

HORN POINT LABORATORY POSTDOCTORAL MENTORING PROGRAM

The postdocs in this proposal will be involved in the HPL Postdoc Mentoring Program (PMP). The PMP ensures a supportive, productive working environment for all postdoctoral researchers (postdocs) at HPL. The PMP contains direct and indirect mentoring elements that promote their professional advancement, training, and inclusion in the HPL community.

Direct mentoring Direct mentoring occurs both through regular interaction with the primary research mentor as well as periodically through a postdoctoral mentoring committee.

Primary research mentor The primary research mentor (advisor) collaborates and interacts with the postdoc on a daily to weekly basis. The primary research mentor encourages and facilitates the postdoc's professional and scientific advancement through research and supporting activities. These include allowing and aiding: the postdoc's attendance at national scientific meetings; participation in developing, writing, and submitting research proposals; publication of research in peer-reviewed journals; and involvement with outreach activities. This guidance also provides training in responsible professional practices.

Postdoc mentoring committee The postdoc will meet annually with a mentoring committee, whose purpose is to provide the postdoc with a diverse set of recommendations for advancing their career. The meeting with the committee is supportive and casual, and also provides the postdoc with a means to discuss issues that they may be hesitant to broach with their primary mentor. A committee exclusive of the postdoc's primary research mentor can provide feedback and advice from an external perspective, removed from the day-to-day research process. This adds a unique mentoring component that both directly benefits the postdoc's job application process, and provides guidance from a broader, multi-disciplinary perspective. An initial meeting will occur within one month of arrival in order to provide the postdoc with the chance to meet several faculty members outside of their immediate research focus, thus speeding inclusion into the HPL community.

Annual review The postdoc's research activities are formally reviewed on an annual basis by the primary research mentor; the postdoc's portfolio with regard to career advancement is reviewed by the mentoring committee. Separate written reviews are produced by both the advisor, and the committee; these reviews are discussed directly with the postdoc and submitted to the Laboratory Director. Prior to the annual review cycle, the postdoc provides a CV and short (one page) personal narrative. The narrative may be research-based or teaching-based, as fits the postdoc's interests and goals. Submission of the CV and narrative serves as an exercise for the postdoc to personally reflect on their career path in the written format common to many academic and professional positions.

Indirect mentoring Indirect mentoring is accomplished through involvement in the HPL community, and includes an arrival orientation, inclusion in faculty activities, and seminar opportunities. These additional aspects of the PMP facilitate the inclusion of postdoctoral researchers in the HPL community.

Faculty activities Postdocs at HPL are included in most faculty-related activities. They are encouraged to attend regular faculty meetings and are invited to the annual HPL faculty retreat. Postdocs are included in the faculty email list, in order to receive regular announcements about funding opportunities.

Weekly seminar series Each new postdoc will be invited to give a seminar in the HPL seminar series within their first year. This provides the postdoc the opportunity to share their research and receive feedback on their science communication skills.

Arrival orientation To ensure a successful start at HPL, an orientation and reference manual is given to every new postdoc upon their arrival. The manual includes the points of contact and procedures for how to get email, a USM library card, payroll, VPN information, etc.

Semiannual director's coffee Postdocs are invited to an informal group discussion with the laboratory director. These meetings provide postdocs with the opportunity to offer suggestions and ideas about postdoc activities as well as the general state of affairs at HPL.

Mentoring Committee expectations The responsibilities of the mentoring committee are to provide the postdoc with the opportunity for specific recommendations for attaining their short- and long-term career goals. This direct mentoring occurs upon the postdoc's arrival and annually thereafter.

The committee is comprised of three faculty members with a range of experience. The setting of the meeting is casual and supportive. The mentoring committee provides specific, written recommendations to the postdoc following the meeting, with the constructive goal of improving the postdoc's potential as a job candidate. These recommendations are submitted to the Laboratory Director for inclusion with the comments of the primary research mentor. These may include recommendations on publications, proposals, and teaching experience. Where possible, committee members may facilitate introductions to other colleagues in the field or speaking invitations at colleagues' institutional seminar series.

Mentor committee members will rotate every three years, with one person rotated off the committee each year. The faculty member with the longest tenure on the committee will serve as the chair for that year.

Semiannual director's coffee This gathering occurs at the beginning of each semester.

IMPLEMENTATION

This mentoring policy is to be posted and maintained on the UMCES/HPL site publicly, under a specific postdoc section.