



May 2008

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.

Office of Education, DIR, NHLBI

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From the Director of the Office of Education

Before long, summer interns will be arriving on campus. If you do have a summer intern coming to your laboratory, you should take advantage of the opportunity to learn and practice the teaching and mentoring skills that are necessary for success in any career. Virtually all of these students have some research experience, and with the proper guidance they can make a positive contribution to your research. In return, you can sharpen your one-on-one teaching skills and can list this experience on your C.V.

Our next Career Development Seminar is on Tuesday, May 20th at Noon, in Building 10, Room 13S235B, where Dr. Susan Shurin, Deputy Director of NHLBI will lead a discussion on Balancing Careers and Family. This topic is one that is important for all of us as we only have 24 hours in a day, with many competing responsibilities.

Our office is dedicated to making sure that the needs of NHLBI fellows are addressed. For that reason, if there are any issues that arise during your time here, please feel free to come to the Office of Education to discuss them.

The Cover Letter

by
Herbert M. Geller, Ph.D.

Most job applications are in response to an advertisement, either on the web or in a scientific or technical journal. While many of these ads will specifically request a cover letter, others will not, bringing up the issue of "How important is the cover letter?" If you do a Google search for "Cover Letter" you will find 8,980,000 results, which clearly indicates it must be important. In fact, a cover letter is extremely critical in helping you achieve your goals, but also has the potential to put your application at the top or the bottom of the pile, depending upon its content.

(Cont'd p. 2)

Careers in Science Centers

by
Stephanie Guzik

Recently, the idea of alternative careers for scientists has become a more intriguing topic to me and many people I've spoken with. The opportunities for employment outside of the lab are countless and many of them involve public outreach. One such opportunity is working in a public forum, such as a museum or science center, to convey to the general public what research is and what discoveries have been made. This chance to learn more about public education drew me to the most recent NHLBI Career Development Seminar where Dr. Erika Shugart from the

(Cont'd p. 3)

(Cover Letter, cont'd)

The major purpose of a cover letter is to introduce you to the reader and let them know why you are interested in their position and how your qualifications dovetail with the requirements of the job for which you are applying. This is the reason that a "generic" cover letter is not adequate, and why you should not send your resume or CV without a cover letter. A generic cover letter will not address the particular employer or highlight which of your many skills are most important. You want to highlight your education, research and leadership experiences that are relevant to a position you are seeking. Be as specific as possible, using examples. Thus, while many jobs will require some knowledge of cell culture techniques or molecular biology skills, each job advertisement will specify the primary function of the position. You can then relate how your particular skills and experiences apply to that particular position. This is very rarely obtained by reading the titles of your papers. Don't "stretch" anything you say. You must be completely truthful while still presenting yourself in the best possible light.

You should also let them know how you found out about the job. Thus, if you know someone working for the company, put that in the cover letter. This may not be a big help if the company is large, but it will indicate that you are somewhat familiar with what they do. If you were told about the job by someone in the company, then you certainly should mention their name because companies often reward their employees who recommend new hires.

While cover letters should be formal, they must also reflect your attitudes and communication skills. This means that you must write the letter yourself - not simply copy it from an example on the web. While you do need to have a personal touch to the letter, you do not want to get too personal - either in your letter or what you include on your CV, unless they specifically highlight skills that might be used on the job. Thus, while no one needs to know about your excellent skills in football, it would be worth mentioning if you were responsible for coordinating the football league events, as this speaks to your organizational abilities. Likewise, if you are applying to an international company, you may want to

emphasize that you have traveled to some of the countries in which they do business.

The challenge here is also to remember to keep your cover letter brief. Remember that hiring managers are busy people without the time to read through thousands of 2-3 page cover letters. Highlight your experiences as best as possible, but try to say as much as possible using the fewest amount of words.

Appearance counts. If you are mailing your application or CV, use high quality stationery, not laser printer paper. Choose a serif typeface that's clear and easy to read, such as Times New Roman or Book Antiqua. While a fancier font may be different, it may not be as attractive to the reader as to you. There are many sample cover letters on the web, and I would suggest that you read many before you begin to write one. If you are not sure about your written English, by all means ask a native speaker to help you edit the letter. Our own Jess Llewellyn is more than willing to do this for NHLBI fellows.

Come to the next

Career Development Seminar

entitled

"Balancing Career and Family"

featuring

Susan Shurin, Ph.D.

Deputy Director, NHLBI

Tuesday, May 20th

Noon to 1:00

10/13S235

(Science Center, cont'd)

Marian Koshland Science Museum spoke about her career path from science policy into museum management.

The Koshland museum is a branch of the National Academy of Sciences and is located in downtown Washington, DC. Dr. Shugart is currently the Deputy Director of the museum, and is in charge of several facets of the museum's activities. Among other responsibilities, she manages several teams that plan, design, build, and present the exhibits on display at the Koshland museum. During the meeting, Dr. Shugart mentioned several opportunities which fellows could pursue to learn more about working in a public outreach position at a science center. Among these opportunities, there are volunteer positions within the museum for several facets of the daily museum functioning. Also, the Christine Marzayan Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship Program provides an opportunity for some of its participants to work in the Koshland museum while also investigating the field of public policy.

As a final note, Dr. Shugart shared a piece of wisdom that her father had shared with her. People often look back on past choices and debate whether they made the right decision. There is no way to change the past or the choices you have made. At each point in your life that requires a decision, choose the path that seems best at the time. Follow that path wherever it goes, and don't look back at that choice – it was thoughtfully made using the knowledge you had at the time. Her advice was intriguing to me as I (slowly) travel toward a fork in my road. Should I continue to pursue benchwork? Or should I opt for a career in public outreach? Regardless of the path I choose,

with this outlook I can be sure to make the best decision I can make at the time and I'll try not to look back at that decision later. From Dr. Shugart's visit, a career in museum management seems

to me to be a very interesting, exciting, and rewarding career choice.

Stephanie Guzik is a Graduate Student in the Laboratory of Molecular Physiology with Dr. Jim Sellers.

Jessica's Corner

Salude mi fellows! This month's "inspiration station" is all about regrets. Not a nice topic, I know, but hear me out. As hard as it may seem to believe, this program coordinator can be pretty negative at times. When things don't go my way or I wish my life had taken a different turn, or path, I find that it's so easy to sit back and regret and wish that I had done something - anything! - else. It's easy to take all of this stuff and let it hold you down and hold you back. Fortunately, for me, this month, I had a few experiences that may have changed my mind and spirit for the better.

First, I was invited to attend the NIDDK Fellows Retreat last week because of my awesome planning and karaoke skills (thanks Dr. G!), where I was able to speak to and influence a number of fellows like you and help with a conference that needed me. During some down time, a fellow asked if I'd ever thought my life would have taken this path. You know? I REALLY REALLY didn't! For a while I thought I wanted to be a diplomat and wanted to save the world and be so much greater than I was. Well, due to a number of things, THAT didn't really work out and my immediate post college graduation was spent lamenting creation and being angry and frustrated with myself for not fulfilling my potential. I tried to let go and move on and try just to be happy and comfortable with the new skills I was acquiring - but still - it just stunk. I

wasn't happy being an assistant and not being allowed to make decisions and fill needs.

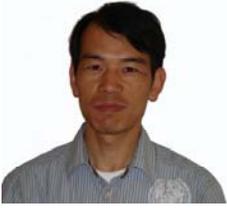
But this month has really helped to change my opinion. At my community service organization, I was awarded the first Distinguished Service Key in our section - an award that is the highest honor this group can bestow on one of its members. I was so honored and excited that someone took notice of the good works that I was doing - that it actually made a difference and was important. It was a real motivation to continue my passion and determination to this group.

Lastly, I attended a seminar where the speaker said not to hold on to your regrets by revisiting decisions that you think were bad. You made the right decision at the time with the info/resources available to you (See Stephanie's Column above =).

All of these experiences led me to rethink my frustration and this sense of regret I had been having. Maybe I am exactly where I need to be and doing exactly what I need to do right now. Maybe I am saving the world after all. Remember that just when you think that you don't matter or that what you're doing has no impact, keep doing what you set out to do because you know in your heart that it's right. Because one day out of NOWHERE, someone will turn around and say "Thank you" - in the biggest way possible ;-)

"Forget Regret or life is yours to miss. No other road, no other way, no day but today." - from the musical Rent

New NHLBI Fellows



Jian Mao, Ph.D. is a Visiting Fellow in the Laboratory of Molecular Cardiology under the mentorship of Dr. Bob Adelstein. He received his Ph.D. in Botany from the Chinese Academy of Sciences from his native homeland of China.

While at the NHLBI, he will be working on understanding the function of nonmuscle myosin III during embryonic development and in the adult mouse.



Yeonee Seol, Ph.D. is a Research Fellow in the Laboratory of Cell Biology under the mentorship of Dr. Keir Neuman. She received her Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Arizona-Tucson, and is originally from

South Korea. While at the NHLBI, she will investigate the mechanism of enzyme-DNA interaction in single molecule levels.

Recent Publications by NHLBI Fellows

Feng, X. M., Kajigaya, S., Solomou, E. E., Keyvanfar, K., Xu, X. L., Raghavachari, N., Munson, P. J., Herndon, T. M., Chen, J. C., & Young, N. S. (2008). Rabbit ATG but not horse ATG promotes expansion of functional CD4(+)CD25(high)FOXP3(+) regulatory T cells in vitro. *Blood* 111, 3675-3683.

Gharib, A. M., Ho, V. B., Rosing, D. R., Herzka, D. A., Stuber, M., Arai, A. E., & Pettigrew, R. I. (2008). Coronary artery anomalies and variants: Technical feasibility of assessment with coronary MR angiography at 3T. *Radiology* 247, 220-227.

Kim, K. Y., Kawamoto, S., Bao, J. J., Sellers, J. R., & Adelstein, R. S. (2008). The B2 alternatively spliced isoform of nonmuscle myosin II-B lacks actin-activated MgATPase activity and in vitro motility. *Biochem. Biophys. Res. Comm.* 369, 124-134.

Klauda, J. B., Roberts, M. F., Redfield, A. G., Brooks, B. R., & Pastor, R. W. (2008). Rotation of lipids in membranes: Molecular dynamics simulation, P-31 spin-lattice relaxation, and rigid-body dynamics. *Biophys. J.* 94, 3074-3083.

Sampath, S., Kim, J. H., Lederman, R. J., & McVeigh, E. R. (2008). Simultaneous imaging of myocardial motion and chamber blood flow with SPAMM n' EGGs (Spatial Modulation of Magnetization with Encoded Gradients for Gauging Speed). *J. Magn. Res. Imag.* 27, 809-817.

Sellers, J. R., Thirumurugan, K., Sakamoto, T., Hammer, J. A., & Knight, P. J. (2008). Calcium and cargoes as regulators of myosin 5a activity. *Biochem. Biophys. Res. Comm.* 369, 176-181.

Waldo, S. W., Li, Y. F., Buono, C., Zhao, B., Billings, E. M., Chang, J., & Kruth, H. S. (2008). Heterogeneity of human macrophages in culture and in atherosclerotic plaques. *Am. J. Pathol.* 172, 1112-1126.

Come support your NHLBI Postbaccs
at the

Postbacc Research Festival (Poster Day)!
Wednesday, May 7th and Thursday, May 8th, 2008
11:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.
Tents on Lot 10-H