

JEFFPOST

Empowering Postdoctoral Careers

ISSUE 3 | December 2023 | Jefferson Postdoctoral Association

Key Highlights

Each year, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs welcomes both new and returning JPA executive board members, elected by the postdoctoral community. The executive board plans events and professional development activities for Jefferson's postdoctoral community throughout the year.

National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW) 2023, established in 2009, was a week-long celebratory event recognizing the contributions that postdocs make in their labs, field of study, and community.

The Postdoctoral Research Symposium (PRS) on September 21 highlighted the exciting biomedical, clinical, and population health research discoveries our postdoc fellows make every day.

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JPA Executive Board Members

Introducing the members of the 2023-2024 Jefferson Postdoctoral Association (JPA) executive board! The JPA is dedicated to delivering excellence in organizing career panel discussions, the Technical Skills Seminars Series (TSSS), social gatherings, and a diverse range of engaging activities for Jefferson postdocs. Our commitment remains unwavering as we strive to uplift the postdoctoral community's spirit through a series of events throughout the academic year.



Mouadh Barbirou, PhD
President

Mouadh is preparing for a career in biomedical science, focusing on translating scientific discoveries into clinical practice. Dr. Barbirou's primary research interest is in understanding the molecular causes of cancer susceptibility. Mouadh aims to uncover the molecular basis of this variation and use that knowledge to enhance detection, treatment, and outcomes. Dr. Barbirou's goal is to pursue the translation of scientific results and knowledge into clinical practice and patient health care, and thereby make applicable the potential of precision medicine.



Joice Thomas Gavali, PhD
Senior Vice-President

Joice Thomas Gavali, PhD, earned her doctorate in Pharmacology at the Centro de Investigacion y de Estudios Avanzados (CINVESTAV-IPN) in Mexico. Her graduate studies focused on regulation by reactive oxygen species of store-operated calcium release in adult rat cardiomyocytes preconditioned with diazoxide. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Jianxin Sun's lab, and her research focuses on understanding the regulation of endothelial cell coupling in cardiac hypertrophy, cardiac fibrosis, and pulmonary artery hypertension.



FNU Deepa, PhD
Vice-President, Communications (July 2023-November 2023)

Deepa is a postdoctoral fellow specializing in Hematology at Thomas Jefferson University. She completed her master's degree and PhD in Biochemistry at Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India. Her primary research area involves the intricate realm of platelet signaling, with a particular focus on elucidating their role in maintaining hemostasis. Her research endeavors are dedicated to unraveling the intricate mechanisms that underlie how platelets contribute to critical conditions like myocardial infarction and stroke.

Sabrina Ben Hamed, PhD
Vice-President, Communications (November 2023-Present)

Sabrina is originally from Djerba, a Mediterranean island in Tunisia. She earned a bachelor's degree in Cell and Molecular Biology and a master's degree in Genetics and Cell Physiology from the Higher Institute of Biotechnology Monastir, Tunisia. She then earned her PhD in Virology and Immunology at the University of Monastir and the University of Justus Liebig Giessen in Germany; here she worked on novel antiviral approaches against the influenza virus. After graduation, she moved to the United States and joined Thomas Jefferson University as a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Schnell's lab, Department of Microbiology and Immunology, where she works on the development of next-generation vaccines and therapeutics.



Sophia Lazar, PhD
Treasurer

Sophia Lazar graduated with her PhD in Biomedical Sciences from the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, in December 2022. Here she studied the role of AGO2-dependent RNAi on platelet function. As a postdoctoral research fellow at Thomas Jefferson University, she chose to remain in the field of hematologic research, joining The Cardeza Foundation in the laboratory of Drs. Steve McKenzie and James Michael. Currently, her studies are focused on the role of 12-HETE in thrombocytopenia, using various ex-vivo and in-vivo models in addition to human patients.

Melissa Molho Medina, PhD
Secretary

Melissa, hailing from Mexico, relocated to the United States to pursue her PhD in Plant Pathology at the University of Kentucky. Throughout her doctoral studies, she delved into the intricate world of virus-host interactions in plants, with a specific focus on the role of the actin network in viral infections. Currently, she is a postdoctoral fellow in the Microbiology Department at Thomas Jefferson University under the guidance of Dr. Ramage. Her current research centers on the captivating realm of virus-host interactions in emerging infectious diseases, with a particular emphasis on flaviviruses.



Amandeep Girdhar, PhD
Vice-President, Career Development

Amandeep earned his B. Tech degree in Biotechnology from Lovely Professional University in Punjab, India and his M. Tech in Biotechnology from RGPV in Madhya Pradesh, India. He then completed his PhD in Biotechnology at IIT in Hyderabad, India. Amandeep is a postdoctoral fellow, working with Dr. Lin Guo at Thomas Jefferson University. His research is centered on designing and evaluating innovative short RNA inhibitors to counteract the liquid-liquid phase separation and protein aggregation observed in ALS and FTLD diseases.

Arun Kumar Jannu, PhD
Vice-President, Nominations and Elections

Arun Kumar Jannu obtained his master's degree from the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) in Hyderabad India and his PhD in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at NIPER in Guwahati, India. His research during this period focused on discovering an innovative carrier system for targeted drug delivery in anticancer treatments. Currently, he is a postdoctoral fellow in the Center for Translational Medicine under the guidance of Dr. Raymond Penn. His current research investigates the cellular and molecular mechanisms by which G protein-coupled receptors regulate essential functions in human airway smooth muscle cells.



Shamaila Zafar, PhD
Vice-President, Social Affairs



Shamaila Zafar, a neuroscientist and licensed Pharmacist hailing from Pakistan, completed her doctoral studies in Physiology at the Government College University of Faisalabad (GCUF) in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Her prior research explored alternative therapeutic strategies to initiate and expedite the process of axonal regeneration, leading to full functional recovery following nerve injuries. Currently, in her role as a postdoctoral fellow, she works with Dr. Jay Schneider to investigate the intricate interplay between socioeconomic and environmental factors and their effects on the developing brain. Her research encompasses aspects of neurocognitive performance, alterations in behavior, and the potential risk of dementia associated with neurodegeneration later in life.

National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW) 2023



JPA members with Dr. Lisa Kozlowski, Director, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, and Dawn Berkbigler, Administrative Assistant for JCLS

Continuing our longstanding tradition within the JPA, we recently marked National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW) from September 18-22. This observance is a heartfelt acknowledgment of the dedication and contributions made by the esteemed members of the Jefferson postdoctoral community. The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) has championed NPAW for over a decade to honor the diligent efforts and invaluable contributions of postdoctoral scholars to the advancement of research and discovery within the United States (U.S.). This special week earned official recognition from the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010. Since then, it has become a widely celebrated event, observed by institutions not only across the U.S. but also on a global scale.

As part of our annual tradition, the JPA organized a weeklong celebration of NPAW for our Jefferson postdocs. The week's highlights included a kick-off event on September 18th with coffee and donuts. On September 19th, an informative training session was hosted by Pam Walter, Jefferson's Director of the Office for Professional Writing, Publishing, and Communication, where she introduced the Postdoctoral Scientific Editing and Reviewing Team (PSERT). A virtual career panel on September 20th featured speakers from various biotechnology sectors sharing their career transition stories. On September 21st, we featured the Jefferson Postdoctoral Research Symposium (PRS), where postdocs presented their research through posters and talks. The week concluded on September 22nd with a lively Social Night, complete with games, food, and prizes. This NPAW, recognizing and appreciating the contributions of our postdoctoral community, was a resounding success.



A significant turn-out for coffee and donuts on Sept 18th made the JPA members happy to pose for a photo



Pam Walter's insightful session drew active participation by Jefferson postdocs on Sept 19th

Postdoctoral Research Symposium (PRS) 2023



Keynote Speaker, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, at PRS



Dr. Joseph Tracy, Distinguished Mentor Award winner



Dr. Nopprarat Tongmuang, one winner of the Outstanding Poster awards



Dr. Benjamin Cartes-Saavedra, winner of the Research In-Depth presentation session



PRS award winners with the event organizing committee members



PRS organizing committee

Postdoctoral Social 2023



Postdoc Social on Sept 22nd: Dinner and Games



JPA Board Members



Postdoc Social attendees



Bingo Game Winners



Call for Stories for JeffPost:

Postdocs, graduate students, and PIs interested in showcasing the following are encouraged to reach out to JPA

- Technologies or services for potential use by postdocs and the research community at Jefferson
 - Stories of research/awards from Jefferson laboratories
- Articles/information associated with improving the life of postdocs and students
 - Postdoc achievements

Acknowledgments: JPA executive board members for sharing photos and organizing all events; Dr. Lisa Kozlowski, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, Pamela Walter, Office for Professional Writing, Publishing, and Communication, and Dawn Berkbigler, Administrative Assistant, JCLS/Office of Postdoctoral Affairs for editing and suggestions.

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