **Map out a sample project or two, and mention future projects as well**

Common pitfalls of teaching-based research statements include:

- » Not sustainable for the institution (time you have, equipment/facilities, animals, labor available/students, training required, etc.)
- » Writing is too technical, too detailed
  - Does not show a focus on the student, but shows a focus on the research
  - Provide just enough background needed to understand projects with students

For a full copy of the “Applying to Teaching-based Professorships and How They Differ from Research-Based Job Applications” workshop notes, please contact Yvette Pittman ([Yvette.Pittman@nih.gov](mailto:Yvette.Pittman@nih.gov)).

## NICHD DIR Year in Review for 2014

We have a lot of great accomplishments to celebrate as 2014 comes to a close. Check out a few NICHD Division of Intramural Research (DIR) highlights below!

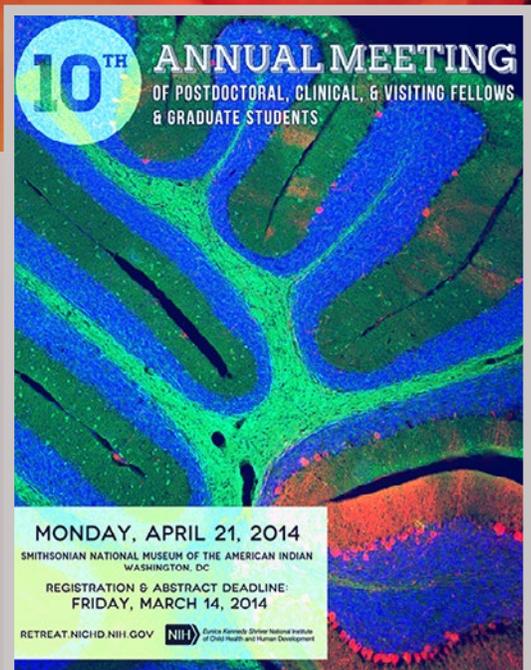
During 2014...

- » NICHD graduate students **Caitlin Younts** (Chitnis lab), **Bennett Waxse** (Lippincott-Schwartz lab), and **Alex Ritter** (Lippincott-Schwartz lab) swept the Biochemistry/Genetics/Cell & Molecular Biology Graduate Student Research Awards (GSRA), winning three of the coveted honors at the tenth annual NIH Graduate Student Research Symposium on January 14, 2014.
- » Postbacs **Andrea Attenasio** (Marini lab), **Jeffery Head** (Chitnis lab), **Joan Nambuba** (Pacak lab), and **Daniela Reyes-Capo** (Han lab) received OITE Overall Best Poster Awards at the 2014 NIH Postbac Poster Day. The NICHD-selected "best postbac poster" winners for 2014 were **Andrea Attenasio** (Marini lab), **Garrett Cheung** (Ahn lab), **Alicia Johns** (Albert lab), and **Maya Sangesland** (Levin lab).

- » The NICHD DIR held the Tenth Annual Meeting of Postdoctoral, Clinical, and Visiting Fellows and Graduate Students at the beautiful National Museum of the American Indian with keynotes by Dr. Eric Wieschaus of Princeton University, a Nobel Prize Winner, and Dr. Sherri Bale, co-founder of GeneDx. **Dr. Ian Williams** (Porter lab) won the 2014 Fellows Retreat Image competition with his image "Degeneration in cerebellum: brain sections from our NPC1 mouse model."

*(continued on page 15)*

- » NICHD DIR researchers authored over 250 publications
- » Twenty-two NICHD fellows received the Fellows Award for Research Excellence
- » **Dr. Elias Leiva-Salcedo** received NICHD fellow Mentor of the Year
- » **Dr. Brant Weinstein** received NICHD investigator Mentor of the Year
- » The first-ever NICHD "Three-minute Talk" (TmT) winners for 2014 include:
  - **Alex Ritter** (Lippincott-Schwartz lab), 1st place
  - **Eva Szarek, Ph.D.** (Stratakis lab), 2nd place
  - **Monica Gupta, Ph.D.** (Ozato lab), people's choice award



## NICHD DIR Year in Review for 2014 (continued from page 14)

- » **Dr. Shvetha Zarek** received a President's Presenter Award for her paper entitled, "Telomere Lengths Are Reduced in Women with Primary Ovarian Insufficiency Due to Fragile X Premutation Compared to Age Matched Controls." This paper was selected by the 2014 SGI Scientific Program Committee to receive one of 25 top awards at the SGI meeting from a field of >1000 abstracts.
- » **Dr. Ryan Heitmann** was recipient of the 2014 Bailey K Ashford Award for Walter Reed Hospital, receiving top honors in the laboratory category for his paper entitled, "Depletion of T regulatory cells leads to decreased litter sizes via a defect in implantation in a murine model." This is the second year in a row that NIH Reproductive Endocrine fellows have won top honors in the competition.
- » **William Long**, summer intern in the Weinstein lab, placed in the top five at the International Science Olympiad, a worldwide competition for high school students. His accomplishment made the news, as a correspondent for Fox 5 interviewed William in the zebrafish facility on campus. The **interview** aired on Fox 5 news, Wednesday, July 30.
- » The NICHD Bioviz team collaborated with *Wired Magazine* to produce a video of the new **3D Print Exchange**. Check it out! <http://www.wired.com/2014/06/science-graphic-week-3d-print/>

Please submit your accomplishments for publication in the newsletter throughout the year to [Shana.Spindler@gmail.com](mailto:Shana.Spindler@gmail.com).

## December Announcements

### GET YOUR IMAGE FEATURED ON THE DIR ANNUAL REPORT

The NICHD Division of Intramural Research (DIR) will feature exciting scientific images, from basic and clinical research laboratories, on the cover and web site of the 2014 DIR Annual Report. To submit images for consideration, please email your file to Nicki Swan ([jonasnic@mail.nih.gov](mailto:jonasnic@mail.nih.gov)) or contact her if the file is too large to send by email. All entries are due by **December 15, 2014**.

### THE OFFICE OF DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS 2015 RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM IS OPEN

The **Program** is a one-year competitive scholarship opportunity to study the role of dietary supplements in health promotion and disease prevention. This program is targeted towards early career scientists, including Tenure-Track Investigators, Early Independent Scientists, Assistant Clinical Investigators, Research Fellows, Staff Fellows or Postdoctoral Fellows with at least one year of postdoctoral research experience. Projects can request up to \$100,000 in funds, which can be spent in FY15 or FY16. Letters of Intent are due by **May 4, 2015**, and full applications will be due by **June 23, 2015**. For additional information contact Dr. Cindy Davis, at [davisci@od.nih.gov](mailto:davisci@od.nih.gov) or 301-496-0168.

### SAVE THE DATE: JANUARY 13, 9 AM – 4 PM, NIH GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

The 11th Annual NIH Graduate Student Research Symposium will be held on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, at Natcher Conference Center. The daylong event includes student talks, poster presentations of dissertation research, a keynote address from Dr. Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa, director of the Brain Tumor Surgery Program and Professor of Neurological Surgery at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, presentation of the annual Outstanding Mentor Awards, and the annual GPP graduation ceremony. All graduate students performing their doctoral dissertation research at NIH are eligible and encouraged to participate (500-word abstracts). The "New Proposal" poster category will return for those in the early stages of a project. All poster presenters are eligible to compete for the NIH Graduate Student Research Awards (NGSRAs, travel awards). To submit an abstract, please visit <https://www.training.nih.gov/gsc/symposium/11th>.

*(continued on page 17)*

## December Announcements

*(continued from page 16)*

### SAVE THE DATE: JANUARY 20, 1 – 2 PM, BIO CAREERS WEBINAR

#### How to be Competitive for the Industry Job Market

Lauren Celano, MBA, CEO, Propel Careers

In this webinar, Lauren Celano will discuss ways that you can become a better candidate for a position in industry while completing your Ph.D. or postdoctoral training. Lauren will focus on research and non-research positions such as consulting, business development, writing, and medical affairs. For Ph.D.'s, she will talk about how to incorporate collaborative research into your Ph.D. work, how to learn hard and soft skills valued by industry, and various ways to gain management and leadership skills. For postdocs, she will talk about how to strategically choose an advisor to work with, or project to work on, what experiences and skills are most important to work on within a postdoc, and more. Importantly, she will discuss how both Ph.D.'s and postdocs already possess many skills valued by industry, and ways to discuss and highlight these skills.

You can register at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4789634641710333185>

### SAVE THE DATE: JANUARY 28, 12 – 1:30 PM, WORKSHOP ON COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Have you struggled to communicate with your PI about issues of mentoring, publishing, or pursuing career development opportunities? Effective communication, even in difficult conversations, is an essential skill for your graduate and postdoctoral training and career planning. Yet, trainees and mentors often find it hard to articulate their thoughts and professional needs in the workplace and tend to avoid these difficult conversations until a problem reaches a critical point.

For this reason, the NICHD Office of Education and the NIH Office of the Ombudsman are offering a workshop titled “**Communication Strategies for Difficult Conversations**” on **Wednesday, January 28th, from 12 noon to 1:30 pm**. The workshop aims to provide fellows with helpful strategies and communication techniques that can make these difficult conversations more productive. Importantly, the session will also raise awareness of existing resources within the NIH that are available to fellows in resolving conflicts in the lab. And with a panel of experienced professionals, we will discuss specific scenarios of young scientists, for a more practical focus.

If you would like to register, email Yvette Pittman at [yvette.pittman@nih.gov](mailto:yvette.pittman@nih.gov), and feel free to pass along any topic you would like to discuss during the workshop, or a scenario you have found to be challenging for you. We will not associate your name with the topic or scenario.

## December Events

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 9 AM – 12 PM

Leadership and Management Course for NICHD Fellows  
David M. Dilts, PhD, MBA, CPA, CMA  
Professor of Management at the Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)

The four learning objectives for the course are: (1) understanding the differences between leadership and management; (2) understanding the need to lead and manage; (3) knowing the difference between a team and a committee; and (4) Identifying the key elements of managing projects in a team environment.

There are 10 slots left. If you would like to register, sign up soon with Yvette Pittman at [yvette.pittman@nih.gov](mailto:yvette.pittman@nih.gov).

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 10 AM – 12 PM

Job Talks and Elevator Speeches  
Led by Scott Morgan, a professional public speaking coach

This workshop is designed to help postdocs explain their work to various audiences with a wide range of knowledge backgrounds. The first section covers the elements that make up a good “elevator speech” for use at conferences and during interviews. Topics include: identifying common ground, adding personal connection, elaborating on rationale, and framing one’s work within the larger scientific picture. The second section covers structural and delivery techniques that ensure a memorable job talk, including: how to talk around and between data slides, how to control PowerPoint, how to proactively manage the question-and-answer period, how to tailor the talk to a specific institution, and how to weave one’s personal experience into the presentation.

You can register with Yvette Pittman at [yvette.pittman@nih.gov](mailto:yvette.pittman@nih.gov).

*(continued on page 19)*

## December Events (continued from page 18)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2 – 3 PM

Postbac holiday social  
Building 31, room 2A48

