

THE PGA POST

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DANA-FARBER
POSTDOC AND
GRADUATE STUDENT
ASSOCIATION

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Where @ DFCI?



Do you know where this is?
Send your answer to
dfci_pgapost@dfci.harvard.edu
Correct answers will be entered
into a raffle for a gift card!

Jennifer Molina: PGSAO's new administrator

As an Arizona transplant, I've been living in Boston for about 16 years. Although my original plan was only to stay here for the summer, I met my future husband here and never used my round trip ticket back home!

In July 2009 I began my position as Program Manager at DFCI in the Grants Management Office of Medical Oncology. The role gave me the opportunity to collaborate with the Human Resources, Payroll and Compensation Departments. I also had the chance to work with Brooke

Johnson while she was Program Administrator for the Postdoc and Graduate Student Affairs Office (PGSAO), and I really admired her and the mission of the office. I knew that if the opportunity ever arose, I would like to be a part of the PGSAO as it would be the perfect next step in my career path. As of March 1 this year, I was fortunate enough to make that prospect into a reality. I am very excited to take on the role of Program Administrator for the PGSAO. Some of my goals include: collaborating closely with



the PGA and their respective committees, expanding the visibility of the PGSAO and continuing to update and enhance our internet and intranet sites. I look forward to meeting and working with you all this year!

Welcome aboard Jen!

Report from PGA's Social Committee: March Snow

It was already the PGA's third social event for the year, but this outing was somewhat different. After ice-skating in January and a pub evening in February, we decided to enjoy the last of the snow and leave Boston behind for one Sunday afternoon. On March 13th, we headed out to Amesbury Sports Park, just about an hour north of Boston. We encountered some worrying showers on the way, but our group of 18 arrived at the Park when the sky was just about to clear up. None of us had done snow-tubing before, so we didn't know what to anticipate. It turned

out to be similar to sledding, but faster; with rotations added and tubes connected together, it was a lot more fun than we expected. Everybody had a good time! It was not only a great outdoor activity, but also a good chance to get to know each other, especially during the drive times. After

three hours of tubing, some drinks, and a lot of chatting, we returned to Boston - relaxed and exhausted at the same time.

Many thanks to Tobias Otto, for his great job in organizing this event! Stay tuned for our next social event!

-PGA Social Committee



Finding an academic position:

Insights from Dimitrios Iliopoulos, Ph.D.

Dr. Dimitrios Iliopoulos joined Dana-Farber last year as an assistant professor in the Department of Cancer Immunology & AIDS; he is also affiliated with the Department of Pathology at Harvard Medical School. He received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 2006, and came to Harvard Medical School as a postdoctoral fellow in 2007. Since he has recently gone through a successful (!) job application process, we thought it would be helpful to get his insights into how to go about finding an academic position.

When did you start to look for a faculty position and how did you find open positions? I started to prepare my CV and other application materials after I had a paper accepted in Cell (2009). I found opportunities through advertisements in journals like Nature. Some departments also post job openings on their website. A tip for using online programs such as NatureJobs is to broaden your search using several different keywords.

What materials do you need for the application? An application package that includes a cover letter, your CV, and most importantly a short research proposal. The proposal is what singles you out from other candidates: it should be 2-5 pages long, with specific aims, projects you want to accomplish, and short-term and long-term goals - just like for an ROI application to the NIH.

Can you describe the interview process? You meet with 5-7 faculty members from the department where you have applied, and the Chair of the Department at the end; you give a seminar that is mostly the same as a normal research seminar, but at the end you should include a couple of slides that describe your future research plans, as written in your proposal. If the search committee members are interested in you, you'll be invited to give

a chalk talk in a few months; if, however, the institution is far away, they may schedule the chalk talk on the day after your interview.

What is the chalk talk like? The chalk talk is the most difficult part: you have to lay out specific details of your research plan on a white board, without the help of any visual aids/powerpoint slides. Your plan should be very specific: for example you should be able to name what mouse model you plan to use, and what results you expect from the study. A good way to prepare for this is to practice with your PI or your fellow postdoctoral colleagues, and see what kind of questions they have.

Do you have any advice for those of us who plan on applying for an academic position? Work hard. And remember that having a well thought out research pro-



posal is just as important, if not more so, than having good publications. Also, it is very important to read about the people you will meet with, and about their research. You should also be prepared to ask questions about the department and to tell the interviewers why you want to join that particular department. Sometimes an interviewer will ask whether you have interviews scheduled at other places. If you do, tell the truth—it shows that you are competitive, and they understand that interviewing for multiple positions is not uncommon.

Up, Up, and Away—Traveling in Summer

As summer approaches, many of you will be traveling home. Here are some important reminders to make your journey back to Boston as smooth as possible.

→If you have an expired B, F, H or J visa in your passport, you may be able to travel to Canada and Mexico for up to 30 days and re-enter the United States, provided you meet certain conditions. Contact Lorraine Barnes in Human Resources for more information.

For international travel:

→Check your passport to see if you have a valid visa that will allow you to re-enter the US.

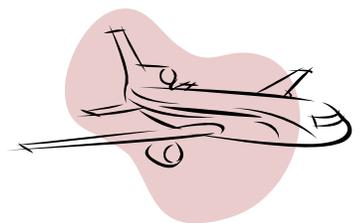
→If your visa has expired, and you need to travel to a country other than Canada or Mexico, you will need to go to the American Embassy/Consulate in that country to get a new visa before coming back. You may be subject to a Background Check or Administrative Processing, which

could delay your return by several weeks.

→It is best to apply in your home country for an entry visa to the US.

→If you have changed your visa status since the last time you entered the U.S., you will also have to obtain a new visa in your home country before returning.

→Citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Syria and other countries may be required to participate in Spe-



cial Registration, which subjects you to additional tracking measures. For more information, please go to: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/special-registration/index.htm>

Please contact Lorraine Barnes at least two weeks before leaving the US.
Lorraine_Barnes@dfci.harvard.edu

Child Care @ DFCI

If you're one of the many DFCI postdocs or graduate students who has a family or plan to have one in the near future, you understand the joys of raising a child(ren) but possibly also the occasional "complications" that could arise. One such difficulty has to do with getting the appropriate help with child care. Be aware that the department of Compensation & Benefits at DFCI works hard to provide staff with access to several alternatives that will help support your efforts with the ever-increasing demands of balancing work and family life. Here are some links from the DFCI intranet, as well as outside sources that may be helpful for DFCI staff.

"Parents in a Pinch" is a program which enables staff to take advantage of 20 days of

backup in-home child care at the cost of \$15 per hour. For those families with an annual income of less than \$60,000 the hourly rate is reduced to \$6 per hour.

<https://dfcionline.org/employee/worklife/familychildcareresources/default.aspx>

DFCI also now offers spots at the BWH Backup Child Care Center, a great new alternative option to backup in-home care. Children from 8 wks to 12 yrs are welcome.

http://www.partners.org/childcare/BWH_Backup_Center.html

The Child Care Information link on the Harvard Medical School Office of Work and Family website guides parents through the process of assessing their child care needs and evaluating the options; an FAQ is included

for each type of child care option.

<http://hr.hms.harvard.edu/workandfamily/>

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) not only offers a wealth of information on its website but also provides the opportunity to speak with a Partners EAP Consultant for assistance with issues related to child care.

http://www.eap.partners.org/WorkLife/ChildCare/Child_Care_Introduction/Childcare_Intro.asp

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides a search tool for child care options that are licensed by the Massachusetts Dept. of Early Education and Care.

<http://www.eec.state.ma.us/ChildCareSearch/EarlyEduMap.aspx>

Contact Gail Beauregard (gail_beauregard@dfci.harvard.edu) and Catherine Brownell (catherine_brownell@dfci.harvard.edu) for more information about child care at DFCI.

BWH Backup Child Care



Sylvan Baca: Student, Scientist, Marathoner

Sylvan Baca, a graduate student in Dr. Garraway's lab in Medical Oncology, came to Boston from Stanford, California in 2008. Over the past several years he has run marathons in Massachusetts, Connecticut

and Rhode Island. After qualifying for the Boston Marathon in the Lowell Bay State Marathon, his thoughts turned to training for Boston. It was something he wanted to do not only because it's the world's most famous race, but he heard it would be a great experience.

Training began 16 weeks before the marathon, which was a real challenge this winter! Aside from dodging snow banks, he didn't mind the training conditions since

running is something he loves to do. "It's a nice way to spend time away from the lab and I like to stay active," he says.

The hardest part of the marathon: Heartbreak Hill. The beginning of the marathon is downhill until this point. Even though it's the toughest, he says, "It's got the best crowd along the whole route". He heard bagpipes, drums, screams and cheers along the hill stretch. The volunteers and kids were handing out Gatorade and

ice pops. He even saw people from his lab with signs rooting for him. Those encouragements, along with all the excitement and momentum of his fellow runners carrying him along, kept his spirits up until the finish line. The pleasant weather and nice tailwind didn't hurt either. Looking back over the experience, he never would have thought he would have been able to do it. But he had so much fun he's "definitely signing up again next year".

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Special thanks to Jennifer Molina, Megan Malone and Sonal Jhaveri. If you are interested in contributing to the PGA Newsletter, email us at dfci_pgapost@dfci.harvard.edu Comments and suggestions are also welcomed!

Facilities Around the Corner: RNAi

The RNAi Facility provides investigators with access to RNAi reagents and high-throughput screening technology. Lentiviral-based RNAi constructs against the human and mouse genomes are provided by the RNAi Consortium of the Broad Institute (http://www.broad.mit.edu/genome_bio/trc/), and can be used to transduce a wide range of target cells, including primary and non-dividing cells. The Facility provides reagents, equipment, and technical expertise to design, optimize, perform and analyze cell-based, arrayed lentiviral RNAi screens. Custom screening sets and high-throughput virus preparations services are also available. Additionally, glycerol stocks of lentiviral RNAi constructs against individual genes can be requested by members of the DF/HCC community. Please e-mail any questions about the RNAi Facility to anna_schinzal@dfci.harvard.edu.



Ask Jen!

Have a question for the PGA? Email Jennifer_Molina@dfci.harvard.edu

Q: Why should I join LinkedIn?

A: LinkedIn operates the world's largest professional network on the Internet, with more than 100 million members in over 200 countries and territories. Compared to other social networking sites, LinkedIn is a more effective tool for disseminating your professional profile, connecting with other professionals, exploring potential career opportunities, and staying up-to-date in your field. LinkedIn is user-friendly, and provides step-by-step guidance to help you readily utilize its features.

LinkedIn's greatest asset is that it enables you to build new relationships by joining shared interest "groups". The PGSAO encourages all postdocs and graduate students to join the "Dana-Farber Cancer Institute Postdoc & Graduate Student Networking & Alumni Group" so you can stay connected to the DFCI community after you leave, maintain contact with current and former colleagues, link to their professional networks and enhance your own contacts – all of which will prove to be invaluable for your future career trajectory. Through this group, the PGSAO shares news and updates, posts links to career training resources and provides a forum for discussion between members.

PGA calendar

June 17, 2011 - Brain Lunch

June 23, 2011 - "Writing Winning Resumes for Industry Jobs", Tom Hamilton, Staffing Manager, Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research

June 29, 2011 - Breakfast with Benefits

Events subject to Change. Visit <http://dfcionline.org/departments/postdoc/events/default.aspx> for updates.

Curiosity Corner

DID YOU KNOW?

Wedding season is here! When Prince William announced that he will be attending University of St. Andrews, there was an 85% increase in the number of female applicants that year! Recent studies show that the peptide hormone vasopressin is responsible for nuptial harmony, at least in prairie voles (distant cousins of mice). Prairie voles have a life-long monogamous relationship after mating but when vasopressin signaling is blocked, males turn to "Casanova" dating/mating with multiple partners. Well, in humans, genetic studies indicate that there is an association between polymorphic repeat sequences upstream of the gene encoding the vasopressin receptor and pair-bonding. Men with the RS3334 allele are significantly more likely to score poorly in terms of commitment and relationship stability. Guess it's good to get the groom's genome sequenced well before the wedding bells start ringing! (Cell 145, 2011; PNAS 106, 2009; PNAS 106, 2008; Nature 365, 1993)

Sigh•ence by CLN

Scientific Contradictions:

The Inefficient Multi-tasker

