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Office of Education, Division of Intramural Research National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute **FELLOWS NEWSLETTER**

The Fellows Newsletter is published monthly by the Office of Education, Division of Intramural Research, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and distributed to NHLBI DIR members to promote the interest of DIR Fellows.

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From the Director of the Office of Education

As you may know, a budget for NIH for Fiscal Year 2006 has not yet been approved by Congress. The budgetary process in the US is a very complicated one that starts with the President proposing a budget to congress. This budget proposal includes specific proposed requests for each of the Institutes at NIH, including NHLBI, as well as for the Centers and the Directors office. Each of the houses of Congress, the House of Representatives and the Senate, then must pass their own appropriation bill, which may or may not observe the funding levels requested in the President's budget request. Once each has passed, then any differences must be resolved into one bill that gets passed by both houses again and then must be signed by the President. We are now waiting for the House and Senate to pass their bills, both of which do not include a significant increase in funds for NIH. Even after the budget is signed, the President may order reductions. Thus, the best advice is to be as frugal as you can without sacrificing significant aspects of your research.

We do not have a Career Development Seminar this month. Our next one is on Tuesday, January 9th is Dr. Jim Hyde of the NIDDK Extramural Program, who will speak on "Grants Administration". We have a full schedule of seminars, so mark your Calendars!

Also, mark your calendar for the the Fellows Retreat, to be held once again at Harbourtowne Resort in St. Michaels, MD on April 27-28, 2006. Our Keynote speaker will be Dr. J. Craig Venter, former NIH Scientist who developed expressed sequence tags (ESTs). Our Scientific Speaker is Dr. Stuart Orkin, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator at Children's Hospital and Dana Farber Cancer Institute where his research concerns how commitment to specific lineages is programmed and cell-specific patterns of gene expression are established in hematopoietic stem cells.

We invite all NHLBI fellows to participate in our activities, either by volunteering to help organize them or through your input to the Fellows Advisory Committee.

Finally, as we go into this Holiday Season, I'd like you all to consider making a donation to Charity to help the neediest amongst us. One easy way is through the Combined Federal Campaign (www.cfc.gov).

I wish you all the best for this Holiday Season and the New Year.

How I found my job

Dr. Matthew Wolfe
Schafer Corporation

At the end of my first year at NIH I attended a symposium titled “Moving from the Bench into Business: Entrepreneurship in Science”. Why? For the most part, I was just curious, but it was clear that my interest in laboratory work was fading. After leaving the symposium, I began a process of introspection, based on the the question “why do I like science?” The answer turned out to be quite simple: I liked science because it is filled with difficult problems that need to be solved. As it turns out, there are lots of other problems needing to be solved and the biotechnology business problem was appealing

With that goal in mind and the support of my mentor, I began to explore options in business. I took two approaches. First, I began networking with local business people. This was designed to increase my visibility, my knowledge base, and, hopefully, put me in contact with the people who would hire me. I joined the NIH Bioscience Business Interest Group and a handful of MD/VA organizations dedicated to entrepreneurship in the biotech industry. While these memberships did cost some money, this effort paid off immensely. Some examples: I served on the U. of MD’s Center for Entrepreneurship program committee, I co-organized one of the region’s successful biotechnology meetings, I was introduced to the top management of some of the most successful biotechnology businesses in the Mid-Atlantic region, and importantly, I was able to interview for positions that were not otherwise advertised. Getting involved in a new industry made me nervous at first, but I quickly found that the people wanting to

invest in, and build biotech companies, were eager to speak with someone from the NIH.

The second step involved applying for three different types of positions: research positions in an established biotech/pharma company; positions within a start-up company; and business positions. The first two environments would clearly take advantage of my lab experience and get my foot in the industrial door. A larger company would provide me with more job security, but the start-up would give me hands-on experience with different aspects of business including funding/financing, IP protection, grant opportunities, etc., which was what I was looking for. I found that many companies were looking to hire a person with a specific set of skills that could be immediately applied to their problems, and my training was of a more general nature. The third type of position I was applying for was an office position where I could learn the business.

Unfortunately, these positions available for a scientist were few and far between. I did get a few interviews, but these were entirely based on references from people I met during my networking experiences, and did not result in any attractive job offers.

So how did I get my job after 4 years at NIH? I started looking at positions beyond the ones I was most familiar with. I started applying for positions at consulting and government contracting companies. Two positions in particular stood out and both involved concept design and management. Basically, you come up with a scientific idea, gather information supporting its feasibility (and potential shortcomings), and sell the idea to others. It was described to me by my now colleague “you are the PI and the entire scientific community is your

laboratory”. I was offered one of the positions, but realized that it wouldn’t be the biotech business-building opportunity I was looking for. Nevertheless, there were several other attractive features about this new job: it would get me into the private sector, I would expand my network of contacts within a new industry, I would acquire a security clearance (very handy to have in the D.C. region), I would gain management experience, I would make good money, and I would still get to come up with my own scientific ideas. I accepted the position.

So what have I learned from this job-search process?

- Be persistent: people aren’t going to go out and find you, you have to find them. This is true with finding the job and with networking.
- Leave your ego behind: nobody cares if you have a Ph.D., published in Science, or worked for Professor So-and-so if you are a complete jack-ass.
- Networking: gotta do it. Get your name and face out there. Going to scientific meetings isn’t the only networking opportunity. You need to meet a variety of people including the business folks. Having a broad base of knowledge in the industry is a good thing and people will appreciate it come interview time.
- Remember your audience: whether it is a presentation, interview, or networking event. If technical: specific skills, examples, jargon. If business: elevator pitch, creativity, analytical, broad scope. Never use words you don’t understand.
- Get involved: not just in your ‘lab’ but the business in general. People want to see that you are a part of the community and care about the direction of the company.
- Be persistent

- Show personality: have fun meeting new people. No longer will you be trapped in a small lab with 4 like-minded scientists. You need to be able to interact well with others in a casual atmosphere. Networking is good practice.
- Resume vs. CV: appropriate submission for the type of position.
- Application process: this part makes me angry. It seems that most companies these days dump your records into a database. The people doing this don't really have any scientific training and the actual

hiring scientist searches the database with key words. Ineffective as far as I'm concerned. If you figure out the right key words, call me, I'm interested. Submit by fax if you can, at least someone has to touch the paper.

- Follow-up, call HR, speak to someone: most ads say not to call, etc. Well, if you ever want to hear from them again, you may as well try. I've tried tricking some HR people by saying I applied for position xxx and wasn't sure if the application went through. Or, ask

to speak with the hiring manager for position xxx.

- Know your market (entrepreneurs/industry positions): nobody cares about a great discovery, cool idea, etc. if it can't be made and sold. Businesses are meant to make money. Keep this in mind when talking to VC.
- Know why you are applying for the specific position.
- Be persistent

Dr. Matt Wolfe recently left NHLBI to join the Schafer Corporation. He can be reached at: mwolfe@schafermd.com

New NHLBI Fellows



Ms. Natalie Porat-Shliom has joined the Laboratory of Cell Biology under the supervision of Dr. Julie Donaldson as a Predoctoral Fellow. Ms. Porat-Shliom recently received her Ms.Sc. from Tel Aviv University. She will continue to study membrane and protein trafficking for her Ph.D. degree.



Mr. Aibing Wang has recently joined the Laboratory of Molecular Cardiology under the supervision of Dr. Robert Adelstein as a Visiting Fellow. Mr. Wang received his MS in Agronomy from Hunan Agricultural University, Hunan, China in 2001. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry.



Dr. Xiao-Qing Zhao joined the Laboratory of Developmental Biology under the supervision of Dr. Cecilia Lo as a Visiting Fellow. Dr. Zhao recently received her Ph.D. from Fudan University, China. She will be involved in a project on the role of connexins in development.

Recent Publications by NHLBI Fellows

Gladwin M. T., Schechter A. N., Kim-Shapiro D. B., Patel R. P., Hogg N., **Shiva S.**, Cannon R. O., Kelm M., Wink D. A., Espey M. G., Oldfield E. H., Pluta R. M., Freeman B. A., Lancaster J. R., Feelisch M. and Lundberg J. O. (2005) The emerging biology of the nitrite anion. *Nature Chem. Biol.* **1**, 308-314.

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