NATIONAL POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION

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POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION TOOLKIT

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Introduction

Postdoctoral associations (PDAs) are a vibrant and dynamic source of support for postdoctoral fellows at their home institutions and nationally. There are many benefits to establishing and maintaining an active PDA. This toolkit is intended to serve as a resource guide to assist postdocs and their allies in starting and sustaining an effective PDA. In this toolkit, you'll find a wealth of information, including best practices shared from PDAs nationwide, suggestions on how to gain support from key institute administrators, strategies for conducting surveys and methods for affecting institutional policies. Links are provided throughout the toolkit to helpful resources. The NPA welcomes additions to this toolkit from local PDAs to share their success and help others.

Starting a Postdoctoral Association (PDA)

It is important to recognize the level of commitment and time it will demand to accomplish this. You will gain enormous experience in how to work within, and navigate the administrative hierarchy, but do not forget it is your research that will determine your future success in your chosen career.

*** Most important *** Adopt a POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE demeanor. Your initial demeanor will establish the overall position of the organization in the future and is critical to successfully rallying allies within the administration.

- Speak about unlocking the potential of the postdocs and increased productivity
- Win-Win attitude - happy well-trained postdocs are less distracted and more productive
- Acknowledge the current financial constraints facing universities and show what can be done such as training and career counseling with minimal additional cost
- Concentrate first goals on these positive issues to become ingrained in the administration before tackling more controversial and costly issues of benefits and salaries
- Important to use these modest goals while you learn more about all sides of the issues, the politics of your institution, what is already being done regarding postdoc issues, and make institutional allies

1. Critical Threshold

A brief point concerning timeline. You must remember to move quickly in the initial phase to become established before the enthusiasm wanes. Postdocs and administrators will need to see some benefit occurring and real organization before you gain their buy-in. Remember not to let perfectionism prevent initial progress. Start small, but at least start. Then maintain progress.

2. Personnel

As in all organizations, many different personality types with different skill sets will likely be recruited. It is important to embrace this diversity if a robust PDA is to be formed. Each personality type brings with it unique advantages and potential weaknesses. It is important to encourage each of these types to contribute and recognize their strengths to focus their efforts toward the greatest effectiveness.

Examples of personalities (sample and not complete):
- Bureaucrat - person who concentrates on the bureaucratic details such as formalized by-laws, meeting minutes etc. Advantage – useful in keeping the organizational details and navigating institutional rules and regulations. Caution – can keep a group focused on infinite details and hinder substantive movement forward.
- Dreamer – person with ambitious goals for the organization. Advantage – provides creative and motivating goals for substantive effects. Caution – can become too distracted with over-ambitious goals and not attend to important details or make real progress towards realistic goals.
- Activist – person driven by passionate emotions usually stimulated out of negative perspective and vague idea of "fairness". Advantage – provides infectious commitment and motivation. Caution – negative demeanor can derail the process and emotional arguments can distract from the logical and collaborative discussions.

It is important that these and other personality types collaborate, each working to focus the others towards a common balanced goal. Critical to encourage each type to apply their skills in a constructive manner.

3. Create Bylaws

Constructing the Bylaws or charter of your organization will be a vital component of the formation of your PDA. The bylaws communicate the structure, purpose and membership requirements of the organization to current members and potential new recruits and provide the foundation for the successful operation of your organization. Although the Bylaws will have some features unique to your institution, there are some common topics that you need to cover. Briefly, you want to communicate the characteristics, the operation, and the general rules of the organization. Most bylaws should address the following topics:

- Name of the organization
- Purpose or objective
- Operation/Governance - who is eligible for membership?
- Roles and responsibilities of officers - election procedures
- Formation and structure of committees - committee charges
- General rules
- Finances
- Amendments

The Bylaws should be written with the input of all involved in the organization, and they should be reviewed on a regular basis, perhaps every 6 months to a year, so that any appropriate changes can be made. It is the membership of your PDA who would approve the Bylaws. The wording and language should be as accurate as possible and kept to a minimum, so that all may easily understand what you are trying to communicate.

A good reference for general Bylaw construction can be found in General Henry M. Robert's "Rules of Order". This book has been in publication for over a century and has become the bible for rule-setting and creating order within an organization.

Look to other currently existing PDA's for input and sample structures. Many PDA's have their Bylaws and Charters posted on the web. Some great examples include:

- Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Postdoctoral Association [1]
- University of Pennsylvania Biomedical Postdoctoral Council [2]
- Stanford University Postdocs Association [3]

A review of the National Postdoctoral Association bylaws may also be helpful: Our Bylaws

4. Develop a PDA Handbook

Informing new postdocs about their institute's resources is one of the most important roles of a postdoctoral association, including general information about what being a postdoc means as well as specific issues at each institution. Perhaps the best approach is creating a postdoctoral scholar handbook, which several institutions have done with great success. Since each institution is different, and has a different level of organization, it is impossible to compile one handbook that would apply to all postdocs everywhere. However, it is possible to identify key components of any good handbook, and to use feedback from postdocs at your institution to identify additional areas that need to be addressed.

In general, a good handbook should contain the following sections:
- Classification of postdocs at the institution. This may vary depending on source of funding and may have important ramifications regarding benefits and taxes.
- Services for international postdocs. International postdocs face all the issues of domestic postdocs, with many additional concerns. They should be made aware of what resources are in place to help them, and how to access them.
- Employee services. A guide to employee services, and which of these are available to postdocs, is a valuable resource.
- Benefits. Incoming postdocs need to know what benefits they are entitled to, and how benefits differ depending on their classification status.
- Postdoctoral policies. Many postdocs are unaware of the policies governing them until they find themselves in unfortunate situations. A formal policy regarding postdocs should be included in the handbook so that postdocs have a clear understanding of their role in the institute. An official policy should be a part of any institution with a significant postdoc population and serves the interest of all parties.
- General institution information. Postdocs commonly arrive with little knowledge of the institution beyond what happens in their mentors' labs. Information about other departments, resources, core facilities, and the availability of free or discounted tuition can help a postdoc establish multi-disciplinary collaborations and foster independence.
- Quality of life information. This can include information on transportation, housing, parking, spousal programs, day care, banking and a myriad of other topics that are encountered on a daily basis but are not adequately addressed in other areas of the handbook.
- Contact information. A list of names and contact information saves postdocs a lot of time and effort, especially newly-arrived postdocs who have not had time to develop a network. It helps to know that there are people on site who are willing and able to provide guidance.

In addition, be sure to include information about the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) in your handbook or orientation packet, particularly if your institution is a member of the NPA. Sample language is provided below.

Sample section on the NPA for inclusion in handbooks/orientation manuals

The mission of the NPA is to advance the U.S. research enterprise by maximizing the effectiveness of the research community and enhancing the quality of the postdoctoral experience for all participants. To achieve its mission, the NPA works to:
- Develop and advocate for implementation of policies that promote positive and constructive change in the postdoctoral experience.
- Promote collection, analysis, and dissemination of data on postdoctoral scholars.

- Develop a self-sustaining, democratic organization to enhance all stakeholders in the postdoctoral community.

Postdoctoral scholars at institutions that are NPA Sustaining Members are eligible for free Affiliate Membership in the NPA. Please visit the NPA website [4] to learn of the advantages of being member. These include access to web content (e.g. Postdoc Guide to Advocacy, International Postdoc Survival Guide), discounts to the NPA Annual Meeting, and resources for professional and leadership development.

The NPA is always interested in recruiting enthusiastic people to serve on one of its committees of the membership or officer groups. This service is great "beyond the bench" experience, since the committees involve policy, diversity, and international issues, along with planning the yearly annual meeting. It is an opportunity to network and collaborate with postdoctoral fellows and established scientists in a variety of institutions (universities, national labs, private foundations, industry…) both nationally and internationally.

The NPA hosts an Annual Conference every spring that is designed to bring all stakeholders together to understand the needs of postdocs, to educate all parties, and to facilitate change at the local and national level. Workshops are offered to help PDA and PDO leaders identify and accomplish goals for their individual institutions. This event is a great opportunity for all postdoc associations, from those newly formed to long-standing organizations.

Links to Postdoctoral Fellows Handbooks
- National Institutes of Health Postdoc Handbook [5]
- Stanford University [6]
- Ichan School of Medicine at Mount Sinai [7]
- University of Michigan [8]

5. Identifying Postdocs

It is important to find out how many postdocs are in your institute, so that you can establish regular communications and survey them to find out the immediate concerns that need to be addressed. For more information on how to conduct a survey, please refer to the NPA resource on surveys (coming soon). The data you collect about postdocs can be used to make presentations to people in the institute to gain advocates and help create change in your institute. Knowing who are the postdocs also helps build a stronger association and will help identify people that can volunteer in the association to maintain continuity of leadership. At this point, you need names of postdocs and their departments, and their e-mail addresses. For a PDA to get an accurate count of postdocs in their institute, key partnerships must be made. We will discuss a couple of strategies that can be used.

The Human Resources Department will have the most extensive database, although it may not be completely accurate. Why don't institutes have an accurate count of all postdocs? The biggest challenge lies in their postdoc title and method of funding. The human resources database will most likely contain a list of postdocs that are paid from institutional dollars or grants that are managed by the institute (i.e. NRSA). This will represent the majority of postdocs. However, HR may not have a list of people that are bringing in their own funding and are paid directly from a funding agency or alternative institution. The human resources staff strives to maintain accurate records.

A faculty advocate can help you identify the appropriate person in human resources. For more information on how to identify and work with these individuals consult the PDA toolkit articles on Identifying Administrators Responsible for Research and Training Policies and Gaining Support from Faculty and Administrative Advocates.

To enlist the support of others in identifying postdocs, consider making a presentation. Prepare your presentation by doing your research on other institutes with successful postdoc programs. You may have to start with the definition of a postdoc. The NPA, NIH, and NSF definition of a postdoc is:

> *A postdoctoral scholar ("postdoc") is an individual holding a doctoral degree who is engaged in a temporary period of mentored research and/or scholarly training for the purpose of acquiring the professional skills needed to pursue a career path of his or her choosing*

Improving the postdoc experience will make your institute more attractive to the best and brightest talent in the country and abroad, which will lead to better research, publications and grant funding. Let them know of other institutes that have successful postdoc programs and that you would like to see that success occur in your institute. All of this begins with the process of identifying postdocs.

Another strategy is to partner with the science/research recruiter, if your institution has one. This person is usually a member of the HR staff, and processes the paperwork necessary to hire postdocs, graduate students and technicians. Because they deal with postdocs regularly, they hear their concerns and know of their experiences. This may be a good person to partner with. The recruiter will be able to identify the people in HR that can help you obtain the data. Your approach to this person must be amicable. Use the materials outlined above.

An alternative strategy is to find a postdoc and/or faculty advocate in each department. Build a partnership with someone in each department's business office. Ask them for a list of

postdocs in their departments along with their e-mails. This approach is more labor intensive but will likely be more accurate than the database in human resources. With an accurate tally of postdoc names and departments, you will have a database that will be valuable to human resources. They will be more likely to partner with you in future projects if you help them correct their database.

An additional strategy for identifying incoming postdocs is to run a regular orientation session, introducing new postdocs to policies, programs and events at your institution. Incoming postdocs can be targeted using HR personnel lists, flyer advertising as well as word-of-mouth, all of which increases the visibility of the PDO/PDA. Some more information on orientations can be found in the PDO Toolkit article on Creating an Orientation Package for New Postdocs.

6. Identifying Administrators Responsible for Research and Training Policies

Institutions that host postdoctoral scholars are often complex bureaucracies. This is especially true of both academia and government agencies. For postdocs in industry, the level of bureaucracy may be slightly less, but can still be daunting. Each institution has its own unique administrative structure and finding the right administrators who have responsibility for postdoctoral training/research can sometimes be a challenge. At certain institutions, the responsibility for oversight of postdoctoral training may not be explicitly assigned to anyone. In order for a postdoctoral association (PDA) to work effectively, it helps to have a designated institutional administrator (or faculty member) who can serve as a liaison to the PDA. Regular meetings and ongoing dialogue should be the hallmark of a productive relationship between a PDA and the designated institutional administrator.

If you are unclear about who is the right person to approach about postdoctoral training issues, consider department heads, human resources and personnel staff, or perhaps even the director's office. Search the web page for your institution or a published staff directory that includes people's job titles. In an academic setting, the most likely places to begin are the offices of the Graduate School Dean, or the Dean for Research (if such positions exist). These position titles may vary and include senior, associate or vice deans/provosts. At some very large academic institutions with multiple schools and campuses, start at your home department, school or campus and work your way up until you get the answers you need.

If it becomes clear after multiple inquiries that there is no single entity charged with oversight for postdoctoral affairs at your institution, the PDA leadership should ask for a meeting with the institution's top administrator. The goal of this meeting should be to (a) gain administrative consent that establishes responsibility upon the institution to provide oversight for postdoctoral affairs, and that (b) responsibility should be assigned to a specific individual or office. Your PDA can use the various reports and studies from prestigious national organizations that will support your case for developing more explicit policies governing postdocs at your institution, including the identification of an administrator responsible for postdoctoral policies, programs and services. For example, the Association of American Medical Colleges [9], the American Chemical Society [10], and the Council of Graduate Schools [11] have all taken steps to incorporate postdoctoral training and research issues into the portfolios of their graduate education committees or programs. Although it is important that postdocs maintain a distinct identity from graduate students, this is the most logical starting place for many academic institutions. Overtime, PDA interactions with designated administrators should lead to the establishment of separate structures for addressing postdoctoral training issues.

In addition to identifying individual administrators and establishing a strong working relationship with them, there may also be institutional committees or advisory boards comprised of faculty and administrators with some role in establishing or implementing policies, programs and services for postdoctoral scholars. For the same reasons stated above, it will be important to determine whether these bodies exist, identify who serves on them, and how you can make contact with them or even be appointed to serve as a member.

For further guidance on working with administrators, you might consider consulting with the leadership of postdoc associations and offices at institutions of similar size and scope. The NPA listing of PDA/PDO members can help you to locate and connect with these organizations.

7. Gaining Support from Faculty and Administrative Advocates

Identification of sympathetic faculty and administrative staff is the key to gaining support for your newly forming PDA. Consider what groups are already established in your institution, for example a career development office or a graduate research and training office. In general, these groups will be extremely receptive to finding out about the true needs of the postdoc community – after all, these types of offices exist to aid in your training. Approach them with a well-formed plan – perhaps a brief presentation detailing your reasons for forming the PDA, and why it would benefit both the postdoc community AND the institution. Having a successful PDA will provide a voice for the postdocs, thus leading to changes that improve the overall postdoc experience. This in turn will aid the institution by retaining top talent and having better trained postdocs.

Shown below is an example of an actual letter written by a chair of a PDA seeking to obtain support from institutional faculty and staff. All names have been changed to protect privacy. This type of letter is an ideal way to communicate the benefits of having a PDA and can serve to highlight any achievements of the PDA thus far.

"Dear Colleagues,

It is with great enthusiasm that we would like to convey the ongoing development and growth of Generic University Postdoctoral Association (GUPA). Our founding five months ago by Drs. Jane Doe and John Jones, in the Department of Molecular Biology here at Generic University, was sparked by a national movement initiated by the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA). Through its efforts, the NPA has generated an overwhelming response from Postdoctoral Associations throughout the United States. We hope to carry this torch to Generic University so that both Postdoctoral Scholars and the University benefit from the momentum. Indeed, many of our sister Universities with well-established Postdoctoral Associations have enriched the lives of their Postdoctoral Scholars. The goal of this letter is to tell you about GUPA in an effort to generate your support for our establishment at Generic University.

GUPA's Mission - To create, nourish, and sustain an academic community for Postdoctoral Scholars at Generic University, thereby fostering recognition and positive change.

GUPA's Charter - The purpose of the Generic University Postdoctoral Association (GUPA) is to create, nourish, and sustain an academic community for Postdoctoral Scholars at Generic University, thereby fostering recognition and positive change. Membership shall include all scholars with a doctorate degree who do not currently hold a permanent full-time faculty position at Generic University. Specifically, persons holding such titles as postdoctoral trainee, postdoctoral fellow, research fellow, research associate, or medical center fellow are eligible for membership. Our goals include, but are not limited to:
1. Providing a forum for social gatherings and scholarly camaraderie;
2. Providing information to new and existing postdocs (e.g. welcoming committees, foreign visas, grant opportunities, housing locations, etc);
3. Providing a forum for discussion of postdoctoral issues (e.g. career development, salary, benefits);
4. Connecting our postdocs with national organizations such as the National Postdoctoral Association, AAAS, and Sigma Xi.

Brief History – Desiring to establish a Postdoctoral Association at Generic University, Dr. Jane Doe applied for, and received, a NPA travel award to attend their annual conference. Upon returning from the NPA conference, Dr. Jane Doe recruited the help of Dr. John Jones. Together, they worked to establish a database of identified Postdoctoral Scholars so that word of GUPA's creation could be spread through a formal e-mail list. To facilitate the endeavor, Drs. Doe and Jones set up a GUPA Cookout, posted flyers and coordinated a generous contribution by Faster Scientific, and funding by the Departments of Cancer Biology, Neuroscience, and Pharmacology. The results

were promising. Over 50 Postdoctoral Scholars attended, and many more names were added to the database through RSVPs.

Inspired by the success of the first cookout in June, and with the help of Mrs. Elaine Smith, the GUPA Postdoctoral Database has grown to over 200 M.D., Ph.D. and M.D./Ph.D. persons who do not currently hold a permanent full-time faculty position at Generic University. These Postdoctoral Scholars have been identified in multiple departments from both Medical Center and Main-Campus. At our last cookout, additional funds were provided by the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and over 100 Postdoctoral Scholars attended. More recently, Dr. Jane Doe has arranged an association between GUPA and the Department of Cancer Biology to attend the Cancer Biology Career Development Seminar Series in an effort to facilitate GUPA's mission and goals.

GUPA continues to focus its efforts on multiple fronts: First, we are continuing to work hard to reach out to all Postdoctoral Scholars who do not currently hold a permanent full-time faculty position at Generic University in order to extend an invitation to join our association. Second, due to the hard work of Dr. Jane Doe, Acting Chair of our Association, Generic University has been selected by Sigma Xi to be a pilot site for its Postdoctoral Survey while her travel award to the first meeting of the NPA has provided us with national recognition as an up-and-coming association. Third, Dr. David Archer has taken the initiative to volunteer as a Science's Next Wave Campus Representative at Generic University which will help in our efforts to increase Postdoctoral Scholar awareness of this internationally recognized organization.

Fourth, Drs. James Waterford, Chris Lee, Angela Stanford and Lauren Friedman have developed the base for both our events and membership committees. Despite such progress, however, we are in need of your support. GUPA needs to obtain recognition and support from the Generic University faculty and staff in order to become an official GU sponsored organization. Therefore, we need your help in the form of a letter stating that you support GUPA's efforts to become an official organization. If you are willing to send such a letter of support for the postdoctoral scholars throughout both Medical Center and Main-Campus, please send your letter to: Jane Doe, Ph.D., Dept. of Molecular Biology, Generic University, Genericville 0000.

Respectfully,
Jane Doe, PhD
Chair, Generic University Postdoctoral Association
John James, PhD
Vice-Chair, Generic University Postdoctoral Association"

This also brings attention to the NPA, and therefore provides links to a great resource for all parties interested in becoming more involved with the postdoc community. The second letter was written by the former NPA Executive Director, Alyson Reed, to the Dean of Research, in support of the formation of the PDA.

"Dear Dr. Beckman:

On behalf of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA), I am pleased to support the Generic University Postdoctoral Association (GUPA) and the efforts of Jane Doe, PhD, as Co-Chair of GUPA. As you may know, NPA is a member-driven organization that provides a unique, national voice for postdoctoral scholars. We are a collaborative organization that seeks to work with all stakeholders to improve the postdoctoral experience in the United States. For an overview of the NPA, please see http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/. Postdoctoral scholars from across the country have formed the NPA to address national issues relevant to postdocs and focus public debate on how to improve the lives of postdocs at all levels.

The NPA's mode of action is to develop a consensus among postdocs regarding the key issues to be addressed at both local and national levels. The NPA plans to work towards positive change and implementation of policies pertaining to postdoctoral fellows at the local level by working closely with individual Postdoctoral Associations and Postdoctoral Offices, and at the national level through collaborations with professional societies and funding agencies.

NPA supports the Generic University Postdoctoral Association (GUPA) in its mission to create, nourish, and sustain an academic community for Postdoctoral Scholars at Generic University, thereby fostering recognition and positive change.

Dr. Doe has been a productive member of the NPA Outreach Committee since the Association's inaugural meeting, which she attended. Her travel award to this meeting was based upon her description of a compelling and tangible goal to found a postdoctoral association at Generic University in collaboration with her advisor, Dr. Brenda Wendell, Chair of the Department of Molecular Biology. She recognized early-on the potential for the NPA to foster improvements in the postdoctoral experience, and that it could be an organization crucial to the rapid, productive, and positive formation of postdoctoral associations at the local level. She has learned a great deal from her interactions with the NPA and has applied this to her association founding plans with great success. She has interacted with other postdoctoral associations in her region, kept in touch with postdoctoral affairs on multiple levels. Furthermore, she has demonstrated so far that she can balance these responsibilities with her scientific work.

Taken together, these concerted actions demonstrate the outstanding potential for the GUPA to become a successful institutional advocate for positive change, and the NPA supports the mission of the GUPA.

Sincerely,
Executive Director
National Postdoctoral Association"

8. Developing a Budget and Obtaining Funds

There are two key ingredients for successfully establishing and maintaining a postdoc association. The first is effective volunteer leadership and the second is financial resources. In order to obtain the necessary funds to support the work of your PDA, it is wise to develop a plan of what programs are likely to cost, and potential sources of support. For those PDAs with access to a postdoc office, much of this planning can be done in conjunction with the staff, which may have a budget and sources of money to pay for programs, particularly those that are tied to professional and career development for postdocs (see the PDO toolkit article on Financing a Postdoc Office). But what do you do if you have no PDO, or if the administrative office responsible for postdocs has no financial assistance available?

8A. How much will it cost?

The first steps are to identify what you can provide for your PDA members, and how much it will cost. Social events, career and professional development resources, postdoc travel awards, lay it all out and get a rough idea of how much it will cost. Here is a list of some items that can be considered:
- Benefits you wish to provide (or subsidize) for your members
- Funding travel for your PDA leaders to appropriate meetings
- Social events
- Career Development events
- Access to a Career Counselling service
- Professional Development and complementary skills events
- Publication prizes for postdocs
- Postdoc Research Days
- Printing
- Catering for events such as new postdoc orientations and town hall meetings

8B. Where do we get the money?

The next stage is to work with potential funders to secure the finances necessary to pay for anything your PDA wishes to provide.

A good source of funds in many institutions is the graduate school. With an official responsibility for training junior researchers, the graduate school administration is generally very responsive to financing events they consider to be good for the overall health of the postdoctoral community. As a PDA, you should also be mindful of the fact that many events aimed at postdocs will also attract, and be very relevant to, graduate student training. As such, your PDA might consider working with your institution's graduate student association to co-sponsor events of mutual interest.

NIH institutional training grants have recently become incredibly competitive, as grantees realize their potential for funding both graduate student and postdoc driven research. In order to be successful at both getting and keeping such a grant, departmental chairs and program coordinators are keenly looking for innovative ways to provide training and management programs that make them good candidates for these awards. As such, they can be a useful source of funds, particularly as it means someone else will be doing the organizing for them! This is also a useful way of getting faculty buy-in to your PDA's programs (see also the PDA toolkit article on gaining faculty and administrative support).

Some PDAs have also worked with the idea of charging membership dues for postdocs, perhaps as part of their tuition. UC Berkeley employs this type of model, charging all postdocs (termed visiting scholars) $200 per year. This provides the institution with enough money to fund an effective postdoc office, plus provide money for travel awards, workshops and social events. Sam Castaneda, former Director of the Visiting Scholar and Postdoc Affairs (VSPA) Program at UC Berkeley, says that this mechanism "allows [him] to use limited resources in the best way possible."

There is also the possibility of fundraising from outside your institution. Companies and vendors, particularly those selling equipment and resources to your institution, realize that their continued success depends upon keeping you aware of their latest products and services. As such, they are often more than willing to sponsor social events, travel awards and research days, in most cases for simply being able to place a booth or information table in the room with your institutional postdocs.

The Scripps Society of Fellows (SOF) [12] has a very successful annual event with vendors for the entire Scripps campus. The funds raised at this event pay for a rich array of programs throughout the year. The event brings almost 100 vendors to the campus to market their latest technologies. Vendors pay for the use of a booth and the SOF markets the event to ensure maximal participation. The all-day event requires much planning and coordination but is an excellent way to give vendors a unique method for product or service marketing while benefiting the campus and PDA. This money allows SOF to run an extensive program of activities for their postdocs, operating on around $50,000/year.

8C. Putting on bigger events

Occasionally, your PDA may want to try to stage a symposium or research day, or other event that may be beyond the financial resources your PDA has at its immediate disposal. (The PDO toolkit contains a useful article on how to plan career fairs/symposia) In this case, it is almost certain you will have to fundraise outside your institution. Consider local companies who may be looking to recruit postdocs, as well as those who sell products to your institution, and also look to other institutions in your area who may be able to provide financial support in return for allowing their postdocs and/or graduate students to attend your event.

8D. Sample budget

Generic University Postdoctoral Association (GUPA)
 Preliminary Budget Plan for the GUPA to become self-sustaining with assistance from the University.

Year 1:
- Membership dues for Postdoctoral Scholars
- Contributions from Departments
- University Funds
- Contributions from Business Sector

Year 2
- Membership dues for Postdoctoral Scholars
- New Contributing Departments
- Previous Contributing Departments
- University Funds
- GUPA Fundraising
- Contributions from Business Sector

Year 3
- Membership dues for Postdoctoral Scholars
- Determine an annual budget from the University (to make up 50% of GUPA budget)
- GUPA Fundraising
- Contributions from Business Sector

9. *Recruiting Postdoc Members*

In order to develop and maintain a vibrant and active postdoc association (PDA), the active involvement of postdocs at your institutions is essential. While there may be a small core group of individual postdoc leaders who are working to start or maintain the efforts of your PDA, it is critical that the membership of the association be broadly representative of the postdoc population at your institution. Although some PDAs automatically confer membership upon every postdoc that is working at the institution, this does not necessarily mean that all, or even some, postdocs are actively engaged in the programs and activities of the PDA. To avoid shouldering the work of the PDA all by yourself (or with a few others), recruiting and retaining active members will be crucial to your success.

9A. Before beginning the recruitment process

The PDA must identify the needs of the postdocs you are trying to recruit and identify why they might want to join. Other sections of this toolkit provide guidance on identifying postdocs at your institution and conducting needs assessment surveys. Once you have identified the entire population of postdocs and presumably have created an e-mail address list, you will need to define the kind of member you want to recruit. List the qualifications that you are looking for in the "new blood" of your PDA. For example: enthusiasm, skills, ability, motivation, commitment, and interest in the PDA's goals and objectives. After you have decided all of this, you are ready to begin your recruitment campaign. This should involve everyone on your leadership team.

When seeking out member volunteers for your PDA, it is important to also define what your association has to offer. Volunteers are providing you with time, energy, creativity, and many hours of commitment. Because of this, volunteers deserve effort by you to be able to explain what your PDA can offer them and how they will be needed and made an active part of your group. Make a list of the benefits and opportunities that new members will receive for their involvement (i.e. input in bringing speakers to campus, free admission to your organization's events, meeting people, skill enhancement in areas of negotiation, project management, etc...).

As a leader, future leader, or member of an organization it is important to understand the volunteer viewpoint. Active members need:
- to have a sense of belonging - the feeling that they are sincerely welcome and needed;
- to share in planning the PDA's objectives;
- to know that the goals are within reach and make sense;
- to feel that what they are doing has real purpose and contributes to improving the postdoc experience;
- to feel that the PDA is making a difference;
- to feel that the value of their contributions extends beyond personal gain and the PDA itself;
- to share in making the ground rules by which the PDA can thrive and work toward its goals;
- to know what is expected of them and to be kept informed;
- to have some responsibilities that challenge and contribute toward reaching the goals;
- to see that progress is being made towards goals;
- to have confidence in the organization leaders to lead the organization well, treat members consistently and fairly, recognize member accomplishments and trust the members;
- to have fun and enjoy the camaraderie of the group.

[Adapted in part from Basic Needs of People in Groups included in Organizational Recruitment presentation by Jackie Caventer and Jeff Lauber (March 1982), Campus Activities and Programs, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.]

In planning your recruitment drive, you also need to consider WHY people might want to join your PDA. Understanding what motivates people to get involved will help to shape your recruitment strategies. Here are some common reasons why postdocs get involved in PDAs:

- helping other postdocs
- learning new skills
- exploring career opportunities
- becoming actively involved in the community
- utilizing professional skills creatively
- exercising leadership
- meeting new people
- building self-confidence
- improving the quality of life
- making professional contacts
- gaining valuable experience
- promoting a specific issue or cause
- having fun
- changing institutional policies
- engaging in a rewarding and educational activity

Now that you have identified the population of potential members, examined the needs of postdocs at your institution, developed a list of the benefits you have to offer, and reflected on the needs and motivations of potential volunteers, it is time to begin actively recruiting new members for your PDA.

9B. Recruitment techniques

- Personal contact/word of mouth: Postdocs are much more likely to get involved if a friend or colleague personally asks them to get involved.
- Introduce yourself and describe your PDA and its goals.
- Be prepared to answer questions about the PDA.
- Have a list of the benefits and a sample of what your organization does. Attach the date and time of your next meeting and invite postdocs to come.
- Get postdocs names and phone numbers/e-mail so you can contact and remind them of the meeting.
- At your next event: Have an information table with a sign-up sheet for various projects or committees. Have someone there to answer questions.
- Recruit within the publicity of your event: On the advertisement for your event, recruit active members with a simple "If you are interested in helping plan our next event call..."
- Announcements: Get the word out! Send information regularly to postdocs at your institution. Don't rely on e-mail alone. Use posters, newsletters, flyers, etc.
- Hold regular orientations: When a new postdoc arrives at your institution, they can often feel isolated. An orientation session, explaining some of their rights and responsibilities, as well as introducing them to what is offered on campus, serves two purposes. Not only do they feel part of the community quickly, but you increase the visibility of your PDA and its mission.
  [Adapted in part from materials found on the UNL Office for Student Involvement web page]

Maintaining a Postdoctoral Association (PDA)

Once a PDA is formed it is important to think strategically how the group will maintain itself, especially given the transient nature of your postdoc position. The following provides details on how to keep your PDA running smoothly and effectively.

1. Running an effective meeting

Running a meeting means more than just moving the group through the agenda. Running meetings is a SKILL, and not something you are born knowing how to do. Just as with any skill, you will get better with practice--and more confident, too! The important components of an effective meeting are as follows:

Phase I: Planning the Meeting

1. Decide the goal of the meeting. Come up with a clear goal and the agenda becomes your road map to getting there.
2. Do your homework! If you need information or research for the meeting, you had better have it done before the meeting starts.
3. An agenda should include more than just project updates. When people participate in a committee meeting they want to discuss issues and ideas. A boring meeting will put people off and make it harder to garner enthusiasm for the next one! Avoid too much individual reporting; instead foster opportunities for interaction and discussion.
4. Plan with others. This is a great way to develop new leaders AND get other people more invested in the work of your group! Invite interested committee members to help you plan, or even lead, the next meeting.
5. Good agendas count! List the amount of time you plan for each item. Let everyone know what's going to be discussed; don't keep it a secret!
6. A regular cycle. Consider having a regularized schedule of meetings. With a regular meeting cycle, people will start to save the date. But DON'T HAVE A MEETING JUST TO MEET!

Phase II: Running the Meeting

Some General Considerations

1. Start and end on time. It's disrespectful to abuse members' time and about the biggest turn-off there is! If you must start late because only three people have arrived when you're supposed to start, at least apologize! Better yet, get into the habit of starting on time EVEN if there are only three people are in attendance.
2. Take a moment for introductions whenever someone new joins the group.
3. All work and no play is no good! Take a few minutes before starting the agenda to discuss innocuous topics (sports, weather, etc.)
4. Determine who will take the minutes or meeting notes at the outset. Having a record of the meeting will help to keep everyone on track

The Role of the Chair

The chair's role is to help a group make progress. Good facilitating keeps a meeting on track and moving forward. As the meeting facilitator, you should attempt to stay neutral. You should also try to:

1. Get agreement on the agenda. Remember, it's everyone's meeting, so everyone needs to "buy in" to the agenda. Begin each meeting by asking if anyone has questions about the agenda or something to add to it (the penultimate item on each agenda should be five or ten minutes for "any other business." The final item should be "set date for next meeting" unless there is a regular schedule.

2. Keep the discussion on track. If someone's going off the agenda or is speaking too long, pull them back in! Be gentle but firm: people respect a meeting that's run well.

3. Watch the time! Remember about starting and ending! Honor agenda time limits.

4. Summarize what you hear. Wrap-up each agenda item by summarizing any conclusions out loud.

5. Use the power of your position wisely. Leave your opinion for last and be fair to everyone.

Facilitating Tips	Tips for Dealing With Difficult Behaviors
• Watch group vibes. If people seem bored or inattentive, you may have to speed up the pace of the meeting. If people seem tense because of unvoiced disagreements, you may have to bring concerns out into the open. • Ask open ended questions. For example, "We seem to be having trouble resolving the matter. What do you think we should do?" • Summarize what others say. For instance, you might begin, "It seems we agree that . . . " • Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak. One way of ensuring quiet people get a chance to speak is to initiate a round. In a round you move through the call list with everyone getting a few minutes to present their views.	• Flare-ups When two members get into a heated discussion summarize the points made by each, then turn the discussion back to the group. • Pontificating Interrupt the one-person show with a statement that gives him/her credit for his/her contribution but ask him/her to reserve his/her other points for later. • Broken recording When someone keeps repeating the same point, assure that person that his/her point has been heard.

Phase III: Following Up on the Meeting

1. Gather feedback from the group. You will want to gather information about how the participants felt about the meeting, what could be improved, etc. You may not want to do this at every meeting, but at least once in a while.

2. Summarizing the meeting. It's helpful to have a list of the decisions made, with follow-ups, deadlines and volunteer assignments confirmed. This can be in the form of minutes or an update to the action item list. This will come in handy when it's time to prepare meeting minutes or any kind of report on the group's progress.

2. Retaining Postdoc Members

Within your PDA, you will notice two types of members. The first type are the active members – these are the ones who are interested in helping out as well as attending events, providing feedback for the PDA leadership and a potential source of new ideas. These members often make a good pool from which to recruit new leaders for your PDA (for more advice on how to go about this, see the Continuity of Leadership article in this toolkit).

There is also a second group, of more inactive members. This can cover quite a wide range of people, from those postdocs who are glued firmly to their studies, and do not attend meetings or events at all, to those members who attend some events, and perhaps rely on the PDA only as a source of information or help (or something to add to their CV!). Engaging this second group of people can be a challenging experience for your PDA leadership.

2A. How to motivate people to stay involved

Understanding why people volunteer their time and effort is critical to understanding how to motivate them to do so. Four possible motivating factors are:

1) Recognition: Four potential ways you can recognize members:
- *Acknowledgement.* Try introducing new members at meetings and orientations, providing name tags at events, simply saying "hello", shaking hands, bringing up the effort of someone in public or before an event, developing a "today's star" recognition announcement at every meeting.
- *Attention.* Try helping members carry out their tasks whether they ask for your help or not, sending birthday cards, giving your own time to their events, asking for others' opinions, using others' ideas even if you don't agree, being visible about who is working on any project or holds any position of responsibility.
- *Feedback.* Try letting someone know how well they are doing, putting a suggestion box in the office, making an idea corner on the bulletin board, conducting brief interviews to see what some members want from their PDA, giving praise in public, letting someone know that what they are doing is being noticed.
- *Praise.* Sending specific hand-written thank you cards, making certificates of appreciation, designing specialty items to show thanks, public or private praise, asking your postdoctoral dean to recognize this person with a public acknowledgement.

2) Job Satisfaction: People who enjoy the tasks they carry out on a regular basis will stay involved and motivated. Try and find out what a member would like to see the PDA do, and perhaps recruit that member to a team involved in dealing with that. This also has a practical implication; helping to spread the workload of the PDA among different members will avoid a small group of people being overly burdened with many jobs.

3) A Meaningful Role: Feeling like part of the community can give postdocs a sense of identity. What can be done to foster this sense of connectedness? One suggestion employed by some PDAs is to give each new postdoc member a useful but fun item with the PDA logo on it. The Medical College of Wisconsin PDA gives all its members a coffee mug, for example. Calendars and T-shirts are other items that can be considered.

Another possibility to increase participation is making the membership count for something. Your PDA can hold town hall meetings on a regular basis for its postdocs, for instance, where

matters that the PDA leadership feel need member input can be voted on. Another use for voting is to elect the PDA leadership.

4) Financial and other rewards: Although money is a motivator, it is probably the least effective motivator and should not be relied on to keep members involved! One way you can use rewards to get members away from their work is to allocate PDA funds for social events for your postdocs. On-site get-togethers with coffee (mornings!) or alcohol (afternoons!) work very well at pulling postdocs from different departments all over the campus into the same room to meet each other.

Another technique is to allocate funds to awards for the postdocs, for excellence in their research (poster or paper prizes), perhaps in a research symposium format such as those at University of Pennsylvania [13] or Washington University in St. Louis [14], where postdocs present talks and posters, and receive money awards from faculty judges. Another option is to provide travel awards to professional meetings. Both of these ideas provide ways of facilitating faculty involvement and support in your PDA activities.

3. Providing Guidance on Postdocs' Roles and Responsibilities

It is important for the PDA to encourage postdocs to be proactive about their experience. Postdocs who are prepared to openly discuss their expectations, problems and goals with their mentors and other senior colleagues, are more likely to finish their training having had a positive experience. There are three major areas where postdocs have a degree of responsibility: their own professional development, ethical conduct, and grievance issues. It is a good idea for PDAs to be aware of these areas, and to provide resources for incoming postdocs so that they fully understand how to positively direct their own experiences.

3A. Professional Development of the Postdoc

The primary responsibility of postdoctoral scholars is to participate in the research effort of the host institution and at the same time communicate with all participants in their training, including the mentor, the host institution and the financial sponsor. Postdocs will benefit from communicating regularly with their mentors and other colleagues, promoting collaboration with their mentors, and communicating their own perceived training needs. Furthermore, postdocs are in the best position to take responsibility for making decisions about their own career paths and communicating changes as they occur to their mentors. When postdocs are active participants in their own training, they come to recognize that the primary research advisor cannot provide all the necessary advice and preparation for a successful career. Pursuing alternative sources of mentoring will be helpful to the postdoc. These sources may include the postdoctoral office or association, peers, and other members of the research community. Finally, postdoctoral scholars should strive to gain a sense of responsibility for their own careers, to identify specific jobs in which they are best suited and most interested, and to further direct their own postdoctoral experiences toward fulfilling these goals.

3B. Postdoctoral Responsibilities: Professional and Ethical Code of Conduct

Postdocs can position themselves for success by staying current with best policies for ethical and working conduct. This includes all forms of safe working procedures, such as the handling of special materials, conflicts of interest and peer review. Postdocs are encouraged to

keep themselves up-to-date with best practices and licensing requirements for these potentially sensitive issues. For example, postdocs funded by the NIH are currently required to attend an institutionally-run bioethics course, and biomedical postdocs will find it is in their best interests to take such a course. The NIH website has a comprehensive guide to bioethical issues [15].

3C. Responsibilities for Conflicts and Grievance Procedures

During their training, postdocs are likely to interact with a wide variety of people, each with his or her own set of personality traits and manner of accomplishing things. In general, everybody gets along. However, this is unfortunately not always the case. Occasionally, postdocs may feel that they have been unfairly treated, either by their mentors, or by someone else within their departments or institutions. This could be with respect to a number of potential subjects including projects, funding, or more personal issues.

The best way for postdocs to handle this situation is to address this directly with their antagonists, before any direct conflicts have arisen. This approach is designed to avoid magnifying misunderstandings. This is particularly true if a postdoc's antagonist also happens to be his or her mentor. Only if a resolution cannot be reached, or the other person is unable or unwilling to reach a resolution, should postdocs consider initiating grievance procedures.

PDAs can offer information and advice for individual postdocs on how to initiate a grievance procedure, and also when it is justifiable to do so. Here are some examples of institutions' grievance procedures for postdocs.
- University of Iowa [16]
- University of Southern California [17]
- Johns Hopkins University [18]

4. Skills Required for PDA Officers

Playing a role in the setup of a postdoctoral association requires not only a substantial amount of your time, but also the acquisition of a different skill set for you to successfully maintain a productive association. These skills include communication, leadership, negotiation, and general management skills. This might seem a daunting task but realizing how beneficial these skills can be for your future career will certainly make you understand how important it is to become more experienced in these areas.

4A. Leadership Skills

For more information on developing leadership skills, try www.johnbaldoni.com where a multitude of articles on leadership skills can be found. This consulting firm is led by John Baldoni who has published several leadership books. A particularly concise article depicting the five essential qualities of a successful leader can be found at www.leader-values.com, written by Angelo C. Valenti. Placed in the Themes – Leadership section of the website, this article is nestled amongst some other interesting pieces you may want to browse. If the above-mentioned articles all seem somewhat biased towards the corporate world, consider the article by Kathy Barker, "Leadership on the Mountain; Lessons for the Lab," in which she eloquently describes the similarities between successfully managing a scientific team and managing a mountain-climbing expedition. Barker recommends looking to mountaineering books for inspiration.

One of the most important skills for a PDA leader is cultivating and grooming your successor. Avoid trying to do everything yourself.   This makes the PDA dependent upon your individual leadership. What is going to happen to the PDA when you move on?   Always be on the look-out for promising new activists who you can mentor to become your eventual replacement.

4B. Negotiation Skills

To start with, read the book entitled "Getting to Yes" by Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. This book was first published in 1981 and has sold over a million copies. Based on the art of "Principled Negotiation," this book is a step-by-step guide to successful negotiation. After reading this you will find that you can apply your newly acquired skill set to a wide variety of situations, from negotiating funding for your postdoc association to negotiating a great deal on your new car. More information on negotiations can be found at Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation.

4C. Communication Skills

A simple Internet search reveals a dizzying display of articles and sites describing all aspects of successful communication. It can be useful to look for communication experts at your own institution or in your local area to see if there are workshops or other events you could attend to improve your skills. There are also many books to be found on the subject of successful communication – try "Essential Communication Strategies: For Scientists, Engineers, and Technology Professionals", by Herbert Hirsch.

4D. Workshops

A great way to obtain practical help is to attend a workshop. Many institutions, especially those with currently existing postdoctoral associations, are very active in providing additional training to their postdoc community. For example, Caltech's postdoc association presents a "Personal Excellence Series," in which they provide a number of workshops on various topics including a recently organized workshop entitled, "Transferrable Skills Workshop" for undergraduates and postdocs. The Counseling and Postdoctoral Service Department at Scripps Research Institute also present various workshops of interest. It is worth checking with any professional development office that your institution has to see if they organize any workshops or seminars. Once you have helped your institution to establish a PDA you may want to consider initiating a seminar series on various aspects of career development, including how to obtain leadership, communication and negotiation skills. These are generally well-attended, popular events. Although it will come at a price, there are many professional companies, including consulting companies that run seminars or will run a workshop for you at your institution. The NPA also offers workshops at its annual meeting that are specifically intended to assist PDA leaders in building and sustaining successful PDAs.

4E. Seek Advice from Colleagues

Ask for advice on enhancing your skills from people whose leadership skills you admire. Pay attention to their speaking style and interpersonal communication strategies and ask them to suggest reading material or other resources. Approach those who are more senior and experienced than you for advice about effective strategies and tactics for getting what you want for your PDA. Chances are, they will have had a similar experience from which you can gain invaluable information to develop and maintain a successful PDA.

5. Team Building for your PDA Leadership

Every postdoc association needs an effective leadership team in order to accomplish its goals. Having a cohesive leadership is critical to the success of your PDA. A well-organized and developed leadership team will prove to be synergistic -- having more success than the sum of its parts.

5A. What's the mission?

Probably the most critical aspect for successful teambuilding is having a common mission, and having those goals written down somewhere. "One of the first things we did as a leadership council was to write down our mission goals," says Chris Blagden, formerly of NYU School of Medicine's PDA. "It's amazing how they have not changed over the last two years since we incepted, yet within the scope of our mission, we have concentrated on a whole variety of different projects." This is also a useful exercise, as it can help your team when they are faced with taking on new projects and new directions. For the team, asking the question "Is it central to our PDA's mission?" can often be the best tool in building cohesiveness and direction.

Susan Heathfield, the Human Resources writer for About.com, suggests that it is important to differentiate between the idea of teamwork and building an "effective, focused work team." It is important to acknowledge that the development of a cohesive team is a process, not an event. With PDA leadership specifically in mind, as postdocs are a transitioning population, evolution of your PDA goals and leadership becomes an incredibly important issue. An incredibly vibrant PDA leadership one year can wither the next if the new leaders are not engaged properly (See the toolkit article on Continuity of Leadership).

5B. Imparting a sense of ownership and responsibility

One exercise that can be used effectively to engage new PDA leaders is a regular needs assessment of your PDA's projects. Steve Wendell at the University of Pittsburgh recommends "an annual needs assessment as a tremendously worthwhile exercise in giving a sense of ownership and direction to the new leaders of our PDA. It really helps them to feel like the PDA is now theirs." Performing an annual formal needs assessment will put you well on your way to identification of important, current concerns of your members thus enabling your PDA to develop a focused set of shared goals. The needs assessment is an integral aspect to team-building as it ensures a sense of ownership for all members from the beginning of their tenure.

5C. Five key elements

The difficult task is to maintain a cohesive group throughout the duration of your organization. There are five key elements to successful team-building: 1) interdependence, 2) shared goals, 3) cohesiveness, 4) rules and norms, and 5) communication. This article will explore in a little more depth each of these elements and suggest possible activities to include in your team-building agenda.

Interdependence. Members of a successful team must acknowledge that other members of the group bring valuable skills to the table. Accomplishment of your organization's mission will be directly influenced by your ability to identifying these skills and determining how they would be best applied to each new endeavor of your PDA. Each project will benefit from membership that comprises a composite of skills:
- A producer: This person knows how to get the job done.
- An administrator: He or she is able to plan and organize.

- An entrepreneur: This individual has vision and creative problem-solving abilities.
- An integrator: This person can take an individual goal and transform it into a group goal.

Many groups will find that engaging in assessment tools will assist in identifying the tendencies of your members, both on an individual and group dynamic levels. Some common assessments are the DISC, StrengthsFinder, and Thomas Kilmann Instrument.

Understanding Roles. This very simple exercise is designed to help your teammates understand each other's roles. All you need is a ball of string or a skein of yarn. Have your team sit in a circle facing each other. The first person takes the ball of string or yarn and tosses it to a teammate (anywhere in the circle), while all the time holding on to the end of the string. The first person then talks about the things the team needs from the teammate with the ball of string in order to be successful. The second person then repeats the process by tossing the string to another teammate and talking about the things the team needs from that teammate in order to be successful.

After each team member has been talked about and has had a chance to speak and each person is holding a piece of the string, begin a discussion about what the exercise means to the team. More than likely they will talk about how each member of the team is dependent on the other. To further the discussion get them to think about what would happen if one member of the team let go of the string.

Shared Goals. Setting goals as an individual can be fairly easy. However, setting team goals is sometimes more challenging because the whole team has to agree on where they are going and how they are going to get there. The goal setting process is often facilitated by asking the leadership team at the very beginning "What can you as a group achieve?" and "What do you as a group want to achieve?" This process gets the team thinking about the realm of possibilities as well as their motivation and commitment to the goal.

Forming a consensus on your mission and shared goals is a powerful way to strengthen your team. By starting with a needs assessment to identify the current issues facing your membership and then working to prioritize those issues in terms of urgency as well as the outlook for success, your PDA will find that a common mission will lead to more devoted membership.

Cohesiveness. Both social cohesiveness and mission cohesiveness are important for team success. While your mission cohesiveness can be generated with your needs assessment and goal specification, social cohesiveness can be much more fun (and just as valuable) to establish. Structured team-building activities that promote communication, interaction and teamwork (many are described at http://www.wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html) can be effective ways of developing cohesion. Less structured "happy hours" can also be worthwhile events.

Rules and Norms. While it might be rare for an organization to formally establish a "Code of Conduct," assuming that all members will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with cooperation, an informal reminder activity might prove powerful, especially if you find your organization suffering from the stress of individual members pulling your PDA in a divisive direction. A simple team-building activity could be to come up with a fictional activity for the group to discuss potential methods of accomplishing the task and areas of concern or attitudes that might deter the group from the goal.

Communication. Team performance will depend on strong listening skills of all members and the ability to provide and accept constructive feedback. Even a simple game of "telephone" (see below) will reassure you of the importance of clear communication. It is vital to the health of your organization and continued interdependence to identify the members of your organization that tend towards being less verbal and encourage participation of those members, ensuring that the most dynamic personalities do not dominate all discussions and possibly alienate other key members of your team. Many team-building activities like those described under cohesiveness will also encourage communication skills among your members.

Telephone Game This childhood game is a quick and easy way to demonstrate the importance of good communication skills and good listening skills. Have your team sit in a circle. Write out a scenario similar to the one provided here on a sheet of paper, give the first person in the telephone chain about 45 seconds to read and understand the scenario before having them pass it on by whispering in it in the persons ear directly to their right. Once the message has passed all the way around the circle have the last person report what they heard.

Often by the time the message reaches the last person it is quite jumbled and different from the initial scenario. Talk to your team about good communication skills and good listening skills. Also point out that a jumbled message can often be the result of gossip traveling on the team, by the time it gets to the last person it can be very distorted.

Scenario: Harry, Julia, Bob and Alice all signed up for dance lessons. While Julia and Bob liked learning the tango best, Tom and Alice were keen on the waltz. Until one lesson when the dance instructor realized that Tom had two left feet. Immediately he went to the hospital and had a right foot transplant. Now Tom and Alice are back on the dance floor cutting up a rug.

An effective strategy for increasing communication among your PDA leaders is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (read more at MBTI). The PDA leadership at University of Alabama, Birmingham all took part in a one-day, professionally-organized workshop for postdocs to understand more about themselves and how they communicate using this psychological indicator. The then PDA chair, Doug Moellering, enthuses "It really showed up some surprising differences [between the members of our group]. The workshop taught us a lot about understanding and interacting with each other." He also adds that this workshop has a broad applicability for postdocs in general, as it is useful for all types of professional relationships.

Your institution may have resources already in place that PDA leaders can take advantage of. UAB uses a professional consulting/counseling group, but NYU School of Medicine has an Organizational Development and Learning Program open to all SoM employees; originally the group was set up to improve compliance awareness at the hospital, but has broadened its scope to include general employee education. One part of their mission is to foster leadership, management and skill development amongst NYU SoM employees, and they offer workshops and services consistent with those goals.

Effective and open communication involves both the sending and receiving of messages. When sending messages, remember a few simple guidelines:
- Be direct - speak directly to the person you would like to talk to.
- Be complete and specific.
- Be consistent.

- Communicate your needs and feelings.
- Be concise and focused.

When giving feedback to the rest of your team, try to remember these guidelines:
- Be positive - Your team will respond better to the feedback if it is stated in a positive manner.
- Be specific - Let your teammate know what he or she did well or exactly what he or she needs to improve.
- Give feedback immediately - Doing this will reinforce the good efforts and help to change anything that wasn't working. Also, if something is not working too well, it's best to get issues out in the open early, and not save them for a rainy day.
- Be sincere and honest.
- Give feedback less often when skills are learned - This tends to build confidence in the team.
- Focus on efforts as well as results - Not everyone on the team is going to raise $100,000 for your PDA, so structure feedback so that it reflects each individual's accomplishments, not their performance as related to other team members.

In addition, when correcting mistakes as a part of feedback, use the "sandwich technique" - meaning try to sandwich the critique between two positive comments. Start by relaying a positive comment, follow that by a correction (what they should do) and end with encouragement and hope.

5D. Further reading

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick Lenconi
- An excellent read - using a fictional story, the author delivers hard truths to a group of leaders in a corporation that has not succeeded as it should have, and shows them how they have not worked together as a functional team to achieve their goals.

Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Field Guide for Leaders, Managers, and Facilitators by Patrick Lenconi
- Lots of specific practical advice for dealing with those issues.

6. Time Management for PDA Officers

Now that you have committed a significant portion of your time to establishing and maintaining your PDA, how do you find the time to perform both duties in the lab and tasks associated with the PDA? Perhaps you are already juggling a career and family. For many postdocs managing their time effectively is a big concern. This section aims to help you with the basics of time management. Although we obviously cannot control the passage of time, we can however control how we utilize this time in order to help us achieve our personal and professional goals.

The advantages of effective time management?
- Provides a sense of achievement and peace of mind
- Sustains motivation
- Reduces stress
- Gain more time!

The keys to successful time management are actually very simple – goal setting and assertiveness.

6A. Goal Setting

Before you can set yourself goals, you need to have a good degree of self-knowledge. This helps you set both long-term and short-term goals, and most importantly, helps you PRIORITIZE. By setting priorities you will eliminate the not-so-important things in life that can wait, such as checking your e-mail for the tenth time during the same morning. To help set priorities, consider what direction you would like your career to move in. If, like many postdocs, you are committed to gaining a faculty position, then you will realize that a good publication record and evidence of securing funding is vital to your career. If, on the other hand, you are fed up with academia and are looking for a career change such as patent law, then dedicating time to investigating the requirements for such a move will be high priority. Only YOU can decide how important each of your responsibilities is to you, and how much time needs to be devoted to them.

The best way to start setting your goals is to write them down in order of longer-term goals first. If you are thinking of financial goals, then think about thirty years from now! In terms of you career, or aspects of PDA advancement, perhaps five years from now is realistic. Then start writing down goals for the shorter term, such as three years, two years, one year, six months, three months and one month. In addition to your lists of long and short-term goals, you will also have goals that are ongoing, for example, preparing for the regular PDA meeting. Each list will follow on from the previous. Some tips to remember when compiling your goal lists:
- be as precise as possible - date, time, etc
- be positive – master a new technique, rather than perform an old one without making a mistake
- be realistic - is your work really going to make it to Nature?!
- base your goals on performance, not on outcome – if your work gets "scooped", and your publication has to go to a lesser-tier journal, this doesn't mean that your quality of work was any worse
- set priorities – this is key!
- Pay attention to deadlines

In addition to writing down all your goals with priority assigned, you should also to create a daily to-do list. It is helpful to do this the night before, or first thing in the morning whilst drinking your cup of coffee. Keep it short if you can, five or six of the most important items are probably as much as most people can integrate into their regular daily work schedule. It will help you organize your day better, and as you check off the completed items it will help you recognize what you DID achieve today rather than have you focus on what you didn't achieve.

A great way to stay focused on your priorities is to create a list of URGENT/IMPORTANT tasks, as suggested in Steven Covey's book "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People." Below is a sample list of tasks and their assigned importance:
- URGENT BUT NOT IMPORTANT: e.g. ringing phone, incoming e-mail
- URGENT AND IMPORTANT: e.g. lab flood, tomorrow's grant deadline
- IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT: e.g. ongoing experiments, preparing for next committee meeting
- NOT IMPORTANT AND NOT URGENT: e.g. most e-mails, weekend social activities

Try to spend as little time as possible completing the urgent but not important tasks. For many people the urgent and important tasks are incredibly stressful situations and so for best results try to allocate the majority of your time to completing IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT tasks.

6B. Assertiveness

The principle is very straightforward – LEARN TO SAY NO, both to yourself and to others. This is something that many people struggle with. Stick to your priorities. Just as someone on a diet can say no to a doughnut but eat carrots instead, you can say no to replying to personal e-mails when you could be writing the methods section for your upcoming publication. And if you have a grant deadline in ten days, it is not a good idea to agree to help a colleague complete an experiment when there are other people who could assist just as easily. Keep yourself on track by learning to accept your time limitations.

6C. How to Utilize Time Management Skills to Successfully Maintain your PDA

Whether you are running the show, or simply volunteering a small amount of time, the above skills can be incorporated into your routine to aid you in achieving your goals within the PDA.
- *Set realistic goals*. This is probably the most important. If you are establishing a brand new PDA, don't expect it to be up and running overnight. This is a mammoth task that takes a lot of time. Set realistic deadlines
- *Prioritize*. For example, gaining faculty and administrative support for your association needs to be achieved before you can start advocating for any policy changes.
- *Delegate tasks*. This is all part of being assertive. Know where your limits are and learn how to say no. Others may be just as capable as you of completing the task at hand and may even be more qualified. Perhaps among the PDA volunteers there is someone who has good financial knowledge or is very business savvy – if so, they would be the perfect person to ask to draft up a budget for the PDA and they would probably be very flattered that you asked.

6D. Further reading

"The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," by Steven Covey.

The Pickle Jar Theory
- An easy to read article with a very simple theory – gives a whole new meaning to time management!

7. Networking with PDA Leaders Nationwide

Postdocs understand the value of networking to their careers but don't always have time or opportunities to interact with other postdocs outside of their immediate research programs. For postdoc association leaders, the value of networking extends beyond their own careers to include benefits for both their PDA and its constituent postdocs. PDAs around the country have used a myriad of strategies to affect changes at the local level, while also providing essential support for postdocs. Why reinvent the wheel at your institution when there is an established network of PDA leaders (both current and former) who are happy to share information and provide advice. There are a number of ways that PDA leaders and representatives can introduce themselves and to seek counsel:

- The listing of NPA Sustaining Members provides direct web links to all PDOs/PDAs that are members of the NPA.
- The NPA Annual Conference is a wonderful gathering of postdoc leaders from around the country, with workshops and sessions specifically designed to help PDAs achieve their goals. Bring business cards with you. Ask your PDA administrative liaison, PI, or department how you can order business cards through your institute. This is a great networking tool for all other aspects of your career as well.

Be aware of any special events at your own institution. For example, the data and dine event held annually at Penn State University, hosted by the Office of Professional Development, is the perfect opportunity to network with other postdocs, faculty, and administrators. A former resource was The Postdoc Network at Science's Next Wave, which was a useful networking tool for PDA and PDO leaders. Its articles have now been integrated into sciencecareers.org, and include a number of contributions from PDA leaders on how they approached various problems and arrived at solutions. Try searching on "PDA" or "postdoc association" and you'll find a number of useful hits.

7A. General Resources on Networking

There are thousands of articles, guidebooks and workshops designed to help people make effective use of networking opportunities. These can be found on the internet and your nearest library. A good source of resources for scientists on the art of networking is Science Careers. A search for the term "networking" yields over 12,000 results. They also have a nice series of articles in their "How-To" series: How to Build your Network.

8. Ensuring Continuity of Leadership

The position of postdoctoral scholar is a temporary one. One of the main challenges for an association serving those in temporary positions is sustainability. Many PDAs get off to a good start under the dynamic leadership of some very passionate, active and engaged postdoctoral scholars. But sustaining the momentum can be a challenge. Perhaps the early leaders move-on to new positions, or the PDA is successful in addressing a major area of concern and postdocs no longer see a compelling reason to stay involved. In either scenario, it is critical for the leaders of the PDA to be thinking about leadership succession issues. In other words, who will lead the PDA after we are gone? After all of the effort and personal investment of time you have made in developing the PDA at your institution, you don't want the PDA to wither on the vine after you leave. Therefore, it is important to have a strategy for identifying future leaders, and also a process for making a smooth transition to new leadership.
A number of postdoc associations have successfully addressed this challenge. Their stories may be found by clicking on the following links. Although the stories are from over a decade ago, the lessons still ring true today.
- Learning From Experience: Postdoc Associations Share Their Wisdom on Getting Started and Forging Ahead.
- The UNC-PDA organizes itself to assure momentum, continuity, and success.
- History and Evolution of the Stanford University Postdoc Association.
- The Ongoing Challenges of the UCSF Postdoc Association.

8A. Procedures to Ensure Continuity of Leadership

In addition to recruiting your successor, you will need to ensure that procedures are in place to elect or appoint new leadership, provide a thorough orientation, and allow time for a period of transition. For a PDA to be able to function effectively, it is essential that transitions between successive generations of postdocs with leadership responsibilities proceed smoothly. There is often a lag time associated with accepting any new position of responsibility, and the goal of a productive PDA is to ensure that new leadership is incorporated into their group as seamlessly as possible.

Leadership continuity is a terminology widely used in the business world as a means to convey a method of staying current, which is essential for the survival of any successful business. The same holds true to the formation and successful maintenance of a postdoctoral association and its representation of a given postdoctoral community.

The schedule of a postdoctoral scholar can often be full, to the point that he/she may not be able to continuously contribute to the PDA. Thus, many PDA's requiring significant time commitments from their postdoctoral community may find it difficult to maintain a standardized group of leadership positions. Many PDAs stipulate a minimum term that positions of leadership be held, for example, a one-year period. This will serve two purposes: 1) imposes a finite time period whereby the PDA officer agrees to be committed to his/her responsibilities, and 2) provides a long enough time period that a successor may be groomed for transition into leadership position.

Many PDAs utilize different mechanisms for election and period of service of their postdoc officers. At New York University School of Medicine, for example, the Postdoctoral Leadership Council consists of six postdocs, and new officials are elected by a unanimous vote

of the council. There are no restrictions on the time of service, and anyone wishing to stand down from service may do so at any time, with the full understanding of the council.

By contrast, at Rockefeller University, the PDA's Representative Committee consists of five members, appointed annually by regulated elections involving the whole postdoctoral community. It is expected that each member of the committee will serve the entirety of his or her twelve-month term.

Each institution will find different models to suit their needs and those of their postdoc association members. Consider some of the following suggestions and guidelines:

- *Term limits.* Appointments to a PDA leadership position could be for a minimum period of time, a maximum term limit, or without any term limits.
- *Overlapping terms of appointment.* A useful policy to consider implementing is one that allows for incoming officials to work alongside more experienced counterparts during the early stages of their appointment. This could work in a number of ways, for example by simply having longer or flexible appointment terms. An alternative is to have a period of shadowing before the new person moves into an official capacity; during this time the outgoing officer can mentor the incoming individual.
- *Staggered Leadership.* The appointment can be for a two-year period. The first group decides which board members/PDA officers will stay for one year and who will stay for two years. Every year, there will be turnover of the group; however, everyone's term will not end at the same time. This is how the NPA Board of Directors is set up.
- *Elections.* Several PDAs utilize elections for their officers. This can have its advantages and disadvantages. If the PDA officers perform a lot of the work of the association, then having people with appropriate skills for their responsibilities is a definite advantage, and this can be lost in the voting booth. However, there is always a lot to be said for an organization that is seen by its members to be acting democratically and allows its shareholders to take a hand in electing the leadership.
- *Pre-selecting officers.* The PDA leadership will often be able to identify ahead of time individuals with the skills to lead the association, by their interest in PDA projects, or bringing awareness of postdoctoral issues to the attention of the PDA. Although this works easier with a non-elected leadership, if the PDA leadership utilizes elections, then the use of a recommended slate of nominee(s) (as with the U.S. presidential elections) can be implemented, whereby the PDA leadership identifies on the voting ballot candidate(s) they believe would be best in the elected role.
- *Official Documents.* Formalizing any of these procedures for the PDA leadership by the use of a constitution or bylaws can be a useful exercise to ensure continuity of the PDA. These documents are traditionally ratified by the membership, so this can have the added bonus of making the postdocs feel more involved in the organization. Other good documents to maintain are an archive of the organization's activities
- *Having a Chair.* The chair of the PDA will have a lot of responsibilities and will be potentially required to have greater visibility than the other PDA leaders. The ideal person to lead the PDA is someone who is established in the lab and institution. This will ensure the transfer of tacit knowledge. Be aware though, that given the visibility and the potential time commitment of a position like this, it may be difficult to attract someone to take on the role of PDA chair.
- *Continued Appointment.* To remain in good standing, members should strive to attend a large percentage of the scheduled PDA meetings. Such attendance is essential to continue the flow of leadership ideas as new leaders are conditioned from existing members.

Other PDA Topics

Legal Issues for PDAs

Many universities have policies governing the formation of campus organizations/ associations. There may be student governments, faculty senates, employee unions or other administrative councils and decision-making bodies that have official or quasi-official recognition from the university. As postdocs, your status may not be clearly defined. In some instances, postdocs may be considered employees. When postdoc employees come together to discuss workplace issues, this may be perceived by university administrators and employee bargaining units (unions) as an attempt to form a new union or engage in collective bargaining on behalf of postdoc employees. It is very important at the outset that a nascent PDA make its intentions clear to all. If your PDA intends to engage in collective bargaining activities, you should obtain legal advice from a competent labor attorney. If your PDA is not interested in forming a union or collective bargaining activities, your mission statement and bylaws should clearly state this. In order to gain official status within your institution, these documents may need to be submitted to the university's legal counsel for review. In one instance at a prominent university, legal counsel advised that financial support of the PDA could potentially amount to the establishment of an "employer-sponsored union." This institutional support for the PDA could possibly be viewed as coercive and might potentially lead to abuse. To avoid these and other problems of perception and intent, it is best to state your purpose and goals clearly.

As a service to its members, the NPA maintains an informational page on unionization HERE.

Strategies for Conducting a Postdoc Survey

Postdocs make invaluable contributions to the research enterprise. National and institutional postdoctoral associations (PDAs) strive to improve the experiences of their postdoctoral community by helping to provide a supporting and sustaining training environment. This enhanced training environment provide the postdocs an opportunity for professional and personal growth.

In order for the PDA to adapt with the needs of their members, these organizations conduct periodic surveys to gauge various parameters like professional satisfaction, personal development, career opportunities, etc. Surveys can be used for many different purposes, such as identifying postdocs, evaluating their experience and mentoring, determining their programmatic needs, or bench-marking their compensation and benefits. Data collection of this kind can be particularly helpful in raising awareness about postdoc issues among institutional stakeholders. Conducting a needs assessment survey is also a good opportunity for collaboration between a postdoc association and office.

The results of these surveys help in assessing the performance of the postdoctoral training programs. The surveys help in identifying the strengths as well as the gaps in these programs. These survey results help the research institutions and postdoctoral associations benchmark their policies and practices against those at peer institutions. These surveys also aid in the allocation of resources to support the right programs.

For surveys to be effective, however, they require some careful consideration and planning. For example, they need to be worded appropriately with very specific questions that leave little room for interpretation and yet they must also be sufficiently open-ended so that new issues can also be discovered. Furthermore, the format can play an important role in your response rate as well as in how easily and effectively you can analyze the data. Using existing postdoc surveys as models can provide good examples of survey design and content and, in some cases, can allow you to benchmark your institution against others.

Institutional Procedures Governing Policy Change

The first steps in preparing for policy change have already been set out in this toolkit. It is essential to identify the key administrators responsible for research and training policies and begin a dialogue with such officials early in the process of considering policy change. These administrative contacts will understand the institutional barriers to policy change. They will be able to determine which policies will need to go through a formal approval process and which may be able to be achieved in a more expedited fashion. Moreover, by working with them in a collegial manner, they will become your advocates in the process. Do not ignore the importance of enlisting key faculty in the process as set out in the article on "Gaining Support from Faculty and Administrative Advocates" in this tool kit.

Creating a groundswell of support for new initiatives will bolster your position before the administration. Again, it may take a great deal of time and the policies will most likely undergo many revisions as they wind their way through these groups. PDAs should recognize that policy decisions are rarely made simply on the basis of fairness.

The legal and financial implications of new proposals need to be carefully analyzed in order to determine the impact on the institution. One example is that changes of benefits could have tax implications that may affect the institution as well as the individual. This could be as simple as providing tuition reimbursement or health insurance to postdocs with NSRA grants. These benefits are seen as income to the IRS and are thus subject to taxation payable by the postdoc. Other examples include issues such as appointment letters that commit institutional funds can have an effect on the institution's credit rating or the fact that orientation programs must have certain essential elements to meet federal and state safety requirements.

PDA Trouble-Shooting

Trouble-Shooting: Starting a PDA

<u>Hurdle #1</u>: Identifying postdocs and establishing contacts
<u>Solution #1</u>: Build an e-mail list

This can be accomplished through many avenues. Each organization will utilize a unique combination of each resource / method to maximize their results.

- *Human resources*. Variably useful– many institutions have so many vague definitions of how postdocs are classified that they likely will be of limited usefulness, but this may be a starting point. Some HR offices may be reluctant to help, it may be more useful to have administrators backing your efforts with HR and put some muscle behind your inquiries.
- *Departmental administrators*. Many department administrators may have information regarding their postdocs if you provide them with the definition you are using. Expect a varying effectiveness from different departments. Don't forget to enlist these administrators as your allies to disseminating your information to postdocs. i.e. ask about places to post your announcements for social and training events or ask for their e-mail list (remember they will respond well to the idea of training, not so well to activism).
- *Knocking on lab doors*. Bottom line – the most effective and complete way to fill in the gaps is by recruiting postdocs to go to each lab and knock on the doors and write down postdocs names and preferred e-mail addresses – Try and divide the task and cover all departments within the university. A postdoc survey is a very useful additional way to illicit a response.

<u>Hurdle #2</u>: Stimulating interest and involvement of postdocs
<u>Solution #2</u>: Communication, events, special interests

- *Communicate the issues and potential of a PDA.* Important to establish a positive and constructive stance at this stage and not stimulate activism or "victimization". Career counseling and professional development are always safe and interest-stimulating topics to bring up.
- *Communicate the benefits of becoming active in the PDA*. Participation in the PDA gives valuable experience in working with the administration.
- *Social events.* Free food and drink is a sure winner. Often these events allow you to briefly convey your goals, get input from the postdocs about their concerns, and recruit postdocs into the PDA.
- *Subcommittees.* Always motivating to enlist involvement in a specific area of interest. Provides opportunities to take a leadership role and have a vested interest.

<u>Hurdle #3</u>: Identifying and fostering relationships with faculty and administrators
<u>Solution #3</u>: Identify key personnel, create a Postdoc Counsel, gain access

- *Identify and meld currently existing related offices, faculty, and administrators*. Examples include: graduate student organizations and/or offices, career development offices, career workshops, departmental programs such as alternative careers.
- *Formation of a Postdoc Counsel.* Representatives should include individuals from postdoc, faculty **and** administrators.

- *Identify administrators in higher levels who are sympathetic.* Many will respond well to being viewed as progressive leaders, Deans, vice-provost etc.
- *Presentations to administrative leaders and faculty leaders.* Prepare a brief presentation and seek to present to as many groups as possible, be BRIEF, be positive – stress how the organizations goals will benefit them.
  Remember to start with non-controversial issues that are win-win issues, concentrate on becoming ingrained in the administration before tackling the controversial issues such as salaries and benefits. These two issues are best addressed after you have become established. Why?
    - It can set the administration against your organization before you have a chance to become well established,
    - It will take time for your organization to learn about the complex interplay of factors involved in these issues,
    - It will take time to learn how to navigate the administrative politics,
    - You will need powerful allies within the administration to address these issues.

Trouble-Shooting: Maintaining and Sustaining a PDA

Hurdle #1: Administrative resistance
Solution #1: Attitude/philosophy

- *Positive and constructive with a solutions-based attitude and desire to benefit the postdocs, faculty, administration and scientific community at large.* Examples:
    - Postdocs – Many benefits related to providing career counseling, mentoring, and benefits.
    - Faculty – Better trained postdocs, job postings, positive recruitment tool.
    - Administration – Postdoc training, orientation, postdoc alumni network, talent retention.
- *Administrative allies.* Existing offices such as graduate student office, career counseling/development, human resources, individual deans/vice-provost etc. These allies will usually be far less transient than the postdocs and can be critical to maintaining the PDAs goals.
- *Representation on important University counsels and boards.* Become part of the administrative network.

Hurdle #2: Postdoc interest
Solution #2. Events and Communication

- *Social events and orientation.* Regular events that allow an opportunity to communicate in both directions. Orientation events introduce the PDA to new postdocs and recruit new members.
- *Results.* Make sure postdocs are kept aware of the results of the PDAs efforts. Positive results of any kind will be the most motivating factor and be sure to always advertise your successes and results.
- *Frugal contact.* Listservs and e-mails are important communication lines but do not tax the attention of busy postdocs or you could lose their interest.

Hurdle #3: Member turnover
Solution #3. Maintaining relationships, structure, pipeline, and memory

- *Maintain contacts and working relationships.* Other Related Groups include: international student organizations and diversity groups.
- *Organizational structure.* Hold yearly elections. Have a defined and efficient method for officer promotion as members leave.
- *Pipeline.* Use committee heads as a way to have a more extensive pipeline for new members to become involved in leadership roles while they become educated about the issues and are ready to move into officer positions.
- *Centralized Resources/Institutional Memory.* Centralized computer with presentations, e-mail list. Use a letter head and logo, maintain a bulletin board. Construct a University-based website. Office space – possibly a space within an existing office may be the easiest initial option. (graduate student office, career advancement office etc.)

Hurdle #4: Growth
Solution #4. Focus on the future

- *Philosophy of layering/steps.* Start small, but at least start then build on this experience.
- *Incorporate pre-established programs.* For example: Skills and professional development programs.
- *Focus.* As an organization, be clearly defined and maintained.
- *Goals.* Goals should be written with a timeline and prioritized.

Hurdle #5: External Support
Solution #5: Postdoctoral Association Networks

- *Draw on National Postdoc Association relationship.* Advice, documents, resources, site visits.
- *Form contacts with other neighboring universities PDAs.* This is important for sharing of information and improving your organization.
- *Create regional networks of PDAs.* Organize occasional area meetings.