

UMD's Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

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Postdocs at the University of Maryland

- Postdocs are appointed as Faculty at UMD
 - Policies and appointment/contract procedures overseen by the Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA; Associate Provost)
 - Benefits implications
- Office of Postdoctoral Affairs is housed in The Graduate School (TGS)
 - The Grad School provides all funding for the office's activities and staff
 - OPA Director regularly interacts with OFA and TGS leadership



Benefits and Challenges to UMD's Model

- OPA is a professional development and community support office, but serves as the liaison with OFA on hiring, benefits, and related contract issues.
 - Positives: we can inform policies, identify system improvements, better advertise programming, and closely collaborate with grad student programming.
 - Negatives: we rarely have the authority to assist or solve problems and regularly are a mediator or translator for other offices. Director needs to navigate multiple offices and procedures.
- OFA doesn't always remember to include OPA in general faculty policy conversations and initiatives.
- Engagement with VPR's office could be improved



Programming and Community Support

- Regular newsletter – highlight postdocs
- Programs with TGS, OFA, and other offices
 - Preparing for careers, navigating challenges, prof. dev.
- Annual system-wide (Univ. System of MD) postdoc symposium hosted by UMD
- Doctoral Career Pathways Conference
- Leadership training and mentorship training, for postdocs and for faculty



Program Examples

- **Bridges to Biotech**
- Consortia-based approach to prof development
- Several MD-DC area institutions and orgs engage with leading biotech industries
- In-person and virtual events, allowing career panels, networking, tours, interviews, etc.



Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

- A signature program to support postdocs and recruit nationally
- Supporting postdoc development and providing pathways into faculty lines
- Improves awareness of OPA activities and engages senior faculty with our office
- Modeled after the UC System's program, which was recently defunded.



Harmonizing the Postdoc Experience at UMD

- No postdoc association for UMD – rare for an R1.
 - Why? Are we doing well enough that postdocs feel supported? Or have we not given enough evidence that we want to hear postdoc voices and make improvements?
- Some local postdoc groups within colleges. Postdocs are involved in programming for larger OPA events.



Discussion

- What challenges are you facing supporting postdocs at your campus?
- What successes have you had?
- What best practices can you share?
- What questions do you have?

