

# The Career Network SPYglass

Welcome to The Career Network SPYglass. In our 6th issue, we are excited to share reports of our past events and give a preview of upcoming events. Our summer mixer and annual networking events are coming up on August 7<sup>th</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup> respectively. We look forward to seeing you there!

Our Career in Focus section brings you an exclusive interview with Dr. Lynn Cooley, the new Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Yale University. The CNSPY team is very grateful to Dr. Cooley for being generous with her time.

Deborah Ayeni,  
Editor-in-chief, The Career Network Spyglass.

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## CNSPY in focus

CNSPY was established to provide graduate students and postdocs with a platform to explore diverse career options and build an extensive professional network of peers, career mentors, and faculty advisors. Our events allow our members to meet and learn from career mentors while building a community of like-minded peers. We aim to establish new avenues for collaboration, business ventures, and job opportunities while supporting an entrepreneurial environment among science trainees at Yale.

### **Working in Biotechnology (Small group discussion)**

**CNSPY Organizer: Tenaya Vallery**

With the help of CNSPY member, Lauren Ann Metskas, we invited Dr. Michel Ledizet, a Senior Research Scientist from L2 Diagnostics for a small group discussion on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Ledizet led a lively discussion with 12 post-docs and graduate students, sharing his insights into working and administrative responsibilities at a biotech company. He advised that during the process of applying for a position, the cover letter and CV should be combined into a single PDF file for ease of application handling. Attendees described the discussion as fluid and insightful.

**Contributed by: Tenaya Vallery**

### **Working in the Biopharmaceutical Industry (Panel discussion)**

**Organizers: Project led by: Michelle Legaspi, James Nelson and Shalini Nag with a lot of support from Faculty Advisor Craig Crews and his administrative assistant Denise George.**

The Chemical Biology Interface Training Grant and CNSPY co-hosted an exciting lunch panel discussion and networking opportunity with representatives from local biopharmaceutical industries. The panelists were Steve Podos (senior principal scientist at Achillion Pharmaceuticals), Taavi Neklesa (Director of Biology at Arvinas), Nathalie Bonafe (senior research scientist

at L2 Diagnostics), and Ken Blount (Former Director of BioRelix; currently at Yale). Participants asked a wide variety of questions, including inquiring about the different lifestyle in industry, characteristics and skills that people are looking for when hiring, and how to get your foot in the door without previous industry experience. Many of the participants said that they enjoyed the candid nature of the panel and appreciated the opportunity to approach the panelists after the informal Q&A session to speak to them one-on-one or in small groups. Many connections were made, and one of the panelists even offered a standing invitation to visit her lab in the future.

**Contributed by: Michelle Legaspi**

### **CNSPY Spring Mixer at Kelly's Gastropub**

**CNSPY Organizer: Deborah Ayeni**

The CNSPY quarterly mixer aims to bring together current and prospective members with similar career trajectories to rub minds and discuss their career explorations. At the spring mixer hosted at Kelly's in May, various schools and departments were represented including the life sciences, physics, engineering, and psychiatry and almost one-third of the 30 attendees were post-docs. Our next mixer will be on August 7<sup>th</sup> at Kelly's. See full details below.

**Contributed by: Deborah Ayeni**

# CNSPY in focus

## Apply to be on the communications team

CNSPY is recruiting individuals with a strong interest in professional communications to join the **CNSPY communications team**. To apply please submit an application for project manager and clearly indicate the position you are applying to by Aug 31, 2014. Application forms are available on our website and must be submitted via email to [administrator@careernetworkforsciencephds.org](mailto:administrator@careernetworkforsciencephds.org). To apply for this position, you must be:

1. A STEM graduate student or postdoc with excellent written and spoken English capabilities
2. Able to commit to the position for at least 1 year
3. Interested in the promotion and professional presence aspects of Science & Engineering
4. Creative, motivated and responsible and a team player

**Responsibilities:** As part of the communications team, you will be an integral part of the CNSPY leadership responsible for maintaining the professional image of CNSPY and communicating with our network through the CNSPY weekly digest, our newsletter (CNSPYglass), the CNSPY website, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and email correspondence. The communications team is currently working on two primary projects. The first project focuses on the transition of the CNSPY website from a Google site to a Yale commons website and the improvement of the CNSPY's web presence. The second project centers on CNSPY's direct communication with its membership and advertisement of CNSPY events, and is ideal for someone looking to improve their promotional skills. Your specific responsibilities will include:

1. Attending fortnightly CNSPY board meetings
2. Working with the CNSPY communications team to ensure the success of the projects outlined above.
3. Conceptualizing creative strategies to enhance the professional image of CNSPY and executing them.

**Benefits:** This is a unique opportunity to gain valuable experience in communications while working with a passionate, enthusiastic and fun team. You will acquire highly marketable skills including interpersonal and communication skills, teamwork, project management and thoughtful leadership, while strengthening your network amongst peers, faculty and career mentors.

**Contributed by:** *Tenaya Vallery*

## CNSPY Upcoming Events

**Small Group Discussion** with Andrey Antov, Associate Director, Office of the COO at The Jackson Laboratory on **August 5<sup>th</sup>**, 6.30pm. Venue: Bass 205.

**CNSPY Summer Mixer:** If you're a Ph.D. student or postdoc interested in connecting with other scientists pursuing diverse career options, come join us for our summer mixer. It will be a great opportunity to meet some of your fellow CNSPY members, the CNSPY leadership team, hear about some upcoming CNSPY events, and have great discussions regarding your aspirations in the lab and beyond. So, on **Thursday, August 7<sup>th</sup>** at 6.30pm, come to Kelly's, for the drink and free appetizer specials, and stay for great conversation and connections. This will be an event not to be missed! Sign up [here](#).

**Networking in Nature:** CNSPY is bringing you our first outdoor networking event designed to connect CNSPY members and career mentors who share similar career interests while enjoying a hiking trip. The first event in this series is the hike with Imran Babar, Senior Associate OrbiMed Advisors. **Career themes** include Private equity, equity analysis, entrepreneurship and non-profit organization. Date: **Aug 23<sup>rd</sup>** from 1-4pm at Ragged Mountain. Please sign-up [here](#). Keep an eye out for the dates and venues for a hike with Usha Pillai from Aria Management Consulting and Maximilian Vargas from LambdaVision LLC.

**Professional Presence Bootcamp:** During this event, coming up in the fall, CNSPY will provide a comprehensive session that includes building or enhancing your LinkedIn profile, designing your business card, snap shot of your professional photograph as well as an information session on the career-exploration resources offered by CNSPY and Yale. Date and venue TBA.

**2014 CNSPY Annual Meet:** CNSPY will be hosting its 3rd Annual Networking Event on October 24<sup>th</sup> 2014. Last year we had over 80 participants including graduate students, postdocs, career mentors and faculty advisors. This year's event promises to be bigger and better. All Yale graduate students and postdocs, career mentors, faculty advisors are invited to participate. Keep an eye out for official announcements and registration information and feel free to spread the word!

## Welcome aboard!

The success of CNSPY activities and events relies heavily on the generous contribution from our career mentors. This quarter, we are happy to welcome:

- Dr. Andrey Antov**, Associate Director, Office of the COO at Jackson Laboratory
- Dr. Dorottya Blaho Noble**, Assistant Director, Raymond and Beverly Sackler Institute, Yale University
- Dr. Suneil Malhotra**, Deputy Director, Global Medical Affairs, Oncology Bayer Pharmaceuticals
- Dr. Tiffany Patrick**, Senior Director, Scientific Outreach, ARIAD Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
- Dr. Karthik Venkatesh**, Principal Medical Writer, MMS Holdings Inc
- Dr. Michael Fiedler**, Senior Medical Writer, Infusion Communications
- Dr. Steve Podos**, Senior Principal Scientist, Achillion Pharmaceuticals

# Career in focus: Academic Research

In this issue, CNSPY board member Deborah Ayeni interviewed Dr. Lynn Cooley, the newly appointed Dean of the graduate school of arts and sciences at Yale University to share insights on her journey and career in Academic Research.

## Interview with Dr. Lynn Cooley Dean, Yale University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

### ***Please share your career path with us. What choices did you make in grad school and during your post-doc that led to your current position?***

When I was young I wanted to be an astronaut, but changed my mind after the Apollo space program ended, and I went to college thinking I would become a marine biologist. During college, to explore the idea of marine biology, I worked in a research lab at the Marine Biological Laboratories in Woods Hole, MA, and also went on a research cruise with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. The outcome of both experiences, which were great, was that I discovered a love of biochemistry, which I studied in a graduate program at UT Austin. During my PhD studies, I realized it wasn't quite the program I had expected, so took a hiatus from grad school and worked in Dieter Söll's lab in the MB&B department at Yale. My experience in Dieter's lab and his encouragement set me back on track to complete my PhD and pursue a career in science. He was an excellent mentor who was able to see into my distant future far better than I could have at that time. Going into my post-doc, the desire to work in a system involving a whole animal, as opposed to in vitro experiments, guided my search. As chance would have it, there was a student-organized seminar here at Yale to which we invited Dr. Allan Spradling who talked about P elements-mediated germline transformation in *Drosophila*, a new path-breaking technology at that time. I asked him if I could do a post-doc in his lab after his talk and, ultimately, he said yes. This is one reason why I advise students to take on the responsibility of inviting speakers to seminars here at Yale.

As a post-doc at the Carnegie Institution of Science, I was interested in studying genes required for oogenesis, or egg development, by isolating mutations that caused female sterility. To accomplish that goal, I developed a new technique in which I used P elements for insertional mutagenesis by inducing them to hop around the genome and create new insertional mutations. I was able to bring this technology along with me when I was offered a position at Yale.

### ***What were the key determinants for you in deciding to come to Yale. Are the responsibilities of a full-time tenured professor at a university like Yale different from those at smaller institutions?***

My final decision was between Yale and Carnegie Mellon, but the emphasis was different at each institution. At Carnegie Mellon, my primary responsibility would have been undergraduate teaching, while at Yale, I could focus more on research with less teaching. At that time, a reduced teaching load was attractive to me, so Yale was the better fit.

### ***Did you consider other career options? Why did you decide to go into academia?***

I went to grad school because I had discovered that I love working in the lab, and earning a Ph.D. followed by a post-doc and a career in academic research was the default pathway. At that time though, I wasn't sure I couldn't "make it" in academia, but I remained hopeful that it would all work out. Staying in the academy, it was a reasonable expectation at that time: it was just what almost everyone in graduate school did.

### ***As a tenured professor, how do you make time to take on other responsibilities in addition to grant writing, teaching and research, especially your responsibilities in administration?***

You have to do a constant recalibration of your priorities and keep in mind the kinds of fulfillment you derive from doing different things. Over time, my interest in directing and administering graduate education developed, and I made time to direct Yale's BBS Program. As my kids grew up, I could more comfortably take on responsibilities outside the university on grant review panels and meeting organization committees. We all have to find and continually adjust the balance between effort devoted to our own research, mentoring others and contributing to the science community. It is a constant juggling act.

### ***What has been the most challenging aspect of your career and how did you overcome that?***

Grant funding is an ongoing challenge, although I enjoy the process of writing grants because it stimulates ideas and collaborations. A much bigger and equally interesting challenge is coping with the more personal "real life" issues that arise in a lab. These include the challenge of finding the best way to communicate with and motivate people in the lab, each of whom has a different set of priorities and approach to science. More seriously, two people in my lab became seriously ill, situations for which

no official training can prepare you. The way lab members pulled together in these difficult circumstances to help each other and work through crises was a great reminder that science is done by caring human beings.

**Could you also share with us how you made it into the position of leadership: First running the BBS program and then becoming the dean of the graduate school?**  
My arm got twisted into running the BBS program. I was pretty busy at that time, not unwilling, but I had a lot on my hands so it took some convincing. I'm very glad I said yes, however, because it gave me an opportunity to have a broader impact on graduate training at Yale. Becoming the Dean of the Graduate School was certainly something that interested me, but I had no expectation that it could ever happen. Thus, it was a very pleasant surprise to be selected by President Salovey, and I am thrilled to be here.

**For graduate students and post-docs preparing for a career in academic research, what would be your advice to them? Specifically for graduate students, what are the critical factors to consider when applying for a post-doc? The reputation of the institution vs PI vs research interests?**

While searching for a post-doc, branch into a new area of science. It is better for you as a scientist, makes you more competitive for fellowships and helps you develop a broader perspective on what do in a lab; so go and learn how to work in a new system and absorb new approaches so you will have more tools in your personal toolbox for going forward. Go to a different place, a different institution to learn how a different administrative structure works and also build a new network of peers and mentors. But most importantly, let the science lead your way. You'll need the drive to get up everyday to do the work, so the science has to be fascinating to you. Once that is figured out, you

can also take into account the mentorship style of the PI, the type of people in the lab's placement track record.

**As a post-doc, how should one transition to being an independent researcher especially if your current research interests coincide with your post-doctoral research?**

I'll give you an example. During my post-doc, I made a lot of mutants and I was free to take what I wanted for my collection while my mentor retained many others to continue with to work with. I advise students in the process of looking for a post-doc to bring it up from day one: "if I develop something in your lab, can I take it with me?" Ask this question from the very beginning so it's understood from the start and there are no surprises later on.

**What are your most and least favorite things about being an academic professor?**

There are so many things I enjoy about being a professor, but the top two are the opportunity for novel discovery even if it's a tiny step, and the chance to interact with very intelligent and interesting people. I can't imagine a more intellectually stimulating way to spend your career. I also love the fact that you don't have to leave your lab to travel the world since American research communities are so international. Part of becoming an independent investigator is also running a business, including raising money, advertising (publishing papers, giving talks), hiring people, personnel conflict resolution, career development and so on. This fact dawns on most investigators only gradually and if there were a magic wand I could have waved during my career it would have been to better prepare myself for the business part of doing research. I will be very glad if I can influence graduate programs here at Yale to include developing "soft skills" such as people and time management and practical information about managing a budget.

For more information, and to keep abreast of our events, please visit our [website](#), or join our [Linked-in](#) and [Facebook](#) groups.

**Thank you for reading!**

[CNSPY Leadership Team](#)

*Co-founders- Thihan Padukkavidana, Rebecca Brown*

*Executive Board - \*Shalini Nag(President), \*Yixiao Zou, \*Tenaya Vallery (Co-President), Deborah Ayeni and \*Daniel Mori (Vice President)*

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