Survey of postdocs at Dartmouth College

Assessment of postdoctoral training needs and for the need of a postdoctoral association at Dartmouth College

July 2008
Survey methods:

Based upon the knowledge that 148 postdocs are currently employed by Dartmouth College

- 6/16/08 3 pm  
  - Email was sent out to administrators from each college requesting the names of any new postdocs since March of 2008

- 6/16/08 5 pm  
  - Initial contact letter and survey link was sent to all known postdocs (based upon the names given by department administrators) at Dartmouth College

- 7/24/08  
  - Second letter/reminder and survey link was sent to all known postdocs at Dartmouth College

- 7/31/08  
  - Responses calculated. Percentage of total postdocs is calculated based upon 148 postdocs at Dartmouth College. Analyzed results from survey monkey plotted according to the final numbers given by the program.
Postdoctoral survey summary:
Demographic information

• 44% (n = 65) of the postdoctoral population at Dartmouth College participated in the survey

• A majority of survey respondents have only had 1-2 years postdoctoral experience

• 78.6% of survey respondents (n = 44) are considering careers in academia while 62.5% (n = 35) are considering careers in industry.
Postdoctoral survey summary:
Results highlighting training issues

- Almost 1/3 (32%) of the entire postdoctoral population (73.8% of survey respondents) feels strongly that there is a need for a postdoctoral association at Dartmouth College.
- Participation would not be a problem, as 67.7% of survey respondents indicated that they would participate in a postdoctoral association.
- Nearly 30% of the entire postdoctoral population at Dartmouth feels strongly that there is a need for postdocs to have a committee for scientific development.
- Job hunting, career development, and grant writing seminars were the most desired information sessions postdocs showed interest in attending (ranging from 87%-77% of survey respondent).
- Training of postdocs in the above categories, however, is limited. A majority of survey respondents feel that they are not receiving proper training to find jobs beyond the postdoc and obtain their own funding.
Total percentage/number of postdocs surveyed

- Responded to survey: 65 (44.2%)
- Did not respond to survey: 83 (56%)

Total years of postdoctoral experience for survey respondents

- 1 to 2 years: 30
- 3 to 4 years: 15
- 5 to 6 years: 10
- 7+ years: 5
Future careers plans/interests for postdocs at Dartmouth

- Academia: 78.6% (44)
- Industry: 62.5% (35)
- Teaching: 37.5% (21)
- Undecided: 12.7% (7)
- Other: 10.7% (6)
- Administrative: 10.7% (6)
- Medicine: 7.1% (4)
- Law: 3.6% (2)

Percentage (Number)
**Question:** Do you feel there is a need for a postdoctoral association at Dartmouth College?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of total postdocs</th>
<th>Survey respondents only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers in ( ) denote total number of respondents
Question: Would you be interested in participating in a postdoctoral association?

Percent of total postdocs

Definitely: 30
Maybe: 13
No: 2
No response: 56

Survey respondents only

Definitely: 67.7% (44)
Maybe: 29.2% (19)
No: 4.6% (3)
No response: 56

* Numbers in ( ) denote total number of respondents
Question: Do you think postdoctoral researchers at Dartmouth should have a committee similar to graduate students for enhancing scientific development?

Percent of total postdoc population

- Definitely: 28
- No: 9
- Not surveyed or skipped question: 63

Survey respondents only

- No: 25 (14)
- Yes: 75 (42)

* Numbers in ( ) denote total number of respondents
Total comments pertaining to a scientific development committee for postdocs at Dartmouth

1. As an option yes, an an obligation no
2. I am not aware of the grad student committee
3. We need independence but we need dedicated mentors as well
4. If a postdoc needs a committee at this point in their careers, then their graduate training ill-prepared them for a postdoc!
Seminars and/or information sessions that postdocs at Dartmouth would be interested in attending

- Job hunting/Career development: 87.7% (57)
- Seminars about grant writing: 78.5% (51)
- Job options beyond the postdoc: 76.9% (50)
- Benefits at Dartmouth: 70.8% (46)
- Resources available for postdocs: 69.2% (45)
- Manuscript preparation: 44.6% (29)
- Seminars/workshops about teaching: 43.1% (28)
- Financial Management: 41.5% (27)
- Mock NIH study sections: 32.3% (21)
- Conflict Resolution: 26.2% (17)
- Other: 6.2% (4)
Comments and additional ideas pertaining to information sessions survey respondents would be interested in attending

1. Professional networking

2. DCAL covers a lot of this already and well

3. Career development/funding options for international post-docs

4. Session on how to give good science seminars.
**Question:** Are you receiving appropriate training for the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing manuscripts?</td>
<td>29.8% (17)</td>
<td>43.9% (25)</td>
<td>26.3% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring/teaching?</td>
<td>12.7% (7)</td>
<td>47.3% (26)</td>
<td>40.0% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running an independent laboratory?</td>
<td>8.9% (5)</td>
<td>39.3% (22)</td>
<td>51.8% (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining funding?</td>
<td>12.5% (7)</td>
<td>30.4% (17)</td>
<td>57.1% (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job searching?</td>
<td>3.6% (2)</td>
<td>32.7% (18)</td>
<td>63.6% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing for tenure track positions?</td>
<td>7.4% (4)</td>
<td>16.7% (9)</td>
<td>75.9% (41)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers in ( ) denote total number of respondents
Type of training postdocs feel they are receiving:
Skills required to become an independent investigator

Writing manuscripts

- No: 26.3 (15)
- Definitely: 29.8 (17)
- Somewhat: 43.9 (25)

Mentoring/Teaching

- Definitely: 12.7 (7)
- Somewhat: 47.3 (26)
- No: 40 (22)

Running an independent laboratory

- Definitely: 8.9 (5)
- No: 51.8 (29)
- Somewhat: 39.3 (22)

Obtaining funding

- Definitely: 12.5 (7)
- No: 57.1 (29)
- Somewhat: 30.4 (17)

* Numbers in ( ) denote total number of respondents
Type of training postdocs feel they are receiving:
Skills required to find a job after the postdoc

**Job Searching**
- **Definitely:** 3.6% (2)
- **Somewhat:** 32.7% (18)
- **No:** 63.6% (35)

**Interviewing for tenure track positions**
- **Definitely:** 7.4% (4)
- **Somewhat:** 16.7% (9)
- **No:** 75.9% (41)

* Numbers in ( ) denote total number of respondents