“Engaging, Connecting, and Developing the Rutgers Postdoc Community”

RUTGERS
Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

Annual Report | 2017-2018
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Executive Summary

Rutgers Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) | Background

With the guidance and support of the Executive Steering Committee and the Postdoctoral Advisory Council, the new universitywide Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) supports postdoctoral researchers and their faculty mentors by providing a central hub for professional development, knowledge sharing, and community building opportunities. As of May 2018, Rutgers has almost 700 active postdoctoral researchers. See more demographics on page 9.

OPA’s First Year Milestones | 2017-2018

The new universitywide Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) was officially launched on February 3, 2017. In the first year it was established, the OPA accomplished the following major milestones:

- **Built Universitywide Infrastructure**
  - *Office Space* – secured a physical space at the Nelson Biology Laboratories building on Busch Campus and partnered with RBHS – Newark to serve and support postdoctoral researchers and their faculty mentors in Newark
  - *Office Staff* – dedicated staff members were hired to get the office established and operational

- **Raised Awareness of Rutgers’ Postdocs and the new Office of Postdoctoral Affairs**
  - *Postdoc Photoshoot* – partnered with University Communications and Marketing to have a photoshoot session as a way to highlight the diverse postdoctoral community
  - *Open Houses* – celebrated the launch of the new office by hosting open house events on each campus. These events served as a venue to educate the Rutgers community about the new office and its services, and to provide a meet and greet opportunity for cross-university collaborations to support and advance the postdoctoral community and their faculty mentors

- **Developed Strategic Communication & Outreach Mechanisms**
  - *Office of Postdoctoral Affairs' Website* – developed a robust and comprehensive website to serve as an online portal to communicate postdoc events and resources
  - *Weekly Newsletter* – created an engaging weekly newsletter that is sent out every Thursday to the listserv and informs the postdoc community of upcoming events and opportunities

- **Provided Career Development Opportunities**
  - *Individual Career Advising Sessions* – offered sessions on defining and strategizing a career path and plan
  - *Versatile PhD* – purchased membership to a digital platform designed to help PhD students and postdocs learn more about career opportunities that exist outside academia
  - *Monthly Career Development Workshops* – hosted skill-building workshops in cross-cutting areas such as communication, grant writing, project management, and teaching portfolios
• **Implemented Orientation Process for New and Current Postdocs**
  - *Welcome Postdocs* - added office description and website to new postdoc appointment letter and sent welcome emails to all incoming postdocs
  - *Information Sessions* - offered monthly welcome and information sessions for new and current postdocs

• **Facilitated Community Building Opportunities**
  - *Monthly Coffee Hours* – hosted 11 coffee hour sessions to encourage informal talks over coffee in a safe space
  - *Rutgers Postdoctoral Association (PDA)* – partnered with the PDA which works to enrich the postdoc experience at Rutgers through a variety of informal events and social activities

• **Instituted Postdoctoral Advisory Council**
  - *Postdoctoral Advisory Council* – developed a small, universitywide group of faculty, staff, and postdocs who have an interest in improving the culture, experience, and professional development for postdocs
  - *Two Meetings* – convened in the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters to identify current issues affecting the postdoc community and areas of future focus

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**Looking Ahead | Strategic Areas of Focus for 2018-2022**

Based on reflection and feedback from our first year, we plan to prioritize our focus in the following five areas:

• **Customized High-Quality Programming**
  - Partner with key internal stakeholders to develop and run a comprehensive career development program for postdocs that will equip them with the tools needed to be most successful while at Rutgers and beyond

• **Comprehensive Services**
  - Create and strengthen partnerships (internal and external) to build new opportunities and bridge services and communication gaps

• **Effective Assessment**
  - Streamline assessment of all events, activities, and services to determine and compare impact

• **Strong Presence**
  - Use various outreach and communications strategies to increase the office’s physical and digital visibility

• **Engagement Beyond Rutgers**
  - Develop alternate funding and engagement opportunities, including grants, foundations, and/or the establishment of a Rutgers Postdoc Alumni Association
Our Mission | We are Universitywide!

Reporting to the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the new universitywide Office of Postdoctoral Affairs is committed to advancing the University's mission to conduct cutting-edge research and advanced training.

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs supports postdoctoral researchers and their faculty mentors by providing a central hub for professional development, knowledge sharing, and community building opportunities.

We connect, recommend, and refer our postdocs to professionals at Rutgers, from whom they can find the answers to their questions. Our office helps postdocs navigate Rutgers by providing information and referrals to campus representatives and relevant institutional contacts throughout the University.

About Us

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) helps postdocs make the most of their time at Rutgers by providing central coordination of information and opportunities relevant to all postdocs, universitywide. Specifically, we:

- Act as a main contact for postdocs, and help them navigate postdoc life at Rutgers by providing information through Welcome and Information Sessions and referrals to campus representatives and relevant institutional contacts across the university;

- Host career development workshops and other activities, open to all postdocs, and encourage postdocs to take advantage of professional development opportunities offered within and outside of Rutgers;

- Offer individual career advising sessions to all postdocs interested in defining a career path and navigating their next career steps;

- Help postdocs build community and expand their professional networks, starting internally, by creating opportunities for postdocs to connect with their colleagues across Rutgers.

In addition to guidance from the Executive Steering Committee, the Postdoctoral Advisory Council, and the Website Advisory Team, the office relies on a strong partnership with the Rutgers Postdoctoral Association (PDA) and with several units across the University.

Executive Steering Committee

Chaired by Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Barbara A. Lee, the Executive Steering Committee is a group of seven senior faculty and administrators who drove the establishment of Rutgers' first universitywide office for postdoctoral researchers. The committee meets every six months with the OPA staff to provide high level oversight to the office and make decisions on policy-related recommendations that impact Rutgers postdocs.

The members of the Executive Steering Committee are:

Barbara A. Lee, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Jan Lewis, Ph.D.
Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences-Newark
Institutional Partnerships

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, relies on strong partnerships with the Postdoctoral Association (PDA) at Rutgers and several units and programs across the University for its success, including among others:

**Office of Postdoctoral Affairs - Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS)**

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs in Newark partners closely with the new universitywide Office of Postdoctoral Affairs to provide support for RBHS postdocs.

**Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs – Faculty Development Programs**

The Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (SVPAA) is responsible for academic programs and policies across the university and is charged with advancing the teaching, research, and service missions of Rutgers University through the promotion of academic and programmatic excellence.

Through its Faculty Development initiatives, postdoctoral researchers pursuing an academic career have been able to benefit and advance their career goals by participating in programs such as the Rutgers Connection Network (RCN) Mentoring Program and the Objective Analysis of Self and Institution Seminar (OASIS) program.

![Figure 1. Participants of RCN Mentoring Program during the Orientation Event | October 6, 2017](image-url)
Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research

The Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research (CTAAR) supports teaching and learning through a variety of areas: pedagogy and faculty development, assessment programs, instructional technologies, classroom technologies, and information technologies.

CTAAR partners with the office to offer teaching workshops like "Teaching Portfolios" for postdocs.

Rutgers Global

Rutgers Global, formerly known as The Centers for Global Advancement and International Affairs (GAIA Centers), creates connections without borders between people, ideas, and resources. The centers have worked to define and attain the university’s internationalization priorities through funding opportunities, educational programs, cross-cultural and local-global events and trips, and services.

Rutgers Global is a "home away from home" for many international postdocs.

Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED)

The Office of Research and Economic Development provides services throughout Rutgers to support the faculty's research, and strategically leads the university's economic development activities. Research is a fundamental aspect of the university's mission.

Postdocs benefit from grant writing workshops and support through the Research Portal, a one-stop-shop for research-related needs.

Office of STEM Education – School of Arts and Sciences

The Office of STEM Education serves to catalyze and support departmental and interdepartmental efforts and related activities targeted at improving the quality of core education in STEM.

This office offers several ways for postdocs to expand their community outreach portfolio through activities such as the Science Bus Explorer and Geology Museum.
School of Graduate Studies

The School of Graduate Studies provides personalized academic support for approximately 5,200 Rutgers students enrolled in more than 150 doctoral, master's, and dual degree programs across New Brunswick/Piscataway and Newark.

Postdocs across the university benefit from several key grant-funded initiatives offered through the School of Graduate Studies, including the National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN-CAN) and career development initiatives iJOBS and INSPIRE.

Office of Graduate Student External Grants and Fellowships | GradFund

The Office of Graduate Student External Grants and Fellowships helps graduate students to navigate the world of external funding and provides them feedback and support as they prepare their funding applications. GradFund, their peer mentoring fellowship advising service, offers students individual meetings, workshops, writing groups, and mentoring programs.

Through our partnership with GradFund, Dr. Benjamin Arenger, GradFund Senior Fellowships Adviser, offered individual fellowship advising sessions once a week at our office to the postdoc community as well as facilitated workshops geared toward enhancing our postdocs’ grant writing skills.

Figure 3. Dr. Benjamin Arenger, GradFund Senior Fellowship Adviser | Jumpstart your Proposal, Grant Writing Workshop, October 24, 2017

University Communications and Marketing

University Communications and Marketing (UCM) guides and supports Rutgers people as they spread the word about their programs, people, initiatives, and achievements; help the public learn about and access Rutgers' many resources; and help the media tap Rutgers experts, news, and events.

UCM played a key role on the Website Advisory Team and in the development of our website, which included a professional photoshoot of current postdocs at work in and outside of the lab at Rutgers.

University Human Resources

University Human Resources (UHR) provides several resources to postdocs, including but not limited to information about:

Getting Started at Rutgers, Policies and Resources, Job Seeking, and Career Management Tools.
Figure 4. Thanks to our partnerships and collaborative efforts, we are able to create and maximize career development opportunities for our postdoctoral community universitywide.
Demographics of Rutgers’ Postdoctoral Community

Universitywide

Rutgers is proud to be home to a vibrant and growing community of nearly **700 postdocs**! The postdoctoral community at Rutgers is a diverse one, representing STEM, Biomedical, Humanities, and Social Sciences fields. As of **March 1, 2018**, Rutgers had a total of **687 postdocs**. This number includes those in the university titles of Postdoctoral Associates and Postdoctoral Fellows.

By Campus

The majority of postdocs (350) were part of the **Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences** (RBHS) campus, while **Rutgers-New Brunswick** was home to the second largest group (282), followed by: **Rutgers-Newark** (51) and **Rutgers-Camden** (4). Refer to **Figure 6** below.

Geographically, a majority of postdocs (426) were located on the Busch Campus in Piscataway, followed by New Brunswick (127), Newark (124), Off Campus (6), and Camden (4).

![Figure 5. Postdoctoral Researchers working at Dr. Verzi's research lab | School of Arts and Sciences, Department of Genetics, Rutgers-New Brunswick](image)

![Figure 6. Distribution of Postdocs by Campus as of March 1, 2018.](image)
By Schools/Divisions

About 90 percent of all Rutgers postdocs were concentrated within 10 schools/divisions (see Figure 7 for this listing), while the remaining 10 percent were spread across 23 academic units/areas (see Figure 8). The School of Pharmacy boasted the largest number of postdocs with 207, about 30 percent of the entire postdoc community.

Figure 7: Distribution of postdocs by schools/divisions at Rutgers. As of March 1, 2018, 90% (n=641) were concentrated in 10 schools/divisions, while the other 10% (n=46) were spread out across 23 academic units/areas.
Number of International Versus Domestic Postdocs

The postdoc community at Rutgers is diverse in many ways. As of March 1, 2018, nearly half of the postdoc population was international (46%), as defined by those holding J1, H-1B, F1 and other visas. 54% were considered domestic, classified as either US citizens or green card holders.

Figure 8: Distribution of Other Postdocs by Area as of March 1, 2018.

Figure 9: Distribution of International vs. Domestic postdocs at Rutgers as of March 1, 2018. 46% (n=320) of postdocs were international (visa holders) and 54% (n=367) were domestic (US citizens or green card holders).
Rutgers’ first universitywide Office of Postdoctoral Affairs was the result of the combined efforts of multiple groups at the University over many years, that came together to fill the need for a central hub of information and career development opportunities for the Rutgers postdoctoral community.

Here are some major milestones we accomplished in our first year.

Raised Awareness of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

Postdoc Photoshoot

To raise awareness and highlight our postdoctoral community at Rutgers, prior to our launch, we partnered with University Communications and Marketing to complete the first ever photoshoot session for postdocs at Rutgers. We took up the challenge of running this universitywide photoshoot (Figure 10) and by doing so we have created a database of postdoc images that can be used for Rutgers promotional purposes. Before this photoshoot, postdoctoral researchers had little representation in the University’s photo database.

Figure 10. First Rutgers postdocs’ photoshoot to raise awareness of the postdoctoral community.
Open House

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) was officially launched on February 3, 2017 under the direction of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. In the months that followed the office launch, the OPA began the task of raising visibility for the newly established universitywide office. During the spring semester of 2017, the OPA developed partnerships with other Rutgers units, and promoted several on-campus events which benefited postdocs in their career development— including, iJOBS Symposium and University Career Services roundtable discussions. This enabled the OPA to begin spreading the word about the new office, while also serving its intended mission.

The OPA kicked-off the new, universitywide office with a series of Open Houses across the campuses where the postdoc population were highest – Rutgers-New Brunswick, Rutgers-Newark and RBHS (Figure 11).

The purpose of these events, was for the Rutgers community to meet the staff of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and the people who made it possible. This was an open invitation to the entire Rutgers community—postdocs, faculty mentors, staff, and students who were interested in learning about the new Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA). These Open Houses were also an opportunity to network with others across the University and identify potential opportunities for cross-university collaborations to support and advance the postdoctoral community and their faculty mentors.

Figure 11. Over 130 attendees took part in the OPA Open Houses across the University | Rutgers-New Brunswick, February 27, 2017; RBHS-Newark, March 30, 2017; Rutgers-Newark, April 20, 2017.
Built Infrastructure

**Dedicated Office Space**

As part of the infrastructure for the new Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, a physical space was secured at the Nelson Biological Laboratories building on the Busch Campus. This campus is home to over 50% of the postdoc population at Rutgers, and the location has been key in establishing visibility amongst the postdoctoral community. The dedicated space offers a place for postdocs to access information and resources that will aid them in their career development and overall experience at Rutgers. It also serves as a place to create a community. Postdocs come to host meetings and coffee breaks with their colleagues.

**Dedicated Office Staff**

A dedicated staff was put in place to get the office established, and operational – ready to provide the necessary services and resources to the postdoctoral community.

- **Yvonne Gonzalez**
  Director, Mentoring and Career Development

- **Itzamarie Chevere-Torres, PhD**
  Associate Director
  (February 2017 - Present)

- **Antoinette Manganello**
  Senior Program Coordinator
  (February 2017-September 2017)

- **Carmen Castro**
  Senior Program Coordinator
  (September 2017 - Present)

- **Fanila Sarwar**
  Special Projects Assistant (P/T)
  (January 2018 - Present)
Partnered with Newark for Success

As a universitywide office, our mission is to serve and support our postdoctoral researchers and their faculty mentors all throughout Rutgers’ three main campuses (New Brunswick, Newark, and Camden) in their training and career development. To do so, we partnered with Dr. Doreen Badheka, Program Director for Special Projects related to Ph.D. and Postdoctoral training programs at the School of Graduate Studies, Health Science Campus in Newark (Figure 12). Under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Andrew Thomas, Senior Associate Dean at New Jersey Medical School, Dr. Badheka develops and oversees the research career advancement activities, teaches courses and runs workshops, and provides individual and group career counseling for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers—which includes postdoctoral fellows, research associates, and visiting scholars in the post-PhD research phase.

From these individual counseling sessions, Dr. Badheka creates an outline of relevant skills and career development activities. Dr. Badheka guides the postdoctoral researchers to various opportunities on the Rutgers campuses, in the NYC metro area and online.

In 2017, the majority of postdoctoral researchers at RBHS – Newark indicated that they were interested in pursuing a faculty position in academia. In response, Dr. Badheka coordinated informal round table discussions and seminars to discuss the strategies for a successful transition from postdoctoral phase to junior faculty position. Of the nine postdoctoral researchers who participated in these meetings, Dr. Valerie Carabetta was recently appointed as Assistant Professor at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University. Concurrent to these, Dr. Badheka continues individual consultation sessions with postdoctoral researchers to discuss their career plans and aspirations. Occasionally Dr. Badheka has also helped postdoctoral researchers connect with appropriate Rutgers departments for matters related to human resources, visa status, housing, etc.

Additionally, Dr. Badheka encourages postdoctoral fellows to participate in community development efforts by hosting the weekly coffee hour, postdoc appreciation hour during the Spring semester, and postdoc welcome lunch and orientation in the Fall semester.

Dr. Badheka is supported and guided in her endeavors for postdoctoral fellows, research associates and visiting scholars by Dr. Andrew Thomas, Senior Associate Dean for the School of Graduate Studies, Health Science Campus, Newark, NJ.
The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs’ website is our main platform of communication and information sharing with our postdoctoral community, faculty, and administrators. It is a place to feature resources, career development tools, and events available to our postdoc community, for both current and potential postdoctoral candidates and their faculty mentors.

Originally launched on February 3, 2017—simultaneously with our physical location and official office launch—it was envisioned through the collective ideas of the website development team and in collaboration with the University Communications and Marketing (UCM) office. The website development team, co-chaired by Yvonne Gonzalez, Director of Mentoring and Career Development and Antoinette Manganello, former Senior Program Coordinator, is a universitywide group of twelve postdocs (past and current) and administrators that advise the new and on-going development of this website.

During the period of February 6, 2017 to February 5, 2018, the OPA website had a total of 4,056 active sessions worldwide. The United States led the list of the top five countries with the most active sessions with 3,569 sessions (Figure 13), followed by India, South Korea, China, and Brazil.

At the national level, our website had the most number of active sessions from residents of the state of New Jersey, which led the list of top ten states with most active sessions—2,783 sessions (Figure 14), followed by New York, Pennsylvania, California, Michigan, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Texas, Virginia, and Florida.
In our first year, our website was viewed a total of 11,179 times. From those views, the Home page received 3,903 views, followed by the Event Schedule page with 963 views, and then the Career Development at Rutgers page with 446 views (Table 1).

Table 1. Top 10 most visited pages from the Rutgers Office of Postdoctoral Affairs Website | February 6, 2017 to February 5, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Webpages</th>
<th>Number of visits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>3903</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event Schedule</td>
<td>963</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development at Rutgers</td>
<td>446</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Us</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Activities</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information for Current Postdocs</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers Contacts for Postdocs</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet Rutgers Postdocs</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Steering Committee</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About US</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs’ Weekly Newsletter

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs’ weekly newsletter serves as the main source of communication between the OPA and the postdoctoral community. The newsletter informs postdocs of upcoming events and opportunities that will help to improve their training, expand their networks, and further develop their careers.

The weekly newsletter evolved from simple email announcements, to a more robust communication tool on a digital platform (Figure 15). This has increased visibility, and allowed the OPA to capture important data on readership. The number of visits from earlier versions of the newsletter has dramatically increased with the new platform. A landing page on the OPA’s website has also been created to provide access to current and past newsletters.

With its standardized circulation on Thursday afternoons, the newsletter continues to be an invaluable tool for disseminating information and resources to the larger postdoc community at Rutgers.

Implementing Orientation Process (Getting Started at Rutgers) for New and Current Postdocs

**Welcome Letters**

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs implemented another element of the orientation process for new postdocs. Welcome Letters are sent to those postdocs that have recently started their training at Rutgers. This is a good way of reaching out to them early on, welcoming them to the postdoctoral community, and encouraging them to learn more about the services and resources provided by our office.
Welcome & Information Sessions

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs’ Associate Director, Dr. Itzamarie Chevere-Torres and Senior Program Coordinator, Carmen Castro offer optional Welcome & Information Sessions every last Friday of the month open to all new and current postdocs who are interested in learning about the resources that are available to them at Rutgers, and who want to learn more about their work benefits. During this one-hour session, postdocs meet with Itzamarie and/or Carmen to discuss any questions related to benefits and resources as well as to provide a brief explanation of the Postdoctoral Information Guide, a document tailored to each individual with information relevant to their reporting campus and job title. The Postdoctoral Information Guide is available online through our website and can serve as a tool to orient prospective postdoctoral trainees.

In our first year, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs facilitated a total of six Welcome & Information sessions for nine postdoctoral researchers.

Postdoctoral researchers in Newark are also able to take advantage of this service. Dr. Doreen Badheka, Director of Special Projects at the School of Graduate Studies, Health Science Campus in Newark facilitates these sessions.

Developed Career Development Opportunities

Individual Career Advising Sessions

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs began offering Individual Career Advising Sessions to Postdoctoral Researchers—postdoctoral fellows, postdoctoral associates, research associates, and visiting scholars in the post-PhD research phase—looking for perspective on how to navigate their career path. Dr. Chévere-Torres facilitates these one-hour sessions for postdoctoral researchers located in New Brunswick. Postdoctoral researchers located in Newark, may contact Dr. Doreen Badheka for an appointment.

Since its opening, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs has offered a total of sixteen individual career advising sessions. The majority of the sessions focused on writing/reviewing individual CV/resumes and cover letters for job applications, preparing for job interviews, and helping to define and strategize a career path and plan.

Career Exploration Tools | Versatile PhD, Universitywide Membership

In collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs announced in November 2017, a new online resource available to all Rutgers graduate students and postdoctoral researchers: Versatile PhD.

Versatile PhD is a digital platform designed to help PhD students and postdocs learn more about career opportunities that exist outside academia. This tool uncovers non-academic professions, facilitating the exploration of a wide range of career paths. PhD students and postdocs in the STEM, Biomedical, Humanities and Social Sciences fields can benefit from this career development tool.
Career Exploration Tools | Rutgers OPA Website, Internal & External Resources

This year we made great progress in developing a compilation of internal and external career development resources, which all postdocs could use to further their professional development and prepare for their next career steps. See detailed list on our website at https://postdocs.rutgers.edu/career.

Internal Resources
• Networking and Job Exploration
• Grant Support
• Skill Building
• Mentoring Programs
• Individual Career Advising
• Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

External Resources
• Professional Associations
• Career Planning
• Skill Building
• Mentoring Programs
• Job Exploration
Monthly Career Development Workshops

Career development workshops were offered at least once a month and open to all postdoctoral researchers, universitywide. These workshops served postdocs interested in strengthening their skills, in areas such as communication, grant writing, project management, teaching, networking, and public speaking.

These workshops were also an opportunity to connect with other postdocs that shared similar interests, to increase their networks, and expand their knowledge on skills needed to succeed and prepare them for their next career steps. Often, these workshops were complimented with individual career advising sessions to address more specific questions.

We have streamlined the frequency of workshop offerings to optimize promotion and enrollment. We launched our fall workshop series with Dr. Thomas Magaldi’s “How to Overcome Career Challenges” workshop, focused on wellness and work-life balance on August 22, 2017. Since then, all our workshops have been tailored to the needs of our postdoc community and have covered relevant topics, such as time management, interviewing skills, grant writing skills among others (Table 2).

Our interactive workshops have been well received by our community and had an overall attendance of 115 people (Figure 17)—including, postdoctoral researchers, graduate students, instructors, associate professors, assistant professors, a research project coordinator, a program coordinator, and a research teaching specialist (Figure 18).

At the end of each workshop, we administer a workshop evaluation form in which we gather information that will help improve our offerings and help us adjust as needed to the career development needs of our postdoctoral community (Figures 19 & 20).
Table 2: List of all workshops facilitated and sponsored by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and other events promoted through our office during the period of February 3, 2017 to February 2, 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sponsors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February, 2017</td>
<td>Office of Postdoctoral Affairs Open House</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grant Writing &amp; Written Communication</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of Research and Sponsored Program (ORED)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 2017</td>
<td>RCNMP’s Writing Retreat</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angela Christiano - Career Talk with Postdocs</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Office of the Dean of Douglass Residential College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Symposium</td>
<td>Scholarship, Research, and best practices on diversity &amp; inclusion: Current Findings and Emerging Issues</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office of Postdoctoral Affairs Open House</td>
<td>Newark - RBHS</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April, 2017</td>
<td>Office of Postdoctoral Affairs Open House</td>
<td>Newark</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Rutgers Postdoctoral Association, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs</td>
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<td>May, 2017</td>
<td>Rutgers Writing Retreat</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs</td>
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<td>June, 2017</td>
<td>Teaching Portfolio</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 2017</td>
<td>How to Overcome Career Challenges</td>
<td>New Brunswick &amp; Newark</td>
<td>Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, Rutgers UOB5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2017</td>
<td>How to Regain Control of Your Time and Be More Productive</td>
<td>New Brunswick &amp; Newark</td>
<td>Rutgers Global, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postdoc Appreciation Networking Lunch</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Rutgers Postdoctoral Association, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs</td>
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<td>October, 2017</td>
<td>Grant Proposal Writing Workshop Series</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of Research and Economic Development, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview SMARTS: Proven Techniques for Standing Out from the Competition</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of Postdoctoral Affairs</td>
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<td>Young Women in Bio</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, SciWomen, Women in Bio</td>
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<td>RCNMP’s Kick-off</td>
<td>New Brunswick &amp; Newark</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs</td>
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<td>November, 2017</td>
<td>Teaching Portfolio</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, INSPIRE Postdoctoral Program at RWJMS, Office for the Dean at RWJMS, Dean Sherine Gabriel</td>
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<td>December, 2017</td>
<td>Project Management Session I</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of Postdoctoral Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>January, 2018</td>
<td>Project Management Session II</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Office of Postdoctoral Affairs</td>
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Figure 17. OPA Overall Workshops’ Attendance during our first year. A total of 115 people attended our six workshops.
Figure 18. From the total number of attendees (n=78), 63% percent were Postdoctoral Researchers (Postdoctoral Associates n=29; Postdoctoral Fellows n=20), Graduate Students represent 14% (n=11), and Researcher Associates represent 4% of the attendees (n=3). The remaining 19% of the attendees (n=15) represent a variety of job titles.

“Overall, this workshop met my expectations and was worth my while”.

Figure 19. Average response from all six post-workshop evaluations, ranging from 1-5 (disagree-agree) for the statement “Overall, this workshop met my expectations and was worth my time”. Out of those attendees who completed the evaluations (n=96), their average response rate was 4.47 out of 5.
Facilitated Community Building Opportunities

**Monthly Coffee Hour**

The monthly coffee hours serve as community building opportunities for postdocs. Individuals interested in learning more about how to make the most of their time at Rutgers, prepare for life after Rutgers, or those who just want to share some coffee or tea in a safe space, are all welcome. They can also stop in to meet the OPA staff and other postdocs that come to our office.

As of February 2, 2018, we have hosted a total of 11 monthly coffee hour sessions at our office location.

**Rutgers Postdoctoral Association’s Activities**

The Rutgers Postdoctoral Association (PDA) is a volunteer organization that aims to build a stronger and more cohesive postdoctoral community across the university, regardless of campus or department. Rutgers PDA works to enrich the experiences of postdocs at Rutgers, and it hosts a variety of formal and informal events throughout the year, including a fall orientation luncheon, the spring Postdoc Symposium, monthly luncheons or workshops, biweekly postdoc social hours, and outdoor activities and trips around New Jersey (Figure 21).

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs serves as the home for Rutgers PDA, with Associate Director Dr. Chevere-Torres serving in the role of Rutgers PDA Adviser. The office provides partial financial and logistical support, and guidance for PDA endeavors, initiatives, and activities.
Instituted Postdoctoral Advisory Council

**Mission**

Chaired by the **Associate Director** for the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, **Itzamarie Chevere-Torres**, the Postdoctoral Advisory Council is a small universitywide group of faculty, staff, and postdocs who have an interest in improving the culture, experience, and professional development for postdocs at the University. The Postdoctoral Advisory Council was instituted to work together to make formal recommendations for related policies that would be reviewed/approved by our **Executive Steering Committee**.

Council members serve a two-year term, (averaging a couple of hours per semester of time commitment over the **AY 2017-18 & AY 2018-19**) working with the **Office of Postdoctoral Affairs** and the **Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs** in the following ways:

- **Meet four times throughout the two academic years to stay connected about postdoctoral needs, programmatic efforts, policies, and impact**
- **Serve as a champion for postdocs by developing recommendations to better support the professional growth of postdocs to be reviewed by senior administration**

**Postdoctoral Advisory Council Members for the AY 2017-18 & AY 2018-19:**

**Andrew Baker, Ph.D.**
Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy
School of Arts and Sciences
Rutgers-New Brunswick
Csanad Gurdon, Ph.D.
Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Plant Biology
President, Rutgers Postdoctoral Association
Rutgers-New Brunswick

Doreen Badheka, Ph.D.
Program Director for Special Projects
School of Graduate Studies-Newark
Adviser, Newark Postdoctoral Association

Dorothy Hodgson, Ph.D.
Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Graduate Studies
Professor, Department of Anthropology
School of Arts and Sciences
Rutgers-New Brunswick

Ellen Townes-Anderson, Ph.D.
Professor of Pharmacology, Physiology, and Neuroscience
Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Science
Director of Research Development and Initiatives
RBHS-New Jersey Medical School

Janet Alder, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic and Student Affairs, School of Graduate Studies
Associate Professor, Dept. of Neuroscience & Cell Biology, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
iJOBS Program Executive Co-Director

Kirsten VanMeenen, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean for Sponsored Programs and Research Space
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Rutgers-Newark

Li Cai, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering
School of Engineering
Rutgers-New Brunswick

Monica Driscoll, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Molecular Biology & Biochemistry
School of Arts and Sciences
Rutgers-New Brunswick

Paul Copeland, Ph.D.
Director of Research Development, Office of Research and Economic Development
Rutgers-New Brunswick

Ramazan Gungor, Ph.D.
Postdoctoral Associate in charge of Professional Development
School of Graduate Studies, New Brunswick

Tracy G. Anthony, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department Nutritional Sciences
School of Environmental and Biological Sciences
Rutgers-New Brunswick

Urmi Otiv
Director, Center for Global Services
First Postdoctoral Advisory Council Meeting

The Postdoctoral Advisory Council attended an initial meeting on October 18, 2017 where we introduced the goals and membership responsibilities of the Postdoctoral Advisory Council and the new Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and discussed the priority areas of the council. We asked the council to share, based on their daily experience with postdocs, what they thought are the top three challenges or issues that postdocs at Rutgers face. The results of this exercise are summarized in Figure 22. The council agreed that the top three challenges for postdocs were Career Development, Community Building, and Funding.

Figure 22. Top challenges and issues that postdocs at Rutgers face | Postdoctoral Advisory Council meeting, October 18, 2017
Moving Forward: 5 Strategic Areas of Focus for 2018-2022

We aim to make Rutgers recognized as a top “university of choice” for prospective faculty and postdocs, and postdoc recruiters. With the help of key stakeholders, including the Executive Steering Committee and Postdoctoral Advisory Council, we have identified the following five strategic areas of focus for 2018-2022.

Customized High-Quality Programming

- With the specific needs of Rutgers postdocs in mind, offer career development workshops designed to increase the confidence, skills, perspective and network of Rutgers postdoctoral researchers
- Partner with key Rutgers graduate student and faculty mentoring initiatives; being strategic and thoughtful about connecting the various academic pathway programs
- Develop and run a comprehensive career development program for postdocs that will equip them with tools needed to be most successful while at Rutgers, and prepare them to pursue best possible pathways for themselves after Rutgers

Comprehensive Services

- Be an effective resource and referral to faculty, staff and postdocs, for all facets of postdoc life
- Strengthen partnerships (internal and external) to create new opportunities and bridge services and communication gaps
- Create external partnerships to create new opportunities
Effective Assessment

- Streamline assessment of all events, activities, and services to determine and compare impact
- Conduct regular surveying, including exit interviews, to understand postdoc status and Rutgers climate, and to determine short and long-term career outcomes of Rutgers postdoc

Strong Presence

- Be known as the one-stop-shop “career center” for postdocs and their faculty mentors
- Use various outreach and communications mediums to raise office’s visibility
- Develop an online career development toolkit and establish digital subject matter expertise

Engagement Beyond Rutgers

- In addition to giving and receiving internal co-sponsorships for activities that support Rutgers postdocs, develop alternate funding and engagement opportunities, including grants, foundations, and/or the establishment of a Rutgers Postdoc Alumni Association

“It Always Seems Impossible Until It’s Done.”

~Nelson Mandela