

# THE YALE POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION MONTHLY MEETING



Yale  
Postdoctoral  
Association

Tuesday, August 13, 2024 | 6:00 PM

Attendees: 28

## CHECK-IN

YPA OPEN FORUM AUGUST 2024

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13 AT 6:00PM



<https://cmlink.me/2dA/c227335084151250>

<https://yale.zoom.us/j/99108955066>

### Chairs [5 min]

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- Welcome – General and new Postdocs.
- Executive board meeting August 13th, 7 pm
- Inclusive Leadership Workshop for Executive board - August 30th, 12-2 pm
  - The goal of this event is to make sure that the YPA organization and all scheduled events are as inclusive as possible.
- Revision of YPA bylaws
  - The YPA Bylaws will be discussed and revised if needed after next Open Forum in September.
  - The Chairs announced today that a document to suggest edit will be open and the executive board will have until Sep 1<sup>st</sup> to add their suggestions.
  - Past that time the document will be closed, reviewed and on the day of the meeting, we will discuss and vote for each suggestion.
- NPAW - Sept 16th - 20th (National Postdoc Appreciation Week)

- The YPA and OPA are planning many events this week to show appreciation for the postdoc and ARS community at Yale.
- The OPA will be emailing a schedule of all these events, as well as sign up information, to the Yale postdoc/ARS listserv.
- Employee Referral Program
  - The YPA chairs are soliciting testimonials from anyone who has utilized and benefitted from this program. If you have used it before, please email the YPA ([ypa@yale.edu](mailto:ypa@yale.edu))
- Budget FY25 increased but some committees will be negatively impacted.
  - The Chairs will share details with the executive board members but gave a reminder to committees to use their full budget every year.
- 2025 Annual NPA conference, Boston, March 21-22, 2025
  - The chairs will announce soon which committee will be representing the YPA at the conference.

### Secretaries [2 min]

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- We are currently cleaning up the YPA drive (especially the: ‘my drive section’). We will reach out via slack if we have any questions about what committee each orphan documents belong to.
- Go back to **emailing about room reservations** because the Google Form entries disappear.
  - **Info needed:**
    1. Contact name, email address, and phone number
    2. Date(s) of event
    3. Desired location (Please include at least the building name and also include room number if you have a specific preference)
    4. Number of anticipated attendees
    5. Will there be food served? Y/N (If so, you accept responsibility for taking out all trash and cleaning up and/or need to request custodial services as well)
    6. Will you need A/V equipment? Y/N and which kind?
    7. Do you have any other access requirements you would like us to be aware of?
    8. Is there a cost associated with the room you would like to reserve? (e.g., custodial services incur a cost)
      - If yes, what is the COA number for charging those costs?
    9. Any other important details we should know?

Presenting the **nomination for the new co-coordinator-** Harshini Suresh Kumar!!

Harshini was voted new Coordinator for the Secretary Committee, with no objections. Welcome, Harshini!

We still need a second new co-coordinator and new members for the committee, so please reach out to Jess ([jessica.sherry@yale.edu](mailto:jessica.sherry@yale.edu)) or Harshini ([harshini.sureshjumar@yale.edu](mailto:harshini.sureshjumar@yale.edu)) if you are interested!

### Treasury [3 min]

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- Budget updates for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

- Coordinators emphasized that committees need to plan and spend their budget each year to incentivize OPA/Yale to approve proposed budget increases for the subsequent financial year.
  - Certain committees did not spend their entire budget last fiscal year, and this year were awarded less than the proposed amount.
- The budget is not confirmed yet, and treasurers and chairs will attempt to negotiate further with the OPA.
- New purchasing procedures overview
  - The treasurers described in detail the steps in which purchases should be made by YPA committees ([form](#), [pcard request](#), PO number). The updated guidelines are also outlined in the executive handbook that was circulated by the chairs in July. Should any members have questions, ask your committee coordinators!
    - The pcard is tax exempt in the state of CT, and you can request the vendor to take tax off of your receipt. To do so, provide the vendor with the number of the front of the card (the federal tax identification number). Utilizing this exemption will help the YPA budget go further, and coordinators are encouraged to make use of this tax-exempt status. Email the treasurers if you have any questions.
  - Please submit your receipts as soon as possible after your event has occurred.

Contact Cuckoo ([khuleshwari.kurrey@yale.edu](mailto:khuleshwari.kurrey@yale.edu)) or Cristina ([cristina.decavoli@yale.edu](mailto:cristina.decavoli@yale.edu)) if you have any questions, or would like to get involved.

## Community and Networking Committee [4 min]

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Coordinators are thinking of creating events based on many different cultures (e.g., tea party). Hongyu invites postdocs to suggest events to be organized.

### Recent Events

- YPA Book Club: *The Metamorphosis* – July 18<sup>th</sup>
- YPA trip to the New Museum of Science and Technology (Mercer's Lab) and Summit One Vanderbilt in New York – July 27<sup>th</sup>
- Picnic at East Rock – July 20<sup>th</sup>
- YPA Kayaking in East Rock Park – August 7<sup>th</sup>
- August 10th HIKING: Hiking Daytrip: Sam's point & Ice caves, NY

### Upcoming Events

- August 17th Kayaking
- August 22nd YPA Book Club: *I Who Have Never Known Men*
  - Book club happens monthly.
- August 24th YPA trip to the Bronx Zoo in New York
- Board Game Nights and Happy Hours will be restarting in September.

**Upcoming Community and Networking Committee meeting:  
Time, date, and location – TBD**

Contact Nicolò ([nicolo.mangraviti@yale.edu](mailto:nicolo.mangraviti@yale.edu)) and Hongyu ([hongyu.li.hl953@yale.edu](mailto:hongyu.li.hl953@yale.edu)) if you have any questions, or would like to get involved.

## Professional Development Committee [5 min]

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### Upcoming events

- We intend to host another workshop on grant writing strategies with a focus on NIH and European Research Grants (e.g.: MSCA-postdoctoral fellowships and ERC). Tentatively to host it as a zoom event in September/October.
- We will host the next edition of the Pint of Postdoc event starting in September aligned during the Postdoc Appreciation Week. Speakers interested in participating are directed to contact Luis Mestre ([Luis.mestre@yale.edu](mailto:Luis.mestre@yale.edu)).
  - **Pint of Postdoc will occur on September 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at Trinity.**
- Career Cafe Event with Holden Thorp, chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Editor-in-Chief, Science Journals. This event is targeted for early October and as a Zoom Event.
- We are planning a visit to the Cold Spring Laboratory in NY, with a possible collaboration with OCS. Tentative date is around ~ October/November.
- We intend to start having regular company visits, with a visit offered in each semester. This would be a joint venture with OCS and also other graduate student associations. We highly recommend postdocs to also recommend names of companies, ideally within the Connecticut region, where such visits can be organized.

The next PD committee meeting will be on August 29th via Zoom.

To attend and discover more about the PD committee, please contact Amit ([amit.aji@yale.edu](mailto:amit.aji@yale.edu)) and Michela ([michela.notarangelo@yale.edu](mailto:michela.notarangelo@yale.edu))

## Communications Committee [8 min]

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### Events

- Meet the YPA event – August 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm.
- Upcoming Meet the YPA event – September 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm.

### General

- **Website:** Update on our website-related meeting on Monday (August 12<sup>th</sup>) where we discussed final decisions to prepare for launching.
  - Website will be launched on Friday 23rd of August. The committee invite every coordinator to review their webpage and send an email to Sarah Smith with all URGENT request only. Minor one will be addressed after the launch of the website.
  - Sarah will email Coordinators during the week to provide more information and a link to access the website.
  - When adding upcoming events to the new website, be sure to tag your committee so that the event will also be displayed on the committee's webpage.

- **Post-event photos:** Interested in submitting photos of events that your committee planned (after the event has happened) to be posted on social media? Let's discuss: whose job is it to take photos, having a form for submitting photos, and considering consent to post.
  - Communications committee proposed that event organizers be responsible for taking pictures of their event and then send them to the Communications Committee (a form to submit photos will be created soon).
  - To obtain consent of participants to share photos, chairs suggested that adding a section to the Yale Connect registration form for events with the following sentence that is mandatory to check: "I give YPA permission to record my image and/or voice and grant YPA all rights to use these sound, still or moving images in any medium for educational, promotional, advertising, or other purposes that support the mission of the association. I agree that all rights to the sound, still or moving images belong to YPA".
    - If participants do not want to consent to their images to be recorded, but still want to attend the event the chairs suggested that another sentence can be added: "If you disagree with the use of your image, please contact XX".
    - A coordinator brought up that keeping track of who can be photographed and who did not consent may become challenging at large events or in the context of a group photo.
- **Introducing YPA committees:** Thoughts on proposed "Introducing the YPA" series on social media.
  - The communications committee coordinators suggested recording videos interviewing committee members that will then be posted on Instagram and saved in the highlights section.
- **Merchandise:** Update on merch for YPA.
  - New merchandise will be designed.
  - Attendees expressed support for another round of jackets and T-shirts.
  - Coordinators asked the chairs what the major issues for the last clothes purchase were. Chairs answered that:
    - 1 – some people never picked up their orders
    - 2 – collecting the money from postdocs was a significant challenge for the coordinators
  - Erin Heckler clarified that the YPA can NOT request that members pay for items, meaning the YPA will have to cover all expenses for the merchandise.
  - A suggestion brought up was to get quote from various companies, including YPPS.

**Coordinators:** Anne-Marie ([anne-marie.rickmann@yale.edu](mailto:anne-marie.rickmann@yale.edu)) & Jennifer ([jennifer.j.park@yale.edu](mailto:jennifer.j.park@yale.edu))

**Committee meetings:** Next in-person meeting October 4:30pm (exact date TBD).

## Symposium Committee [2 min]

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- We are on Summer Hiatus; will resume monthly meetings in Sept 2024
- Dhananjay Bhaskar will be stepping down from his role as co-coordinator – We are looking for a new Co-Coordinator to step in and take his place! Announcement sent out via slack and newsletter.
  - A message to the current members has been sent, and the symposium is inviting anyone interested in becoming a co-coordinator.

- The role of the co-coordinator is to attend the monthly meeting Open Forum, the Executive board meeting, meet with the leads of the 4 symposium subcommittees etc.
- Please email Jacob if you are interested in the position.
- We have put out a call to former members inquiring about their desire to return.

### Next Month:

- Subcommittee leads will be decided in Sept-October. Open to new members - announcement via slack.
- Yale Connect Survey to be put out this month, be on the lookout.
  - The goal is to obtain as much feedback as possible, so that any issues or suggestions can be addressed in the planning to the next symposium.
- Last year the committee was not allowed to finance travel or accommodations for invited speakers from outside the immediate area, however the coordinators will attempt to work with the OPA to make this a possibility this year.
  - For a non-Yale-affiliated speaker, they could be paid a *per diem*, and they could utilize that money themselves for travel or accommodations.

Please reach out to coordinators Jay ([Dhananjay.bhaskar@yale.edu](mailto:Dhananjay.bhaskar@yale.edu)) and Jacob ([Jacob.orkwis@yale.edu](mailto:Jacob.orkwis@yale.edu)) if you are interested in joining the symposium committee, or if you have any questions.

### Mentorship Committee [3 min]

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- Quick updates on existing mentoring programs
  - Peer-mentorship program will be restructured, and registration will open in September.
  - Faculty-postdoc mentoring program registration will open in the next few weeks.
- Searching for a new leader for the Buddy Program (taking over from Peng Xu)
- Conceptualizing a new program - "Building your Mentoring Team in practice". This program will help postdocs find professional and scientific mentors at Yale beyond your PI. Data shows that the more mentorship a postdoc has, the more successful they are.
  - looking for feedback by the postdoc community
    - Attendees were largely supportive of this program; however, some expressed the concern that it would not be taken well by their PI if they request another mentor. Coordinators will discuss this idea further with the OPA.
  - interested in experience from departments that already have something similar.
    - If your department has implemented something like this program, please reach out to the Mentorship committee coordinators with your experience.

**The next committee meeting will be held in late September.**

Reach out to coordinators Dasha Zigackova ([dagmar.zigackova@yale.edu](mailto:dagmar.zigackova@yale.edu)) and Paris Filippidis ([paraskevas.filippidis@yale.edu](mailto:paraskevas.filippidis@yale.edu)) if you would like to get involved or have more questions.

## Advocacy Committee [4 min]

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### NPAW Events:

- DOGA, Tuesday Sept 17th, 4:30-5:30pm, Sterling Memorial Library
- Navigating Difficult Situations, Erin Heckler Tuesday Sept 17th, 5:30-6:30pm, Sterling Memorial Library
  - These two events are back-to-back.
- Finding a therapist (TBD)
- Unhappy Hour: Advocacy Meet and Greet (TBD)
  - This will be a space for postdocs/ARS to discuss their grievances with other community members, as well as find community with others who may be dealing with the same issues.

### Compensation Policy efforts:

- Continuing Social Media Campaign regarding issues with the Yale's compensation policy for postdocs
- Please fill-out this survey:



- Pushing for postdoc representation on future compensation meetings with the Administration & HR.
  - So far this has been discussed with the OPA, and the advocacy committee will be invited to the next compensation meeting and present their case.

### Other ongoing advocacy includes working with Chairs/OPA to push for:

- Improving grievance procedure.
  - Collecting stories of unresolved grievances from postdocs, reach out to us!
- Increase our annual PTO and secure consistent recess days.
- Improved Yale shuttle experience and routes.
- A postdoc rate for Payne-Whitney gym.

**Contact us** if you have other issues or suggestions and we'll look into them! You can reach us at [alaz.ozcan@yale.edu](mailto:alaz.ozcan@yale.edu) and [rishi.tripathi@yale.edu](mailto:rishi.tripathi@yale.edu).

**Committee meeting for August is TBD, usually on Zoom.**

New members are always welcome!

**Note:** If you are struggling with any concerns, such as disability accommodation, bullying, etc., please get in touch with the advocacy committee and we will advocate for your needs.

## Belonging Committee [4 min]

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## **NPAW Planning:**

- Knowing your parental benefits
- Knowing your Yale benefits

## **Upcoming Events:**

- Postcards for postdocs
  - It was suggested to work with the OPA, Advocacy, and the Communications Committees, as they were thinking of doing something similar.
- Another round of bystander intervention
- Winter drive in Nov/Dec
  - This is a donation organized by the YPA that benefits the New Haven community. Last year an Amazon wish list was created, and people were able to order these items and send them to the coordinators. Final details will be advertised later in the fall.

**We are looking for new members—join the Belonging Committee!**

Contact Sabrina ([sabrina.ghadaouia@yale.edu](mailto:sabrina.ghadaouia@yale.edu)) or Luis ([luis.maestre@yale.edu](mailto:luis.maestre@yale.edu)) for details.

And reminder that you can always find the [DEI Toolkit here](#).

## **Associate Provost for Postdoctoral Affairs, Erin Heckler [5 min]**

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### **NPA Board Vote**

The National Postdoc Association is asking all postdocs at member institutes cast their vote in the board elections which are coming up. Erin asked the Chairs how we could make sure to involved anyone interested in this process.

- The chairs suggested to run an election similarly to the one organized for the YPA Chairs Election.
- Chairs or OPA could prepare a survey on Yale Connect and advertise on Newsletter.

### **Upcoming programming:**

- August orientation: August 15, 9:45-11:30: <https://cmlink.me/2dA/r2271483>
- Academic Job Search Series: Identifying and Breaking Down Academic Job Postings – via Zoom  
August 15, 6-7:15pm: <https://cmlink.me/2dA/r2272681>
- September Orientation: September 19, 9:45-11:30: <https://cmlink.me/2dA/r2271484>

### **Yale Connects forthcoming for:**

- Coffee and Conversation with the OPA: September 10, 4-5pm TAC; theme of mentorship
- Practicing Leadership Workshop Series, starts September 17
- Postdoc Fundamental Workshop Intensive
- NPAW: Navigating Difficult Situations as a Postdoc
- NPAW: Coffee Grab & Go
- NPAW: West Campus lunch



## **Open Forum - Questions/Comments [15 min]**

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A question was raised by an attendee about whether there is a common room on campus for postdocs to meet and feel welcome and in safe space.

- The chairs answered that there is no venue allocated for the YPA.
- There is a WhatsApp group where postdocs organize meetups.

The open forum ended.