



**Jefferson**

Philadelphia University +  
Thomas Jefferson University

HOME OF SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE

# JeffPost

*(Empowering Postdoctoral Careers)*

ISSUE 2 | October 2022 |

Presenting the **2022-2023 Jefferson Postdoctoral Association (JPA) executive board** members! The JPA puts its best foot forward in executing career panel talks, Technical Skills Seminars Series (TSSS), social hours, and multifarious activities engaging Jefferson postdocs. We will continue to conduct events to uplift the spirit of the postdoctoral community throughout the academic year.

## JPA Executive Board Members



**Elham Javed, PhD**  
**PRESIDENT**

Elham received her PhD from Jefferson and started working as a postdoc here. Being the only female and postdoc in her new lab, she realized she needed to be around peers whom she could relate to better. She is finally in a comfortable position in her career and wanted to dedicate some of her time towards the JPA and engage with her peers.

When not neck deep in research, Elham enjoys baking and cooking. She even has plans to start a meal on wheels program with local charitable organizations. If not a scientist, Elham would have joined Emirates airlines as a manager!

The best part of being a postdoc for her is that she enjoys the freedom to work independently but is also acutely aware of the fact that along with that freedom comes more responsibility. Occasionally she tends to miss being a student, as now, she doesn't have the luxury of messing up because 'she is a student.'

In Elham's own words, "The moment my committee said congratulations you are now a doctor, it felt special. When we go through our PhD journey, we hear lots of advice, but I think very rarely do we get advised on how indescribable that moment is when your committee tells you those words. My postdoc journey started from those words and with it came a sense of accomplishment like none other. I was fortunate enough to get hired in an amazing lab. Of course, I should also mention my first official year as a postdoc, COVID hit, so going back to lab after 6-8 months and doing bench work was interesting."

**Kristen Davis, PhD**  
**SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT**



Kristen is a neuroscientist working in Timothy Mosca's lab at Jefferson. She joined the JPA in 2020 as the VP of Social Affairs and has been on the board ever since! She is currently the Senior Vice President.

In Kristen's words, "I joined the JPA because I wanted to be more involved in making Jefferson a welcoming place for all sorts of folks. One of my favorite things about being a postdoc is all the different people you meet from so many places around the world. I love learning about different cultures and hearing about the experiences of other postdocs. When I am not being a postdoc, I enjoy going to concerts and spending time with friends."



**Arijita Ghosh, PhD**  
**VICE-PRESIDENT, COMMUNICATIONS**

Arijita received her PhD from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras. Her doctoral work focused on delineating the role of a novel family of ion channels in cellular calcium signaling with a focus on Endoplasmic Reticulum. The calcium chase made Arijita change compartments for her postdoc and she arrived at MitoCare in Gyorgy Hajnoczky's lab to study mitochondrial calcium dynamics and organellar communication in health and disease.

In sync with her research, Arijita finds clear, concise, and effective communication to be the key for everything in science and life! She joined JPA to learn, grow and highlight the voice of her peers through *JeffPost*, the JPA newsletter. Arijita feels the best part of being a scientist is to experience the dichotomy of clarity and chaos on a regular basis. She also believes academia needs key systemic changes to address better compensatory strategies for stakeholders.

One of the most beautiful and challenging things about her postdoctoral journey has been starting her life in a new city and country. The experience of befriending wonderful colleagues and peers from all across the world has left her grateful and ecstatic. Arijita confesses that she enjoys reading fiction more than reviewing literature. She has a penchant for stories and story-telling. If not a scientist, she would have been a historian.

**Melissa Molho Medina, PhD  
SECRETARY**



Originally from Mexico, Melissa moved to the US to pursue a PhD in Plant Pathology from the University of Kentucky. During her PhD, she studied virus-host interactions in plants, specifically the role of the actin network in viral infection. She was also part of the university's Graduate Student Congress leadership team and advocated for international students. In 2021, she joined Dr. Ramage's lab as a postdoctoral fellow in the Microbiology Department at Jefferson. Currently, she studies virus-host interactions of emerging infectious diseases focusing on flaviviruses.

In the course of being a postdoc, a significant lesson for Melissa has been that collaborating is key to expanding her knowledge. She joined JPA to meet fellow postdocs, make new connections, and to organize social and professional development activities that benefit her peers. Other than science, she loves listening to crime podcasts and reading thriller novels. She also enjoys engaging in outreach activities to promote access to science and advocate for diversity and inclusion. If not a scientist, Melissa would have been a journalist, reporting on the latest news and highlighting incredible stories across the globe. As a postdoc, she enjoys the academic freedom that her job brings, opportunities to pursue multifarious scientific topics, and interactions with fellow scientists doing cool research.

**Nicole Mambelli-Lisboa, PhD  
VICE-PRESIDENT, NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**



Nicole completed her Master's degree in Toxicology/Science and holds a PhD of Genetics at the Butantan Institute in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In 2015, she participated in CAPES PDSE program resulting in a combined doctorate at Jefferson. She completed a postdoctoral program focused in stem cell therapy at Cellavita in partnership with the Butantan Institute, and then was hired by the same company to work as a Quality Control and Technical Manager. She was also a part of the research and development team. Currently, she is pursuing Immunotherapeutic and Cancer Research work as a Research Fellow in the Department of Pathology, Anatomy and Cell Biology at Jefferson.

Nicole went back to academia after her industry experience because she is passionate about it. She joined the JPA board to share and hear different experiences in science, courtesy of the great networking that the board provides. She is looking forward to helping the functioning of the JPA and making things better for postdocs. Besides science, she loves cooking and spending time in outdoor spaces.

**Piyush Mishra, PhD  
TREASURER**



Piyush completed his PhD from JNCASR, Bengaluru, India. He joined Jefferson as a Postdoc in 2018. His research interest lies in the study of mitochondrial biology with respect to primary and metastatic hepatocellular carcinoma, and he is aiming to develop effective and novel treatment strategies for the same.

Piyush had been a silent observer and supporter of JPA activities over the last few years. In his words, “While I really appreciated their efforts, I also wanted to be a part of it and contribute my bit in any capacity possible. I am glad I decided to join this wonderful team.”

Piyush is an avid follower of football (soccer) and plays the sport whenever he gets a chance. He also likes exploring the food scene in and around Philly. If not a scientist, he says he would have been a singer or pursued a career in the performing arts!

For Piyush, the best part of being a scientist is the benchwork, the excitement of designing an experiment/hypothesis and then executing it regardless of the outcome. The impossibility of anticipating what he will end up discovering is something that excites him. He also attests to the importance of a good work-life balance and he resonates with the thought that postdocs are highly under-compensated for their efforts.

**Joice Thomas Gaval, PhD  
VICE-PRESIDENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS**



Joice is the Vice-President of Social Affairs of the JPA, where she organizes events to engage the postdocs better and create an inclusive and welcoming experience for all. She believes in the saying, ‘happiness and engagement translate to results.’ Joice is currently working under Jianxin Sun as a postdoctoral fellow in cardiovascular diseases. She integrates her expertise in molecular mechanisms of excitation-contraction coupling in cardiac fibrosis and pulmonary artery hypertension to extend the boundaries of science.

Before joining Jefferson, she worked as a postdoctoral scientist at Smidt Heart Institute, Cedar Sinai Medical Center, in Los Angeles. She broadened her horizons by experimenting with the heart failure model to understand the role of the PMCA1 gene in excitation-contraction coupling. Hailing from a small town in India, it wasn’t an easy road for Joice to pursue her goals. She embarked on her scientific journey with grit, determination, and passion which took her to Centro de Investigacion de Estudios Avanzados (CINESTAV-IPN) in Mexico, where she received her PhD in pharmacology.



Her graduate studies focused on regulation by reactive oxygen species of store-operated calcium release in adult rat cardiomyocytes preconditioned with diazoxide.

She strives to exhibit dedication and collaboration in all aspects of her life – be it actively helping at church on Sundays or organizing events for the JPA. Her enthusiasm for research can be captured in the moments when she runs to lab in the middle of the night to set up her workspace for the next day's experiments. In her words, the nighttime Jefferson security personnel might be her best friend!

The small town of Nanded that she grew up in holds a special place in her heart and she can't stop bragging about it. Her favorite thing to do anywhere in the world is to relish home-cooked food by her husband.



***JPA Executive Board members along with Associate Dean for Student and Postdoctoral Affairs, Dr. Lisa Kozlowski***

## National Postdoctoral Appreciation Week (NPAW) 2022

In continuation of a long tradition for the Jefferson Postdoc Association (JPA), we celebrated the National Postdoctoral Appreciation Week (NPAW) from September 19-23 in appreciation of the efforts by the Jefferson postdoctoral community. The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) has been celebrating NPAW for over a decade to recognize the hard work and contributions of postdoctoral scholars towards US research and discovery. This week was officially recognized by U. S. House of Representatives in 2010. It is celebrated across institutions in US and worldwide.

As in past years, JPA arranged and scheduled various events and programs spanning the week to celebrate NPAW along with Jefferson postdocs. The week kick-started with grab and go coffee and donuts on Sept 19<sup>th</sup>. An insightful training session was conducted by Pam Walter wherein she introduced the Postdoctoral Editing and Reviewing Team (PSERT) to the attendees on Sept 20<sup>th</sup>. An exciting and interactive career panel was conducted virtually on Sept 21<sup>st</sup>. It showcased invited speakers from diverse walks of the biotechnology industry and beyond, who enlightened the audience about their transition stories and experiences. On Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>, JCLS Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and JPA organized the Jefferson Postdoctoral Research Symposium, where postdocs exhibited posters and presented research talks. The major attraction of the last day of the week, Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>, was the trivia night, which was all about fun, games, delicious food, and exciting prizes!

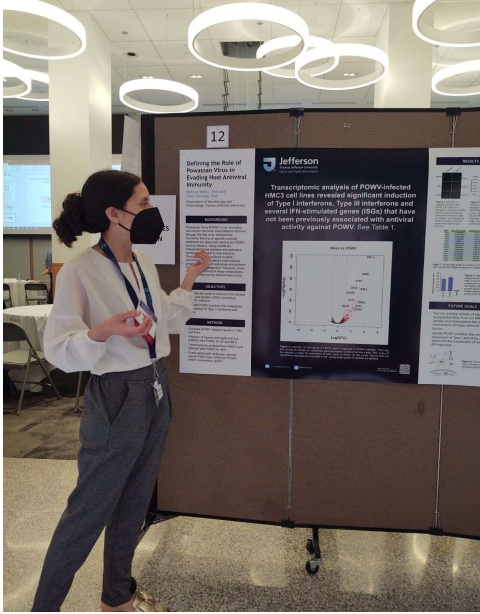


*A significant turn-out for coffee and donuts on day 1 made the JPA executive board members happy to pose for a photo!*



*Pam Walter's insightful session drew active participation by Jefferson postdocs on day 2!*





**Dr. Melissa Molho Medina at the poster presentation session in PRS 2022**



**Dr. Ankita Srivastava wins one of the Best poster awards at PRS!**



**Dr. Piyush Mishra presents his work in the research in-depth presentation session**



**Dr. Ashutosh Phadte wins one of the best poster awards at PRS 2022!**



**Dr. Piyush Mishra wins Outstanding Research In-depth Presentation award!**



**Winners of best poster/research talks along with the PRS organizing committee members!**





**TRIVIA Night!**



**The TRIVIA Winners!**



**Postdocs enjoying the spread!**



**JPA members on food duty!**



**Congratulations to the winners and nominees!**



**Dr. Nicole Wilski and Dr. Fabio Quaglia win Best Postdoc Mentor Awards!**





## Call for Stories for JeffPost:

Postdocs, graduate students, and PIs should reach out to JPA if they are interested in showcasing the following:

- 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 execution of all events. Dr. Lisa Kozlowski, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, and Pamela Walter, Office of Professional Writing, Publishing, and Communication, for editing and suggestions.*

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