

National Institutes of Health



Visiting Fellows Committee

NIH VFC Newsletter 2014 Summer Edition

Contributing to global science development by building careers

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Career Tools

Scientists Teaching Science

Learning the Basics of Teaching

By Amie D. Moody, PhD

Two of the many training opportunities available to postdoctoral fellows here at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are the Scientists Teaching Science two-hour workshop and the nine-week pedagogy course; both are taught by Barbara Houtz, M.Ed. This pair of courses is designed so that the two-hour course introduces fellows to the concept of different learning styles, different teaching philosophies, and what goes into course development. The nine-week pedagogy course provides fellows with more in-depth coverage of these topics, particularly fellows interested in pursuing a teaching career. Although the two-hour workshop is offered several times a year, the nine-week course is only offered twice a year.

A two-hour workshop can only cover so much information. Therefore, rather than quickly breeze over important material, Ms. Houtz provides attendees with an activity that embodies the message of the longer course. The key segment of the workshop is the VARK (Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, Kinesthetic) assessment. Each attendee fills out a short questionnaire to determine their “best” learning style (i.e., I personally was split evenly between being a kinesthetic and read/write learner). Afterwards, fellows are split into groups of like-minded learners to discuss characteristics of that style. In this way, Ms. Houtz provides a practical example of one teaching method, instead of lecturing the entire time. She also gives attendees the information packet, “Scientists Teaching Science,” used in the nine-week course so that interested fellows can decide if the longer course suits their needs.

Pedagogy—the art and science of teaching—is covered in greater detail during the nine-week course. Learning these concepts is particularly important for fellows who have little to no teaching experience. Ms. Houtz provides ample readings about how students learn, effective methods to teaching students, and pitfalls to be aware of and avoid. True to the concepts Ms. Houtz tries to impart on course participants, the information comes in all forms: text readings, PowerPoint presentations that have either been narrated or transcribed, news stories and primary articles from education or scientific journals. There are also several topics that participants discuss in online discussion forums, and everyone must participate in at least one live online discussion. The course format really is a refreshing break from typical lecture style, or other online-centered classes! And it serves a great model for future teachers to keep in mind when creating classes of their own.

In addition to an interesting course format, the two major assignments are aimed at being useful for the participant. The first major assignment requires participants to write a one-to-two page educational philosophy statement. This is a necessary portion of almost every application for teaching positions, and can be difficult to write if a fellow does not have any prior teaching experience. A first draft is due after the second week of the course, and each participant receives detailed feedback from Ms. Houtz regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the document. She also highlights the upcoming lessons that would be particularly beneficial to incorporate into the final document. The revised draft is then submitted at the completion of the eighth week.

The second major assignment is also critical for any class a fellow may teach—writing a syllabus for an introductory level science course. This serves as the final project for the course. As such, each participant must combine the knowledge gained over the previous nine weeks with the feedback Ms. Houtz provides on previous assignments. Finally, in addition to the practical

tools that participants gain upon completing this course, Ms. Houtz also provides a letter of recommendation to anyone who completes all requirements. There is no limit to how many times a participant can ask for a recommendation, and the offer never expires! Altogether, anyone even considering teaching or conducting research at an academic institution should strongly consider taking this course. For more information about the two courses and the schedules for upcoming classes, go to the OITE website: [https://www.training.nih.gov/Teaching and Mentoring](https://www.training.nih.gov/Teaching_and_Mentoring). For additional information about teaching opportunities at the NIH in this edition of the Visiting Fellows Committee Newsletter, please read Ping Chen's article "How Do I Get Teaching Experience?"

VFC-Brown Bag Seminar Series

Educational Opportunities with the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES)

By Masfique Mehedi, PhD

The NIH visiting fellows committee (NIH-VFC), a sub-committee of the NIH fellows committee (NIH-FelCom), has been organizing informative seminars on different topics of interest primarily associated with fellows at the NIH. The latest installment was on "Educational Opportunities with FAES" (Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences) that was held on March 20, 2014. This exciting seminar was focused on FAES education services, and was presented by three marvelous presenters from the FAES: Candice Allar (candice.allar@nih.gov), assistant registrar; Dr. Constance Noguchi (connie.noguchi@gmail.com), dean; and Mark Nardone (nardonem@faes.od.nih.gov), director, Bio-Trac/CellServ Program.

At the beginning of the seminar, Candice Allar described how the FAES provides three major categories of education services to the NIH community under its umbrella. First, the FAES Graduate School offers more than 120 courses - at both graduate and undergraduate levels. The Graduate School operates with the approval of the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Further, as a non-traditional school, FAES courses currently do not lead to degrees. Second, the FAES offers training and conference services, as they have more than 10 years of experience coordinating medical workshops, educational classes, and scientific meetings. Third, the FAES offers a foundation bookstore where graduate school textbooks, NIH authors & editors' scientific and medical books, and more are available.

The FAES offers graduate school courses in basic and advanced biological sciences, medicine, language, technology transfer, public health, and general studies etc. Course credit is transferable, depending on the transfer policy of the receiving institutions. The FAES academic calendar consists of two semesters, fall and spring, similar to that of universities. Courses are typically offered as one, two, or three credits, and tuition fees per credit are \$150. Enrollment forms for courses are available at www.faes.org/grad, and completed forms can be sent to registrar@faes.org. It is recommended to check www.faes.org/grad for dates and deadlines. The FAES officials are constantly working on improving efficiency and effectiveness of the FAES website. Stay tuned for the updated FAES website this fall!

Dr. Constance Noguchi, the dean of the FAES Graduate School at the NIH, provided the insight for FAES establishment. The FAES was established more than 50 years ago and was born from a need to share knowledge between colleagues in the NIH and the FDA (Food and Drug Administration). It motivated fellows to teach. FAES faculty members are NIH investigators and members of the community who are interested in courses in their fields of study. It is encouraging that more and more postdoctoral fellows are participating as FAES faculty. As

expected, student enrollment is also increasing and currently stands at 1,200 to 1,400 per year.

The FAES always looks for new instructors not only for new course development but also for current courses. They encourage fellows to take a teaching course before applying for a faculty position. The Office of Intramural Teaching and Education (OITE) offers “Scientist Teaching Science Online Pedagogy Course” (nine weeks) and FAES offers “Boot Camp for University Teaching.” For additional information about these two courses, please refer to other articles in this edition. Completion of one of these two courses is required to be a faculty for FAES courses. The FAES provides opportunities for fellows who are interested individually or as a team to develop a FAES course. Guidelines for new courses overlap with existing FAES courses. Audience, level, prerequisites, general concepts, and course content need to be determined. Duration, which varies from 1/2 credit which requires two hours for four weeks, to three credits that require three hours for 16 weeks, also needs to be decided. And more importantly, new courses require approval from the dean and department chair. Fellows who are interested in teaching in the FAES Graduate School can contact registrar@faes.org for more information.

In the last part of this Brown Bag session, Mark Nardone, the director of Bio-Trac program, provided valuable information regarding this program. The Bio-Trac program has trained more than 16,000 scientists at the NIH since it started in 1985. This program is a success, as it has a 98 percent satisfaction rate among the participants. Participants are from federal organizations such as the NIH, the FDA, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), universities and colleges, and private industries. The participants in the program are usually from the NIH - lab chiefs, project investigators, postdocs, postbacs, visiting fellows, and lab technicians. The Bio-Trac program, through the FAES, provides 55 workshops, not only lecture-based, but also hands-on in different areas such as microscopy, proteomics, genomics,

immunology, microarrays, stem-cells, PCR, and expression analysis (siRNA & miRNA). Hands-on lab trainings on biotechnology are usually three to five days long. Both NIH and outside scientists are taking advantage of Bio-Trac courses, as these courses are primarily taught by active researchers from the NIH, FDA, USDA, Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland. Bio-Trac attendees are typically active researchers, primarily MDs/Ph.Ds who are interested in the latest techniques relevant to their research interests. Details on the Bio-Trac program are available at www.biotrac.com.

Bio-Trac is an attractive place for fellows to get teaching experience. More than 300 researchers have participated as instructors in this program. Any fellow can get teaching experience by lecturing or participating in the laboratory opportunities in the Bio-Trac. Bio-Trac provides compensation to the NIH fellows. A single lecture is an hour and a half long, whereas a single lab is four to five hours. For more information please visit www.biotrac.com

For contacts:

FAES graduate school: phone 301-496-7976, fax 301-402-0174, e-mail registrar@faes.org, and web www.faes.org

FAES bookstore: phone 301-496-5272 and fax 301-480-5319.

FAES training and conference center: phone 301-496-7975, fax 301-402-0174, and e-mail training@faes.org

Bio-Trac: phone 301-496-8290, e-mail training@faes.org, and web www.biotrac.com

The slides from the presenters are available at: [www.training.nih.gov/attachments/att5333045c561e5/FAES Presentation Visiting Fellows.pdf](http://www.training.nih.gov/attachments/att5333045c561e5/FAES%20Presentation%20Visiting%20Fellows.pdf)

For further information on the VFC-Brown Bag Seminar Series and the upcoming sessions/topics, please visit us online at www.training.nih.gov/vfc_brown_bag_series or contact organizing members Masfique Mehedi at

masfique.mehedi@nih.gov and Sudhir Rai at sudhir.rai@nih.gov

Career Tools

How Do I Gain Teaching Experience?

My Experience with the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES)

By Ping Chen, MD-PhD

During my postdoctoral training at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), I have had both great research training experiences in my laboratory, and other scientific skill training from through the Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) and the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES) and other NIH resources. After participating in multiple courses, I realized the importance of gaining teaching experience, especially if I plan to work at an academic institution. Another important factor in motivating me is that I like to teach and interact with young students. Teaching is a great way to learn things in an unexpected way and to pass some of our knowledge on to others. That is how we improve our health and society. However, I was unsure how to take the first step since I did not have any teaching experience.

As a first step, I volunteered for the summer students' journal club at the National Eye Institute (NEI) two years ago. I also participated in the OITE course, Scientists Teaching Science. The instructor really gave us practical skills and deep thoughts about teaching in schools (for more information about Scientists Teaching Science, please read Amie Moody's article in this issue of the VFC Newsletter). My next step was to gain practical teaching experience. Therefore, I took advantage of a great opportunity and enrolled in a teaching course from the FAES, called Boot Camp for University Teaching. The best aspect of this

course was that the class instructors not only taught us how to teach and provided us with information about how to obtain teaching experience, but they also created an opportunity for class participants to teach another class.

During the four-month class, the instructors instilled the basics of teaching. We learned the background material for courses we were going to teach. We learned how to prepare teaching materials, how to write a syllabus, and how to grade assignments. We learned about teaching philosophies, and practiced teaching a lecture. After teaching, we received feedback from students during an end-of-course pizza party. After I finished this course, I felt that I was ready to teach.

Immediately after finishing the teaching training, I was provided a teaching opportunity when the FAES was looking for co-instructors to teach a new course called Microbiome. I was very interested in teaching this course because I have extensive background in immunology, especially in the basic science and clinical training in infectious and autoimmune diseases. I had the strong opinion that the lectures should combine information about basic and clinical information pertaining to the microbiome, immunology, and related human diseases. I told the dean of FAES Dr. Noguchi and the primary instructor Dr. Pierce about my idea. They thought it was a good idea, and I secured the teaching opportunity.

Although in the beginning I was unsure how to gain teaching experience, now everything is going smoothly. During this journey, I received good advice and assistance from many people. Even as we carry on our daily bench work in the laboratory, there are opportunities for all postdoctoral fellows to build up teaching experience with our mentors' support. At least, this is my personal experience. The next step for me is to look for teaching opportunities outside of the NIH. I also would like to mention that the OITE provides various opportunities to help postdoctoral fellows be successful in their career development. So please visit the OITE website

(<https://www.training.nih.gov/>) to take advantage of these resources.

Volunteer Opportunities

Bridging the Gap between Scientists and the Public

By Djamila Harouaka, PhD

There is a wide gap between the highly technical work being executed by scientists in the laboratory and the general public. This is a major conundrum, as science is intended to serve everyone. In recent years, government and academic institutions have invested in better communicating the relevance of scientific advancements and emphasizing the importance of continued funding of scientific research using taxpayer dollars. Understanding the rapidly evolving science and technology is becoming increasingly important for people to make informed decisions about their nutrition, health, and lifestyle.

Moreover, education in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in the United States (US) lags behind many countries around the world. The US ranked 27th in the number of undergraduate degrees obtained in STEM fields according to the US Department of Commerce, and a test administered by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) to 15-year-olds in private and public schools showed the US ranked 25th in math literacy. Countries like Singapore and China have made improvements in STEM learning by focusing on curriculum development and rewarding and retaining good teachers, while the US has focused on applying more extensive student testing. Many students choose not to pursue STEM careers because they are 'too hard'. This false perception can only be corrected through the use of open and effective communication between scientists and the lay audience.

In an attempt to bridge the gap between scientists and the general public, the National Human

Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) collaborated with the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) to design a new exhibit to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the completion of the Human Genome Project. The exhibit entitled "Genome: Unlocking Life's Code" opened at the NMNH in June 2013 and will remain in Washington D.C. until September 2014.

I had just begun my postdoctoral fellowship at the NIH when I saw the flyer recruiting volunteers to work at the Genome exhibit. There was an informational session held on the NIH campus, but the advertisement was also aimed at the general public. Volunteer applicants were screened in a group interview. Once accepted, we filled out an application form, obtained a Smithsonian identification card, and attended weekly training sessions for six weeks to become acquainted with the exhibit.

Volunteers had the option to work as docents to guide visitors through the exhibit, or with additional training, one could choose to work in the 'Genome Zone' and lead group activities to provide visitors with a hands-on experience. NIH scientists were highly sought after because of their expertise in the biological sciences. Volunteers were expected to serve a minimum of eight hours a month, with the option of working four-hour shifts during the day, or two-hour shifts in the evening. Scheduling was flexible and could easily be completed online through the Smithsonian's volunteers' website (www.si.edu/volunteer).

Several volunteers worked in collaboration with museum staff to formulate a guided tour of the exhibit. I typically move around the different areas of the exhibit and entertain questions from visitors. The Genome exhibit is divided into five areas that can be explored in any order. One area focuses on defining terms such as gene, genetics, genomics, and chronicles the human genome project. Other areas focus on human ancestry and the relationship between genomics and race, genomes in the web of life, the microbiome, and genomics in relation to human health.

There are a few interactive activities including a puzzle to align DNA sequences that provide an opportunity for docents to begin a conversation with visitors who span all ages and educational backgrounds. The conversations are equally diverse whether you are discussing basic information, responding to questions about recent reports in the news, or trying to answer science fiction or science future type queries.

Having a background in science is helpful of course. Trying to find the most effective way to speak to vastly different audiences in rapid succession was the most challenging and fun aspect of this experience. Volunteering at the museum has also been a remarkable networking opportunity. It is not unusual to meet people from all sectors of the science industry, which made the museum an unexpectedly good place to make new contacts.

There are several volunteer opportunities available at the Smithsonian that can be found on their website listed above. For those of you interested in science education, the Smithsonian is currently looking for volunteers for their Q?ruis program (<http://www.mnh.si.edu/education/volunteering/volops.html>).

In addition to the personal rewards listed above, volunteer benefits also include discounted tickets for the IMAX Theater and Planetarium, discounts at museum stores, access to special lectures, and free parking. This experience made me appreciate the value in exercising my science communication skills and the importance of translating scientific research away from the bench.

Disclaimer: Volunteering and outreach can be valuable components of professional development and also help strengthen the scientific community. However, fellows should weigh the importance of volunteering for activities in their overall career development. If volunteer events fall on weekdays and require you to leave the NIH during normal working hours, participation depends on permission of your supervisor. In addition, if you attend a volunteer event such as the ones described in the article above you are not

representing the NIH and should not represent yourself as such.

Career Tools

NIDDK Office of Fellow Recruitment and Career Development

Resources for NIDDK Trainees

By Christine C. Jao, PhD

The NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) is one resource trainees turn to for information on career development and training. There are additional resources available for the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) trainees, namely the NIDDK Fellowship Office, or more formally, the NIDDK Office of Fellow Recruitment and Career Development. The Fellowship Office is located in Building 12A, B45, and is staffed by Ms. Kala Viswanathan and Ms. Lorraine Moore. The mission of the office is to support the fellows' endeavors in training and career development by providing opportunities for leadership, grant writing, and networking, to name a few.

NIDDK trainees have the opportunity to develop leadership skills by serving on the NIDDK Fellows Advisory Board (FAB). The FAB, in collaboration with The Fellowship Office, organizes the NIDDK Fellows Scientific Conference. In addition to organizing the conference, the FAB also publishes the NIDDK Fellows Newsletter, the iNFORMER. The iNFORMER provides opportunities for trainees to gain experience in writing and editing, much like the opportunities provided by the Visiting Fellows Newsletter.

The recently concluded 9th Annual NIDDK Fellows Scientific Conference featured Dr. Sally Rockey, deputy director for Extramural Research and director of the Office of Extramural Research. She talked about the state of the biomedical

workforce, as well as how to strengthen it. The conference also featured talks and posters, allowing trainees to network and learn about research being conducted in their institute. An Early Career Panel session featured a diverse panel from academia, industry, and government. The panelists talked about their backgrounds, their path to their current positions, and took questions from the audience. The conference also awarded five travel awards of \$1,000 each for best oral and poster presentations. The travel awards will be used by the trainees for conference travel expenses in the next fiscal year. The Fellows Scientific Conference is a valuable resource for trainees to network, and to learn about careers beyond their time at the NIH. Mark your calendars for the 10th Annual NIDDK Fellows Scientific Conference, which is scheduled for April 7-8, 2015.

There are two programs available to NIDDK trainees to improve their grant writing. The NIDDK hosts a grant writing workshop, once in the fall and once in the spring. The workshops, which are broken into three sessions over six weeks, place special emphasis on writing the K99 career transition grant. The format includes lectures, group discussions, and writing assignments. Enrollees in the workshop receive feedback on their assignments from the instructor. The current grant writing workshop will end on June 6, 2014. As of this printing, the fall workshop is scheduled to start in August 2014. Contact the NIDDK Fellowship Office to apply early as there are limited spots for the workshop.

The second program for grant writing is a competitive one. The Nancy Nossal Fellowship Award was created to honor the memory of Dr. Nancy Nossal, former chief of the Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Biology (LMCB), for her excellence in both research and mentoring. She was a world leader in studies on DNA replication, using T4 bacteriophage in *E. coli*. The competition is held twice a year, in March and September. Applications are in the form of an NIH National Research Service Award (NRSA) grant application. Each application is reviewed by a panel of investigators from the NIDDK Intramural Research Program, and given a priority

score, in a similar fashion as NIH grants. Each applicant receives written feedback on the grant, which serves as an invaluable resource for understanding what review panels look for. This is an excellent way to practice grant writing skills. The award is given to as many as 25% of the applicants, and is targeted to the top 10% of NIDDK fellows. Winners are given a stipend increase of \$3,000 per year.

If you are a trainee in the NIDDK, drop by the NIDDK Fellowship Office to learn more about the resources and support available to you.

For more information:

<http://fellowshipoffice.niddk.nih.gov/about/>
(NIDDK Fellowship Office)

http://fellowshipoffice.niddk.nih.gov/newsletter/current_issue/page1.html (iNFORMER)

<http://fellowshipoffice.niddk.nih.gov/retreat/> (9th Annual NIDDK Fellows Scientific Conference)

<http://fellowshipoffice.niddk.nih.gov/grantwriting/>
(Grant writing)

<http://fellowshipoffice.niddk.nih.gov/audience/fellowship-award.shtml> (Nancy Nossal Fellowship Award)

Career Tools

The Sallie Rosen Kaplan Fellowship

By Delphine Quénet, PhD

Nowadays opportunities for women in science should be equal as for every other scientist, as access to education and the job market are the same for both sexes. However, studies show a different reality (for data, see: www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-sciences), with women leaving the science field earlier than men.

Sallie Rosen Kaplan was an educated woman. However, after her high school graduation and acceptance to a university, she took up responsibilities of her family, giving the opportunity to her brothers to concentrate on their studies at college and law school. Even after her marriage, she continued to show a high interest in the education of her family, especially women. Following Mrs. Kaplan's death, her bequest funds The Sallie Rosen Kaplan Fellowship for Women Scientists in Cancer Research (www.cancer.gov/researchandfunding/cancertraining/atnci/srk), established to provide seminars and workshops on leadership, networking, and work-life balance. Candidates must be female NCI post-doctoral fellows with at least one year remaining at the Institute. The application to this one-year program is a two-step process.

As the first group of fellows completes their training, two women agreed to share their perspectives, feelings, and hopes on this program.

DQ- Why did you apply to The Sallie Rosen Kaplan Fellowship and what were your expectations at that time?

Fellow 1- I applied to the fellowship because of the unique leadership program and the stated goals of retaining more women in the sciences. I want to be a scientific leader, so this program seemed ideal. I had also experienced first-hand some of the difficulties faced by women in science, and was excited to meet a group of women with whom I could share experiences and try to make things better.

Fellow 2- I applied because it was a competitive fellowship that I thought would help me balance the demands of my career and family life.

DQ- What were your first feelings?

Fellow 1- I was excited. It seemed like a wonderful opportunity to learn!

Fellow 2- I was excited but also a little worried as it seemed like a large time commitment. I felt I would definitely grow and learn to use the right tools to help me be successful.

DQ- Do you see a difference between the “You” at the beginning of the fellowship and the “You” today?

Fellow 1- I do. I'm more confident, and I can better articulate what I want from my research and my career.

Fellow 2- Yes. I am more confident in managing myself, my responsibilities, and my relationships (both personal and professional).

DQ- Does this program change your prospects?

Fellow 1- It does. I feel better able to lead others, which will make me a better teacher and mentor. I've been given the tools to make a difference in how women are perceived or treated in science and society.

Fellow 2- I am not sure.

DQ- What is the question that I did not ask and which is important for you?

Fellow 1- I think it's important to realize why we still need programs like this. If you look around at most branches, even here at the National Institutes of Health, the post-docs are about 50:50, but if you look at the gender make-up of the principal investigators, there are many more men than women. We've known about this gender disparity for years, but there's been very little change.

Fellow 2- One of the surprises of the program was meeting nine other fabulous, hard-working women. These women are my peers and they share many of the same concerns and struggles. Their support, understanding, and guidance were something I didn't expect but will always cherish!

These two testimonies showed the importance of this fellowship, as these women seem more self-assured. Applying for this fellowship requires the commitment and support of your principal investigator. Applications for 2014 have not yet been announced. If you have questions, please visit the website or send an email to kaplanfellowship@mail.nih.gov.

The NIH-SACNAS chapter An Interview with its President

By Patricia Forcinito, PhD

The NIH started its Society for Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) Chapter back in 2011, with Angel Morrow, Kelsey Motanic, Elena Hernandez-Ramon, Angela Ramer, Idalis Villanueva as the founders, and Sharon Milgram as the advisor. The mission of this national organization is to foster the success of Hispanic/Chicano and Native American scientists—from college students to professionals—in attaining advanced degrees, careers, and positions of leadership in science. The NIH-SACNAS Chapter has built an enthusiastic, supportive, and warm community to carry out this mission. In January 2014, Angel de la Cruz-Landrau, an NIH Graduate Partnership Program pre-doctoral fellow from Universidad Central del Caribe in Bayamón Puerto Rico, became the new president of the NIH-SACNAS. We interviewed him to get a better insight on SACNAS main goals and impact on NIH fellows.

Who is the NIH SACNAS Chapter composed of?

We now have around 160 members. The board is composed of the president, vice-president, secretary, five counselors, and a liaison from the Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE). Our board encompasses post-bacs, post-docs, and graduate students.

What are SACNAS's main activities?

The NIH-SACNAS Chapter focuses on scientific and career development, networking skills improvement, and outreach. Each of the NIH-SACNAS chapter activities are planned for every educational level at the NIH.

Who can be a SACNAS member?

Everybody can be a SACNAS member. If you are interested in being part of our activities/seminars/workshops, you can subscribe to the NIH-SACNAS chapter listserv [listserv](#).

How does being a SACNAS member help in your career?

Before becoming the SACNAS NIH Chapter president, I actively worked as its secretary. All this has helped me to improve my leadership skills, as well as to realize how important some away-from-the bench activities are. As a president, I have the chance to interact with post-bacs, post-docs, the OITE liaison, etc.; and that helps me to understand their needs and to be able to better help them achieve their professional goals.

What are your plans for the future?

I am not sure yet what the future will bring. I always wanted to help people; I especially love to help them achieve their life goals. I would also like to teach, so I can share the knowledge I have acquired through the pathway of life.



Angel de la Cruz Landrau became president of the NIH SACNAS Chapter on January 2014

Where can we find out more about the NIH-SACNAS Chapter?

You can follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

Science Voices from Home

Tour de France of LaBiotech

An Overview of the Biotechnology Landscape in France

By Martin Lang, PhD

A popular saying states: “If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life.” Following this statement, two enthusiastic French students, Philip Hemme and Joachim Eeckhout, combined their interest in biotechnology and passion for bike riding and produced the documentary “Tour de France of LaBiotech” that showcases the French biotech landscape.

The two young students of biotechnology and business are the co-founders of Labiotech fr, the leading French biotechnology news website. It provides updated news about what is going on in the biotechnology world. The popular website was launched in 2012 and aggregates news from different sources in about 15-20 articles per week. The bloggers also publish their own content, such as interviews, conference summaries or analyses. News websites like Labiotech.fr are excellent resources to follow the vibrant and growing biotech ecosystem.

For this website, Philip and Joachim decided to collect first-hand information about biotech companies throughout France and organized a five-week Tour de France-style bike trip in the summer of 2013. During their trip, the two visited 26 different companies and interviewed their senior leadership. Examples of key leaders interviewed were Denis Lucquin, managing partner and chairman of Sofinnova Partners, the biggest life sciences venture capital company of Europe, or Hervé Brailly, CEO of Innate Pharma, one of the fastest growing French biotech companies. Their experiences were collected in the unique documentary “Tour de France of LaBiotech” that depicts the panorama of the biotechnology business sector in France. The film

is dubbed in English and has been released online (labiotechtour.com/france). The documentary has been shown in Paris, Copenhagen, Berlin, Heidelberg, London, and recently in Boston. On May 05, 2014 the Visiting Fellows Committee had the pleasure of welcoming Philip at the NIH to present his project, showcase part of the movie, and discuss the biotech landscape in and outside France in an informal Science Voices from Home event.

The participants at the meeting learned that France provides a very good environment for start-ups, encourages the development of small businesses, and helps small companies to raise money for their early development. The idea behind this policy is to trigger a positive loop that attracts foreign companies and people with good ideas, which should eventually create employment. For this purpose, several biotechnology hubs have been created throughout France during the last few years. Such incubators help to promote innovation through collaboration and competition. One important example is the *Institut Gustave-Roussy* in South Paris, France, which is one of the world's leading cancer-research institutes and predicted to become Europe's biggest cancer center by 2020. The institute integrates patient care with high quality research and training of students and medical doctors. In addition, smaller and bigger companies will be built around the campus to assist research and patient care, and also to promote development of the companies themselves.

Encouraging the development of such interdisciplinary and concentrated biotech-hubs will be an important way also for other countries to boost the economic growth of an area. For now, France seems a good place for anyone with creative ideas and the intention to start a biotech company.

Culture Corner

The Clinical Center

A Beacon for Medical Research

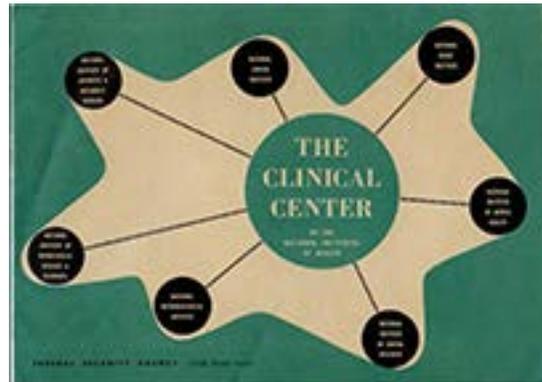
By Amie D. Moody, PhD

Hundreds, if not thousands, of people go through the doors of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Center (CC) every day. Those of us who work in or visit the building (also known as Building 10, the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center or the Mark O. Hatfield Clinical Center) pass through hallways with old photographs and letters on the walls and we attend seminars in the Lipsett or Masur Auditoriums. But what are the origins of this building? What did those people do for the CC that was so special they were honored by having buildings and auditoriums named for them? This article touches on a few of those events and people, and provides some perspective from present day clinicians about what it means to be a part of the CC's legacy.

The goal of the CC when Congress appropriated the money to begin its construction was, "Providing proper clinical research facilities that will bring the sufferer, the human patient, into direct contact with researchers."¹ Unique at the time, the CC was the first facility that brought physicians, biochemists and other researchers, pathologist and patients all together under one roof. Bringing a multidisciplinary approach to treating patients yielded numerous medical breakthroughs over the following decades. Examples include the development of the first cure for a solid tumor, the first immunotherapy option to treat cancer, the description of AIDS' pathogenesis, including the creation of blood tests for it, and the first computerized system to facilitate and monitor clinical trials. This strong history of cooperation between clinicians and researchers, and the medical advances that resulted from these collaborations, are still cited by physician scientists like Dr. Fernanda Arnaldez, an assistant clinical investigator in the Pediatric Oncology Branch of the NCI, where she focuses on solid tumor oncology, and Dr. Minhaj Siddiqui,

a urological oncology fellow, as reasons for coming to work and study at the CC.

Dr. Jack Masur was appointed director of the CC in 1948, years before the CC opened its doors to patients in 1953. Dr. Masur was both director of the fledgling center and a major force in designing the new building. Because the CC was not just a typical teaching hospital, it had amenities like central air conditioning and patient rooms wired for television to alleviate the burden of extended stays for patients participating the clinical trials. The research laboratories were in close proximity to the clinicians, and support facilities were in satellite buildings connected to the CC by underground tunnels. The motto Dr. Masur set for the CC was, "This institution doesn't follow standards, it sets them." Additionally, Dr. Masur was a key supporter of ceasing the testing of new drugs on prisoners, and for instituting the practice of informed consent for patients participating in clinical trials.



Pictured above is the front cover from a brochure for the "new" Clinical Center, which was printed in the early 1950s.²

Although the CC was created with massive support, which led to many prosperous years, the center went through a Dark Age of sorts in the early 1970s. It was tumultuous time, with the Vietnam War dragging on, and President Richard M. Nixon's administration was pushing for large budget cuts. Although spending for the Cancer and Heart, Lung and Blood Institutes was increased, all other institutes saw significant decreases in funding. Congress imposed a personnel ceiling on the NIH, costing 350 permanent staff NIH-wide to

lose their jobs; most of these losses were felt by the CC's nursing staffs.

By the late 1970s, the financial landscape was less bleak. In July 1976, Dr. Mortimer B. Lipsett took over leadership of the CC. His largest contributions to the CC were opening Critical Care Medicine, and pushing the development of the bioethics field, information dissemination, advocating the creation of in-house diagnostic capabilities and furthering patient care research. He also faced increasing pressure to bill patients participating in clinical trials. Fortunately, there was strong congressional support to keep the care of research patients free. Dr. Siddiqui says that, even today, keeping patient care free is important to the mission of the CC. He feels that this provides clinicians unique freedom to care for their patients in ways that are not possible at other institutions—they can take on more high risk, high reward treatments.

Today, the tradition continues where clinicians and laboratory scientists work together to push the boundaries of modern medicine. Dr. Emily Peroutka, a clinical fellow in Surgical Oncology, says that, “Her[sic] experience here has undoubtedly been career defining. She has [sic] been...impressed by the intelligent and creative research that is performed here.” In closing, the next time you walk through the halls of the Hatfield or Magnuson buildings, both named for Senators who staunchly supported biomedical research, take a moment to appreciate the CC's history, and be excited for the next medical revolution that will come from within those walls, whatever it may be!³

1. A quote from Senator Frank B. Keefe from January 16, 1948.

2. The brochure, and other historical documents related to the Clinical Center, can be found on the Office of History's website at: <http://history.nih.gov/research/clinicalcenter.html>.

3. This article heavily draws on “Beacon of Hope,” by Richard Mandel, Ph.D., which can be found at: <http://history.nih.gov/exhibits/beacon/index.html>.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Visited the NIH A Once-in-a-Lifetime Experience

By Patricia Forcinito, PhD

Last March, it became public knowledge that his Holiness the Dalai Lama was coming to give a lecture at the NIH just four days before the talk actually took place. There were only one thousand seats, and, as many more people were interested in the lecture, it was decided to distribute the tickets via a lottery. I applied for this ticket lottery with low expectations on winning, and to my surprise, two days later I received an e-mail saying that I was one of the winners.

Being a visiting fellow at the NIH provides you with the exciting experience of working with leading scientists in state-of-the-art facilities, doing next frontier research. It also allows you to experience enriching opportunities like this one.



Hundreds of people gathered at the entrance of Natcher Conference Center waiting for the NIH J. Edward Rall Cultural Lecture given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

The title of His Holiness talk was “The Role of Science in Human Flourishing”, in the context of the annual J. Edward Rall Cultural Lecture, hosted by NIH Director Dr. Francis S. Collins. Dr. Collins introduced the Dalai Lama first summarizing parts of his biography taken from his webpage, and remarked that the Dalai Lama got the Nobel peace

prize in 1989 for his “consistent resistance to the use of violence in his people struggle to regain their liberty”. Then, he highlighted that the Dalai Lama talked about science in his acceptance speech saying “With the ever growing impact of science in our lives, religion and spirituality have a greater role to play, reminding us about humanity, there is no contradiction between the two”.

I found the Dalai Lama an incredibly humble and down-to-earth person. One by one, he answered the questions that were e-mailed and presented to him by Dr. Collins. Throughout his answers he emphasized the importance of love, compassion, truth, friendship, kindness, and happiness. He emphasized his long time interest in science by saying, “since my childhood I had keen interest in science and technology”, but also said that “some scientists are wonderful as scientists, but they are not necessarily happy as persons. Later he added “scientific knowledge alone will not bring inner peace”. For me, as well as for many scientists, our daily pursuit of knowledge and understanding provides us meaning in our own lives, as well as contributing to the common good. It was a great experience as a researcher, but more importantly as a person, to have had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of hearing His Holiness the Dalai Lama talking at the NIH.

The Dalai Lama talk was webcast live to NIH employees and can be viewed at <http://videocast.nih.gov/summary.asp?live=13812&bhcp=1>.

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We look forward to hearing from you!”

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