

THE YALE POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION MONTHLY MEETING



Yale
Postdoctoral
Association

Tuesday, February 11, 2025, | 6:00 PM

Attendees: 35

CHECK-IN

YPA OPEN FORUM FEBRUARY 2025

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 AT 6:00PM



<https://cglink.me/2dA/c2291949130113618>

<https://yale.zoom.us/j/94114445723>

Chairs [5 min]

Welcome & Introductions

- **Representing YPA to Yale President Dr. Maurie McInnis**
 - The Chairs met with Yale President Dr. Maurie McInnis to introduce the YPA, present our goals and missions as well as asked for her support in the creation of Ombuds office at Yale.
- **Interest in Postdoc Policies**
 - President McInnis showed interest in the current policies for Postdocs
- **Open to Ombuds Office involvement** (under review)
 - The creation of Ombuds office has been requested by other associations as well as by a few Faculty members. She was open to the Ombuds office for Yale and mentioned that her office is currently evaluating it.
- **Reminders & Updates**
 - **Ordering Guidelines:** Submit requests **10 business days in advance**
 - OPDA may not be able to accommodate orders if you are outside of this window

- Shuttle Complaint Survey located [here](#).
- **Upcoming Executive Board Meeting**
- **Ongoing initiatives**
 - **Postdoc/ARS Representation:** Advocating for inclusion in **compensation meetings** in collaboration with **Advocacy Committee & YBPA**.
 - **Postdoc Travel Fund Expansion:** Working with **Advocacy & YBPA** to include more schools.

Secretaries [1 min]

- Updated YPA google calendar with events presented at open forum.
- We are looking for a **new co-coordinator**.

Please reach out to Jess (jessica.sherry@yale.edu) or Harshini (harshini.sureshkumar@yale.edu) if you are interested in joining the secretary team.

Treasury [3 min]

- Expenses and Budget Updates
 - Please remember to send receipts to **the treasurers** as well as the OPDA as soon as possible after your event. This enables the treasurers to keep the budget trackers up-to-date and therefore a useful tool for committees in planning their events.
 - Submitted FY26-27 budget requested an increase in the yearly YPA budget to accommodate spending \$33 per postdoc (increase from \$30 per postdoc in the current FY25-26 budget). This increase was not fully approved, and treasurers and co-chairs are working with OPDA to determine how the approved amount will be allocated between committees.

Contact Cristina (cristina.decavoli@yale.edu) or Cecilia (cecilia.romaro@yale.edu) if you have any questions or would like to get involved.

Belonging Committee [3 min]

- Introducing our new confirmed co-coordinator, Peng Xu
- Events
 - a. Black History Month Networking (in collaboration with YPGA):
 - i. February 27, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at the Harkness Hall's Café Med (Edward S. Harkness Memorial Hall, 367 Cedar St, New Haven, CT 06510).
 - ii. Max amount of people that can come: 50
 - iii. Members of all races are encouraged to attend, as the goal of this event is to connect communities while honoring Black History Month.
 - iv. The event will be between 1 and 2 hours long.
 - b. Retreat (in collaboration with Chaplain's Office) and PD committee
 - i. Estimated Date: April 30th, 2025

- ii. Target audience: 15 postdocs researchers
- iii. Program: Fostering a supportive community among postdocs, allowing them to share experiences and challenges while also providing tools for personal and professional growth.
- iv. The retreat location will take place at Mercy by the Sea in Madison, CT.
- Announcing we are looking for new members!!
- Miscellaneous
 - The Belonging Committee is planning to organize self-care gatherings for postdocs. This will likely be in coordination with the Advocacy Committee's Unhappy Hour events.

Contact Luis (luis.maestre@yale.edu) or Peng (peng.xu.px36@yale.edu) if you have any questions or would like to get involved. And you can always find the [DEI Toolkit here](#).

Community and Networking Committee [5 min]

- **Recent Events:**
 - January 30 - Book club This event is held monthly
 - January 8 - Board game night This is a recurring event
- **Upcoming Events**
Registration for all events can be found on [YaleConnect](#).

February:

- February 20 - Happy hour at Trinity
- February 20 - Game night
- February 27 - Book Club
- February 28th - Ice Hockey - Yale vs. Harvard

March:

- March 8 - Game Night
- March 20 - Book Club
- March TBD - Rock climbing at Ascent Climbing Gym, coached by Karolina
 - There will be room for at least attendees, and this will be a bouldering experience. Stay tuned for details.

Upcoming Community and Networking Committee meeting:

Monday, March 3rd, 6-7 pm

Contact Hongyu (hongyu.li.h1953@yale.edu) or Rob (robert.niescier@yale.edu) if you have any questions, or would like to get involved.

Communications Committee [3 min]

- **Events:**
Meet the YPA – This is a recurring event that occurs immediately prior to the monthly YPA Open Forum. New postdocs are encouraged to come and learn more about how you can make use of the YPA offerings to find opportunities and assistance during your time at Yale.
- **Merchandise:**
The new YPA merch is being developed in collaboration with the Symposium Committee and will be available at the symposium.
 - Blue mugs
 - Tote bags
 - Photo wall (depending on cost)
- **Newsletter and Social Media: Meet a Postdoc**
Please reach out if you would like to be highlighted in this series.

Coordinators: Anne-Marie (anne-marie.rickmann@yale.edu) & Jennifer (jennifer.j.park@yale.edu)
Committee meetings: March 2025. Email Anne-Marie or Jennifer if you are interested in attending.

Professional Development Committee [8 min]

Past Events:

- **Science Illustration Workshop** took place on Jan 29th. This was a 2-part event that included a morning Zoom session that focused on opportunities and career trajectories in this field followed by an evening in-person workshop for instruction. Thank you to Amit for organizing this.
- **Flamingo SciPhD orientation webinar** took place on Jan 23rd on Zoom. This workshop introduced Flamingo which is a job search tool and provided information on how to tailor your resume and market yourself as a candidate for the specific job you want. Thank you to Anjali and Michela for organizing this.
- **Journalism-based event with Natalie Wolchover from Quanta Magazine** took place on Feb 5th. Natalie Wolchover is a prolific column writer and Pulitzer Prize winner. The event is taking place in 2-parts to include a lecture and a career session with a luncheon. Thank you to Amit for organizing this and for successfully being granted a Poynter Fellowship to support this event.
- **Company visit with Johnson & Johnson New Brunswick, NJ** took place on Feb 7th. The agenda included networking, career panels, keynote speakers, and a museum tour. Thank you to Anjali and Michela for organizing this.

Future Events:

- Consulting career event with PreScouter - this event was held virtually last year and was well-received. Rafael is organizing this event with PreScouter on Feb 27th 3-4 pm. Event is on Yale Connect. https://yaleconnect.yale.edu/event_details?uid=9ae36b95b51eae9a4fb09f682e04f62a
- Pint of Postdoc - Our next PoP will be taking place on March 19th at Gryphon's. We will be hosting 3 speakers for this event since we're hosting it a little later into 2025 than usual. Shannon and Luis will be organizing this event and bringing in Eman and Rafael as well.

Women's History Month Events (March):

- Picture a Scientist - Karolina will be organizing a viewing of this 2020 documentary highlighting gender inequality in STEM.
 - This will take place on March 20th.
- Women in Science Invited Lecture - This event was held during Women's History Month previously and was well-received. We would like to partner with Havenly to cater for the event. We are currently in search of a speaker.

The next PD committee meeting will be taking place on **February 27th at 6:00pm over Zoom**. To discover more about the PD committee, please contact Shannon (shannon.duffy@yale.edu) and Karolina (karolina.vankova@yale.edu)

Advocacy Committee [5 min]

Activities planned

1. Self-defense class- April 1-2nd week, Date TBD
 - First aid and victim assistance - (post attack safety [such as concussion or stab wound scenarios] and helping victims of physical AND mental trauma)
 - Bystander intervention
2. Unhappy hour- February 4th week, Date TBD
 - This will take place at the Science Hill campus, as the previous Unhappy Hour was held at the School of Medicine.
3. Coffee and Chat- March 1st Week, Date TBD
 - Come and let us know if you're having any issues and we can advocate for you!
4. DOGA- March 3rd Week, Date TBD
 - This will be the last one with Heidi before she retires.

The dates for all of these events will be listed in the upcoming YPA newsletter.

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

- Increase our annual PTO and secure consistent recess days (<https://postdocs.yale.edu/policies/policies-postdoctoral-appointments/benefits-23-paid-time>)
 - Annual PTO for Yale postdocs/ARS is lower than at other Ivy League universities.

- Improved Yale shuttle experience and routes.
 - [Shuttle Complaint Survey](#)- Please make your suggestions ASAP.
 - This advocacy work and survey is being organized in collaboration with the YPGA and the GSA.

Additionally, the Advocacy Committee with Chairs is working on the following issues for 2025: In Discussion with Yale

- Compensation
- Securing a postdoc rate for Payne Whitney Gym
- Better Childcare subsidy for postdocs
 - The goal is to have a subsidy that will scale with pay, so that postdocs/ARS do not need to pay the same rates as Professors, despite having a lower salary.
- Hardship fund
- Retirement benefits
- Grievance policy
 - The goal is to develop a policy that is more centralized and postdoc focused.
 - This policy aims to provide a way for postdocs/ARS to report issues in confidence.

Contact us if you would like to get involved with postdoc well-being!
Committee meeting for February was on February 6th, on Zoom.
Committee meeting for March TBD, on Zoom.

Email Rishi (rishi.tripathi@yale.edu) and Sudheesh (sudheesh.allikkaparambil@yale.edu) to join. 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.

Mentorship Committee [2 min]

- YPA Mentorship Meet-up Event on Feb 19, at 5:30PM - Registration link: <https://cglink.me/2dA/r229151>
- Open positions for members and coordinators of the Peer Mentoring and Modern Instructor programs

Next Committee Meeting: March 25th via Zoom
 Reach out to coordinators Paris Filippidis (paraskevas.filippidis@yale.edu) and Laura (laura.meissner@yale.edu) if you would like to get involved or have questions.

Symposium Committee [7 min]

1. **New proposed date for the Symposium: Friday June 6th.** The previous date (5/29/2025) was booked over by facilities.
 - The back-up date is May 22nd, as the June date is not official yet.
2. Abstracts will be live this month!

3. We will also be opening submissions for the annual Symposium "art contest" displaying creative designs from the postdoc community.
 - This is a great way for postdocs to contribute promotional content for different YPA events.
4. We are working to develop professional development opportunities on day of the event.
 - Including sponsored sessions from industry
 - Our panel focus remains centered on Postdoc grievance procedures (same as last year) but we are going to prioritize finding Postdoc alumni who can speak about their experiences as a postdoc and transitioning to a career in industry and/or academia
5. Food, merchandise, and perks for the day of the event are being adjusted!
6. Keynote speaker list will be finalized this month. **This is your last chance to recommend a name on behalf of the postdoc community before the committee will hold its formal vote and send out an invitation!**
 - If you have a suggestion, please recommend them to the committee for consideration within the next week.
7. Our primary committee roles are all filled, but we are always looking for postdocs to help out, especially on the day of the event!

Next committee meeting: TBD (late February) via Zoom

In March there will be an in-person committee appreciation meeting.

Please reach out to coordinators Jacob (jacob.orkwis@yale.edu) and Adati (adati.tarfa@yale.edu) if you are interested in joining the symposium committee, or if you have any questions.

Associate Provost for Postdoctoral Affairs, Erin Heckler [3 min]

- National Postdoctoral Association annual conference – OPDA and YPA participation
 - 4 people from the YPA are attending this year.
 - Victoria Hallinan will be presenting SPHERE for non-biomed postdocs.
 - The YPA Mentorship committee will be presenting a poster.
- Changes with the federal administration that impact postdocs:
 - **Research:** The Vice Provost for Research sent out a letter on Monday, Feb 3 - https://research.yale.edu/federal-government-directives-grants?check_logged_in=1. And the Research Office created a page with guidance on EOs and other federal administration changes that impact research - <https://research.yale.edu/2025-federal-administration-transition>. Erin is in communication with NSF Postdoc Fellows to help monitor the impact of not being able to access their fellowship funds and find solutions.
 - **Immigration:** OISS is keeping this page updated, including guidance on contacts with law enforcement and ICE - <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/immigration-changes>. The guidance for faculty and staff is posted in our office.
 - Regarding ICE raids, if you feel comfortable, print out “Know Your Rights” posters and put it in your area both at work and at home.

- The State of Connecticut Attorney General’s press releases: <https://portal.ct.gov/ag/press-releases/2025-press-releases>. Including updates on the suit against the federal funding freeze.
 - The CT Attorney general has been very active with law suits against the current administration, and the page on the CT Attorney General’s website with press releases is very informative and up-to-date as things change rapidly.
 - Some USDA grants have received stop work orders – you will know if this is a grant that you are on.
 - There are upcoming Town Halls for research administrators schedule to discuss these things, but how these orders will affect research and postdocs/ARS at Yale is still unknown.
 - NSF postdoc fellows are paid directly and members of this community may not have received pay – if you need help accessing emergency support regarding NSF funding, reach out to Erin Heckler at the OPDA.
 - If you are having a specific issue regarding activity by the administration, email Erin Heckler at the OPDA and the Yale Research Office.
- Upcoming Programming from OPA:
 - Addressing Boundaries & Burnout for Better Balance, Feb 20, <https://cglink.me/2dA/r2291939>
 - One of the things that came out of the post doc survey
 - Write Together - February, Feb 26th - SHML 115 (5-8), <https://cglink.me/2dA/r2292593>
 - Coffee & Convo with the OPA: Reviewing and Recalibrating Your Goals, March 6, <https://cglink.me/2dA/r2292559>
 - Leadership and Managing in Action Program (LMAP) - 6 session program, Thursdays, 4-5pm on Zoom in March and April, <https://cglink.me/2dA/r2292679>
 - The YPA Pcard is working again.
 - Regarding the Merch order to be placed by the Communications and Symposium Committees, The OPDA requests that as soon as the final count for items is known, please place the order, as it will take time for things to be printed and delivered.

Questions or issues with registration? Please reach out to Victoria (victoria.hallinan@yale.edu)

Guest Presentation from the Yale Chaplain’s Office [5 min]

Reverend Jenny Peek, Associate University Chaplain
<https://chaplain.yale.edu>
 203-432-1128

The Chaplain’s Office welcomes all, meeting trainees where they are, and respecting and honoring all identities that they hold. The Chaplain’s Office is here to work with postdocs/ARS as well as students.

The Roles of the Chaplain’s Office within the University include:

1. Connecting people to religious and spiritual life on Campus. Around 50% of those who reach out to the Chaplain’s Office don’t identify as spiritual. The Office works to connect people with their meaning and purpose in life.

2. Providing one-on-one meetings for confidential emotional support. While the staff are not therapists and cannot offer skill-based interventions, they talk with people about things such as meaning, purpose, grief, and relationship stresses and dynamics.

The YPA and Chaplain's Office retreat will be held April 30th, 2025, from 9am – 4pm at Mercy By The Sea in Madison, CT.

- There is space for up to 15 attendees.
- This retreat provides the opportunity for postdocs/ARS to get away from campus, connect with other postdocs.
- The theme of the retreat is “Finding Generative Roots”.
- Registration has just launched through a Google form and a YaleConnect link is forthcoming.

Open Forum - Questions/Comments [15 min]

Question - Should we be carrying documents/ID with us?

Response from Erin at OPDA - Check if OISS has current guidance on this. The OISS's page on “Recent Immigration Actions and Updates” can be found [here](#). There doesn't currently seem to be official guidance from Yale (or Immigration Lawyers) about this. Yale OPDA encourages you to do what you're comfortable with. It will likely be late March before federal immigration policies are officially updated.

Question - Will the YPA budget be affected if the federal government's forced lowering of indirect costs goes through?

The OPDA budget doesn't come from indirect funds, so it is unlikely, but the OPDA don't officially know for sure yet.

Many science journals have links to provide you with details on how to advocate for academic sciences. The ASM page titled: **How to Take Your Advocacy Message to Congress** can be found [here](#). Please reach out and make your voice heard – representatives are responsive. You don't need to be a citizen or resident voter, just specify that you are a constituent in their area.