

# The NICHD Connection

**January 2015**

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## Do You Know What It Takes to Lead?

*By Jenny Blau, MD*

A successful career in research requires an understanding of how to lead a successful team. On December 2, 2014, the NICHD Office of Education hosted a Leadership and Management course led by management scientist David M. Dilts, PhD, MBA, CPA, CMA. This highly interactive course introduced early-career fellows to the essence of leadership and management. Below are a few highlights from the course:

### GOOD VERSUS BAD LEADER

The course began with small group brainstorming of what it means to be a good or bad leader. From our diverse personal experiences, we created a list of attributes for each category. Highlights of the “good leader” list included: demonstrating interest in others’ professional development, empathy, good communication skills, having a vision and strategy, and trusting others. In contrast, the “bad leader” list included: micromanaging, poor communication skills, publicly defaming, failing to listen, not being available, gossiping, withholding information, and not caring about the team members.

We captured the critical components of a good leader in the word “otherness” and summarized a bad leader as “selfish.” One group depicted these skills as the ability of a leader to communicate effectively to the team while reciprocally receiving team input—all while keeping the team working toward a common goal.

### COMMITTEE VERSUS TEAM

Dr. Dilts next challenged us to distinguish between a team and a committee. While a committee has an assigned leader and individual accountability, it lacks a “shared destiny.” Committees discuss, decide, and delegate work but do not typically implement ideas, unlike a team. In a team, you will find both individual and mutual accountability. Members of a team have a “shared destiny.” They share collective work products, performance measures, and an ability to work toward a common goal. To have an effective team, a leader must:

1. Establish a sense of purpose and urgency
2. Select members for skill and potential, not personality
3. Pay particular attention to actions
4. Set clear rules of behavior
5. Challenge members with fresh facts, information, and ideas

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## Letter from the Editor

A few things I learned last year: we have a lot of very talented individuals at the NICHD, a successful science career requires more than a few publications, and never argue with a four-year-old. They will win—or think they've won. ...But I digress.

Let's begin the New Year with a few articles about two important aspects of a scientist's training: management and leadership. An often-overlooked skillset, management expertise is a critical attribute that will serve a scientist well—for a variety of future career paths. And what postdoctoral fellow wouldn't benefit from learning how to lead his or her own research group, even when conflict arises?

In our first **“Interesting Opportunity”** column of 2015, Dr. Payal Ray introduces an excellent leadership series, hosted by the NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE). The series of five workshops is a prerequisite for the popular two-day management bootcamp. According to Dr. Ray, this opportunity is a great way to identify your personality/work style preferences and hone your own management skills.

On our front page, **Dr. Jenny Blau recaps the Leadership and Management workshop** hosted by the NICHD Office of Education last month. She reveals multiple qualities of a good leader, explains the difference between a committee and a team, and touches upon several aspects of project management. A must read if you missed this event or if you attended but want a simple refresher.

One not-to-be-missed event this month, **“Communication Strategies for Difficult Situations” on January 28**, is the perfect accompaniment to this month's theme of leadership and management. Hop on your email and register now with Dr. Yvette Pittman at [Yvette.Pittman@nih.gov](mailto:Yvette.Pittman@nih.gov). And be sure to check out all of our January announcements and events, including two prestigious awards to Drs. Julian Lui and Prasanna Satpute-Krishnan.

Happy New Year to all!  
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

Please send questions and comments to [Shana.Spindler@gmail.com](mailto:Shana.Spindler@gmail.com). We love the feedback and will continue to shape *The NICHD Connection* according to NICHD fellows' needs.

## Do You Know What It Takes to Lead?

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6. Spend time together
7. Use positive feedback, reward, and recognition
8. Effectively communicate with one another

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The course concluded with key elements of project management in a team environment. Dr. Dilts used the creation of a grant application as an example. The planning and execution of a grant application includes identifying the people who will be involved, what work needs to be completed, how much time each task will take, and who will do each task. A helpful exercise during the management process is to create a responsibility matrix known as a Gantt chart (example can be found at: <http://www.gantt.com>).

Some project managers even post the responsibility matrix publicly—because everyone knows the importance of social pressure! Someone also needs to take ownership over the Gantt chart, updating it as needed, so that the project is kept organized and moving forward. After all of these steps, a manager should never forget to celebrate the team's accomplishments!

Overall, this course is an excellent introduction to good leadership attributes and provides a framework to shape our own leadership goals. Two books that Dr. Dilts recommends for additional learning are Tom Rath's book *Strengths Finder* and—what Dr. Dilts called “the must-read leadership book”—Peter Drucker's *The Effective Executive*. I know I'll be buying these for some non-science reading!

## Team Contract

Following are a set of possible norms that might be used by a team “contract”

### 1. Openness

- To be effective, open sharing with group members is essential to success. If individuals are not sharing openly with the group, it is the responsibility of group members to raise this for. Be careful not to make it personal.

### 2. Trust

- For the team to be effective it is essential that members trust each other and the group as a whole. Trust is built through honest, open communications and a sense of caring about the other members and sincerely liking to help them in growing into effective leaders.

### 3. Conflicts

- A firm agreement should be reached on how decisions triaged and how differences will be settled

### 4. Uniqueness

- The team should allow for individual differences and make accommodations for the needs of others, while keeping focused on the vision.

### 5. Tolerance

- There are no “perfect” answers so be tolerant and do not make judgments about others in the team.

### 6. Feedback

- Team members offer and receive constructive feedback from each other on their ideas, leadership traits, and communication styles.

### 7. Challenges

- Challenges by others are considered to be healthy, if expressed in a respectful manner in which individuals do not engage in personal attacks. By being managed well, respectful challenges will contribute to meaningful learning for all.

Signed: (by all members)



During the Leadership and Management workshop, Dr. Dilts provided an example of a team contract, a tool that can be used to guide workplace behavior. This is a small sample of the kinds of items that could be included. Kindly provided by Dr. David Dilts, Managing Partner, Dilts+Partners, LLC

## Interesting Opportunity: OITE Workplace Dynamics Series

By Payal Ray, PhD

Research experience in the laboratory may not offer many opportunities to garner leadership and management skills. However, a number of young scientists today will go on to hold a managerial position—be it as a PI in academia, project manager in industry, or leader in another science-based sector. Recognizing the need for NIH fellows to acquire managerial skills, the NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) developed the Workplace Dynamics series.

The series consists of five experiential and hands-on workshops, comprised of several active learning strategies, including activity worksheets, think-pair-share, and group discussions. Participants in all five workshops earn a certificate of completion and are eligible for the two-day Management Bootcamp. Because the bootcamp builds upon concepts discussed in each workshop, participation in *all five* workshops is required to attend the bootcamp course.

OITE recommends that the Leadership series workshops (listed below) be taken in the order they are offered, but each can be a stand-alone workshop as well. The workshops include:

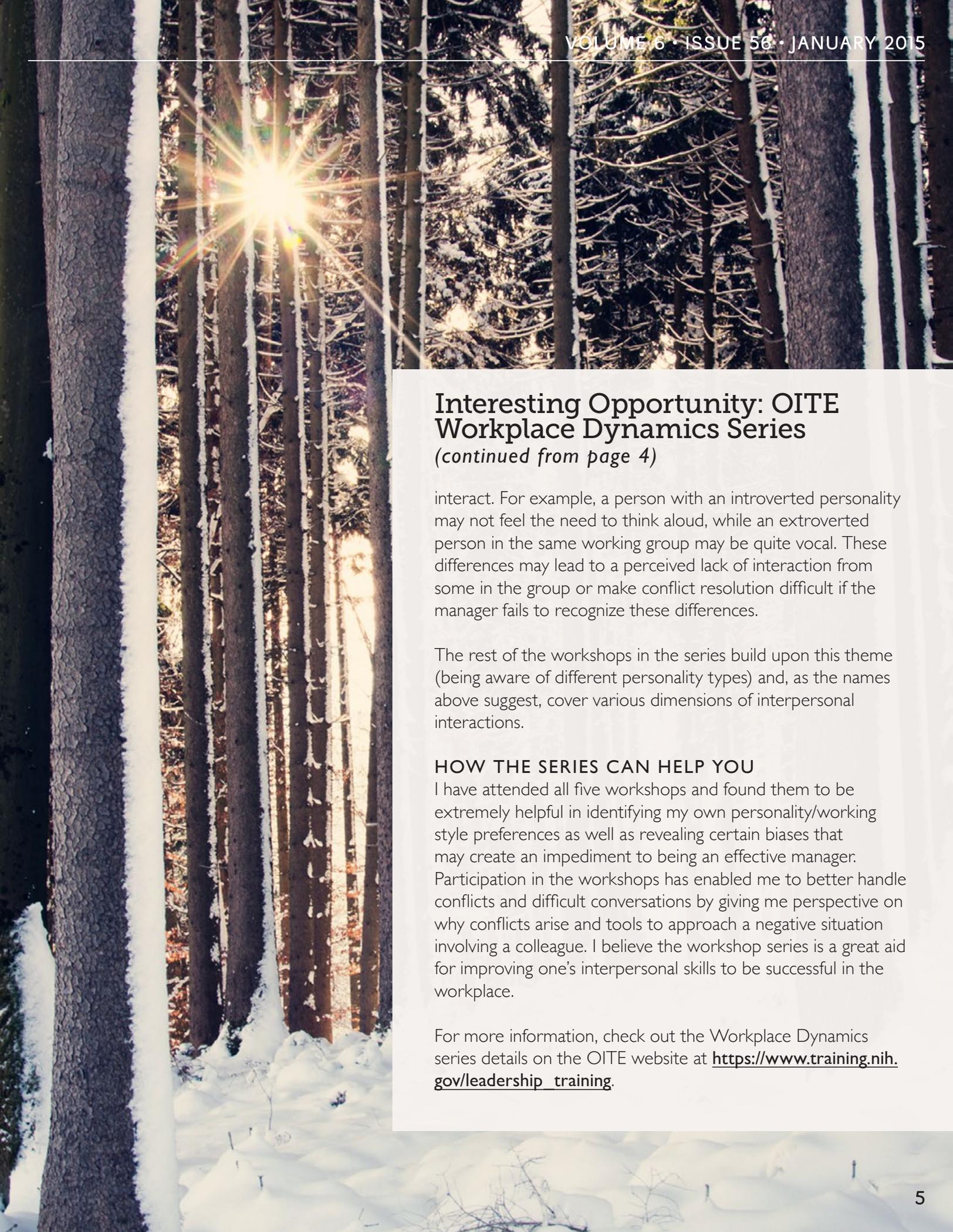
1. Self-Awareness
2. Communication, Learning, & Influencing Others
3. Conflict & Feedback
4. Team Skills
5. Diversity in a Multicultural Society

### WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE SERIES

The first workshop requires attendees to take a personality assessment known as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) before meeting. The MBTI places individuals into one of 16 different types of personalities (or working styles), each of which has a distinct profile. During the workshop, the moderators discuss the implications of these various personality traits in the workplace.

It is important for a leader or manager to be cognizant of different personality types and to be aware of steps he or she can take to ensure an effective work environment. The most helpful activity during the first workshop, in my opinion, is the examination of how people with opposing personalities may

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## Interesting Opportunity: OITE Workplace Dynamics Series

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interact. For example, a person with an introverted personality may not feel the need to think aloud, while an extroverted person in the same working group may be quite vocal. These differences may lead to a perceived lack of interaction from some in the group or make conflict resolution difficult if the manager fails to recognize these differences.

The rest of the workshops in the series build upon this theme (being aware of different personality types) and, as the names above suggest, cover various dimensions of interpersonal interactions.

### HOW THE SERIES CAN HELP YOU

I have attended all five workshops and found them to be extremely helpful in identifying my own personality/working style preferences as well as revealing certain biases that may create an impediment to being an effective manager. Participation in the workshops has enabled me to better handle conflicts and difficult conversations by giving me perspective on why conflicts arise and tools to approach a negative situation involving a colleague. I believe the workshop series is a great aid for improving one's interpersonal skills to be successful in the workplace.

For more information, check out the Workplace Dynamics series details on the OITE website at [https://www.training.nih.gov/leadership\\_training](https://www.training.nih.gov/leadership_training).

## What Are Your Thoughts on Career Training?

By Shana R. Spindler, PhD

In our latest installment about the broadening array of scientific careers, we reached out to successful former fellows for their thoughts on the purpose of graduate and postdoctoral training (see **November 2014**). Now, we want to hear from you, current NICHD trainees.

On December 17, 2014, the website ScienceCareers published **an article** about participating in non-lab career development activities. The author assured wary principal investigators—who feared they'd be breaking the law to spend federal research funds on unrelated career training for students and postdocs—that time away from the lab for career development IS authorized.

While the *ScienceCareers* article focused on the hesitation of PIs to approve non-lab training activities, we want to focus our next article on trainee fears surrounding “beyond the bench” training. What are your worries or questions regarding training away from the lab? Do you feel like you'll get scooped if you step away from your research for a short time? Are you nervous about how your PI will perceive your intentions? Have you been thinking

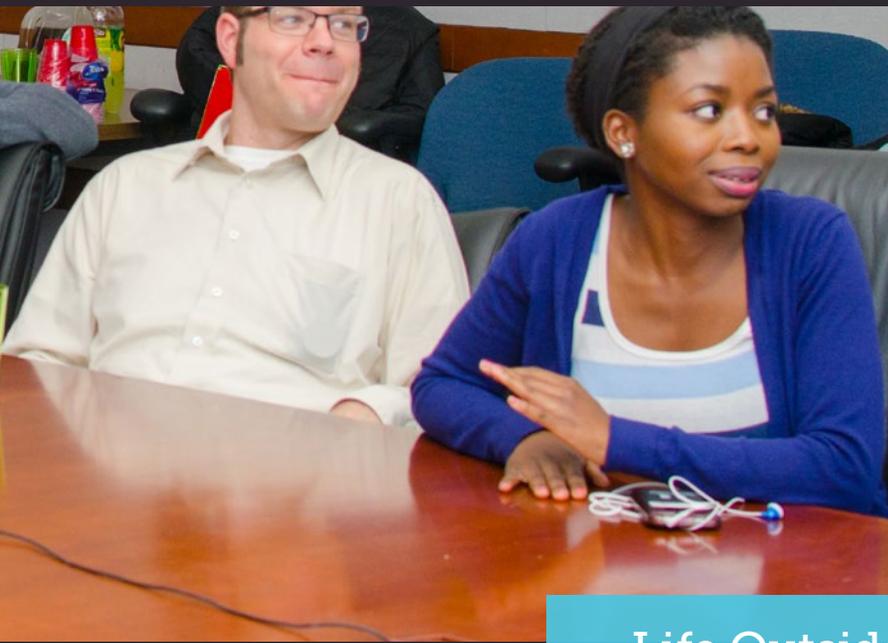
about exploring a science career away from the bench, but you don't even know where to start? Maybe you're scared that you won't enjoy the additional training and will have taken time away from your research for naught? How much time should you expect to spend training in grant writing, public speaking, networking, or teaching? The list of questions goes on and on.

Please consider sending us your thoughts and questions about career training beyond the bench (submissions can be kept anonymous if preferred). If you're worried about something, there's a good chance many other fellows have the exact same unease. In this way, we can focus on concerns specific to you, NICHD fellows.

Please send your questions or comments regarding this topic to **[Shana.Spindler@gmail.com](mailto:Shana.Spindler@gmail.com)** before January 30, 2015.

### REFERENCE:

Bernstein R. “Yes, you can attend that career event, says the U.S. government.” *ScienceCareers*. Published Online December 17, 2014.



Life Outside Lab: Postbac Holiday Social



## January Announcements

### DR. JULIAN LUI WINS GRANT FOR GROWTH INNOVATION AWARD

Grant For Growth Innovation (GGI) is an international initiative funded by EMD Serono, a division of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. **Dr. Julian Lui**, research fellow in the Section on Growth and Development, received one of the three 2014 awards for his proposal titled “Cartilage-Targeted Therapeutics for Growth Disorders.” Please visit the [GGI website](#) to learn more about this unique opportunity, and don’t forget to congratulate Dr. Lui on his impressive accomplishment!

### ASCB PRESENTS DR. PRASANNA SATPUTE-KRISHNAN WITH MERTON BERNFIELD AWARD

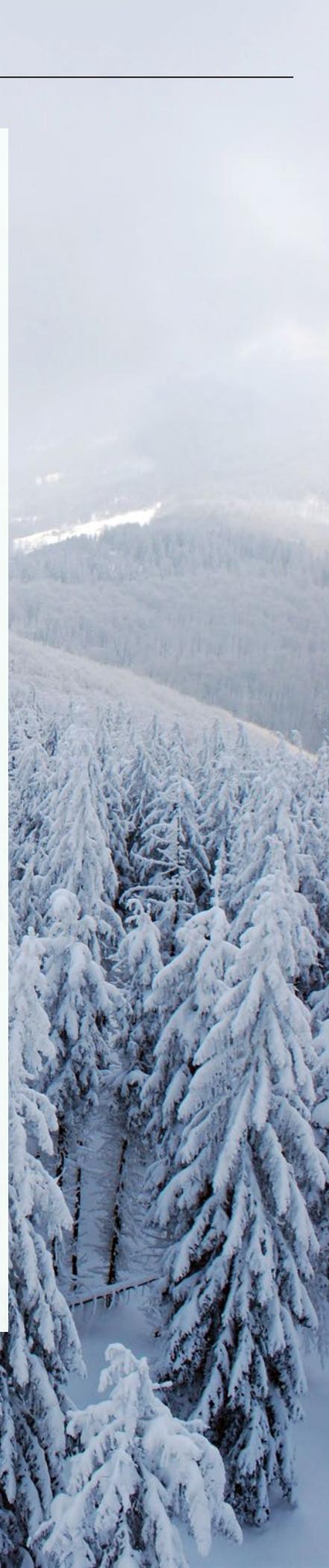
Each year, the American Society of Cell Biology (ASCB) grants the prestigious Merton Bernfield award to a graduate student or postdoc who has excelled in research. The 2014 award went to **Dr. Prasanna Satpute-Krishnan**, postdoctoral fellow in the Lippincott-Schwartz lab, for her work on misfolded proteins. “The selection committee recognized Satpute-Krishnan’s perseverance, dedication, and clever approaches to scientific problems, key features for a successful scientific career,” according to the ASCB newsletter, October 2014. In honor of Dr. Satpute-Krishnan’s work, ASCB invited her to speak during the “Protein Sorting to Intracellular Compartments” mini symposium during the 2014 ASCB annual meeting on December 10, 2014. Congratulations to Dr. Satpute-Krishnan on her outstanding achievements!

### THE NIH FELLOWS EDITORIAL BOARD WANTS TO HELP YOU!

The NIH Fellows Editorial Board (FEB) offers all NIH and FDA fellows a free, fast, and confidential scientific document-editing service. An all-volunteer Board composed of NIH fellows, the FEB edits various documents such as manuscripts, book chapters, and grant proposals for grammar, form, and clarity. The editors also review essential elements pertinent to the document, such as figures and figure legends. Editors do not comment on scientific merit. Authors generally receive written feedback in 10 to 12 business days.

For more information and submission requirements please visit the **NEW** FEB website at: <https://ccr.cancer.gov/trainee-resources-editorial-board>.

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## January Announcements

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### CALLING ALL FELLOWS OF NICHD—IT'S IMAGE COMPETITION TIME

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual NICHD Fellows Meeting will be held in May 2015, and we are looking for an image that represents the great work from our institute.

The winning image will be showcased on the retreat website, publicity posters, and used as the front cover of the program. Also, we will use all submissions to produce an image collage on the retreat website to highlight our outstanding fellows. You can always take a look at the image submissions from previous years at <http://retreat.nichd.nih.gov>. In addition to image resolution and quality, selection criteria includes the relevance to our institute's mission and aesthetic of the image.

If you have something interesting, then send it over (at the highest possible resolution) to Nicki Swan ([jonasnic@mail.nih.gov](mailto:jonasnic@mail.nih.gov)) with a brief caption for the image. The deadline for submissions is **Friday, January 23**.

*This page's background is 2014's winning image, submitted by Ian Williams, PhD, Section on Molecular Dymorphology (Forbes Porter Lab). It depicts degeneration in the cerebellum. Blue = DAPI, Green = lipid stain, Red = Neuron Stain.*

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## January Announcements

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### 2015 TMT COMPETITION: SCIENCE COMMUNICATION AWARDS FOR PREDOCTORAL AND POSTDOCTORAL, VISITING, AND CLINICAL FELLOWS

We're excited to let you know that we will soon be accepting participants for the second annual Three-Minute Talks (TmT) competition. This is a terrific opportunity for you to learn (and practice!) how to explain your research in a way that's meaningful to scientists outside your specialized field—a skill that's become increasingly important for you all.

Starting late February, all fellows will get professional training in speech development and presentation delivery, plus one-on-one coaching and feedback in a supportive environment. Our goal is to help you gain skills and confidence in oral communication, so you can become even more effective as researchers. And to end this year's TmT activities, our finalists will present at the final event in the summer to compete with fellows from other institutes.

We really encourage each of you to consider taking part in this—it will be well worth your time.

Sign up information and competition details to soon follow.



## January Events

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 9 AM – 4 PM**

NIH Graduate Student Research Symposium

Natcher Conference Center

More information can be found at <https://www.training.nih.gov/gsc/symposium/11th>

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1 – 2 PM**

Bio Careers Webinar

This webinar will focus on how to be competitive for the industry job market. Bio Careers is a website NICHD subscribes to that provides many excellent, online, career development resources.

Registration required at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4789634641710333185>

**TUESDAY–WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20–21, 8:30 AM – 5 PM**

Bioinformatics & Computational Biosciences Festival, *Science in 3D*

5601 Fishers Lane Conference Center, Rockville, Maryland

Don't miss this great event, hosting an impressive collection of 3D experts! For more information, please visit the festival website at:

<https://respond.niaid.nih.gov/conferences/bioinformatics2015/Pages/default.aspx>

Registration required at: <https://respond.niaid.nih.gov/conferences/bioinformatics2015/Pages/Registration.aspx>

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 12 – 1:30 PM**

“Communication Strategies for Difficult Conversations”

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, please email Yvette Pittman at [yvette.pittman@nih.gov](mailto:yvette.pittman@nih.gov).



## PhD Comics

### How to read a Professor's door



JORGE CHAM © 2014

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

<http://www.phdcomics.com/comics/archive.php?comicid=1765>