

Welcome to the quarterly CNSPY Newsletter. Here, we report the most recent networking events sponsored by CNSPY and provide a preview of upcoming events. First, with each new academic year, CNSPY gets a fresh perspective by appointing new talent into leadership roles. Thus, we want to introduce you to our newly elected President, Vice President, and Executive Board. We are also very excited about this issue's Career-in-Focus section, which brings us unique insight into the world of start-ups! Dr. Rudy Bellani shares how he went from graduate student to McKinsey Consultant to the cofounder and CEO of Oystir, a company that freely matches qualified PhDs to ideal job fits in the non-academic sector. Learn more about Oystir and his interesting journey to fill a gap that was sorely needed for academics looking to make the transition away from academia in this issue's Career in Focus!

- Victoria Schulman, SPYglass Editor-in-Chief and CNSPY Blogger

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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 peers and colleagues. We aim to establish new avenues for collaboration, business ventures, and job opportunities while supporting an entrepreneurial environment among science trainees at Yale.

Meet the New Leadership Team

With the new academic year, the CNSPY has welcomed many new members to the Executive Board and named a new President and Vice President who manage the daily interworkings that make the CNSPY so great.



President, Prabhitha Natarajan, Ph.D., Postdoc (left)

Vice President, Jimi Miller, Graduate Student (right)

Executive Board Members

Claudia Bertuccio - Director of Events,
Victoria Schulman - Director of Communications,
Tenaya Vallery, Dan Mori, and Seongseop Kim

Business Team

Leo Ma, Dan Mori, and Seongseop Kim

Communications Team

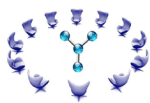
Elaine Guevara, and Victoria Schulman

Events Team

Claudia Bertuccio, Sophie Dutheil, James Havey, Leo Ma, Nayi Wang, and Tenaya Vallery

We are always looking for dedicated individuals who are interested in exploring new career avenues and sharing that passion with our members. If you are one of those people, we want to hear from you! Apply to join the team!

JOIN THE TEAM! Apply [here](#) or email us



Small Group Discussions

Our most popular event continues as we have invited a number of professionals in a wide range of career avenues to join us and speak about their jobs, companies, and the paths they took to get there. These round-table discussions allow students and postdocs to ask questions in an informal setting to learn about different careers.

Dr. Yaihara Fortis-Santiago, Science Alliance Manager, New York Academy of Sciences, New York, NY, and former AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow

On Thursday June 4th, 2015, Dr. Yaihara Fortis-Santiago visited Yale to speak with graduate students and postdocs about careers in science policy.

Dr. Fortis-Santiago is currently the manager of the Science Alliance, a professional development branch of the New York Academy of Sciences in New York, NY. She develops and implements innovative workshops and courses that provide early career scientists with a range of soft and business skills that are essential for all careers. As the manager of Science Alliance, she works closely with career development offices and student and postdoc organizations to consolidate resources and implement new ideas for professional development programming.

Prior to her current role, Dr. Fortis-Santiago completed the Science and Technology Policy Fellowship under the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in 2014. During her time as a fellow, she was assigned to work at the National Science Foundation. In her first year, she worked at the Emerging Frontiers in Research and Innovation office under the Directorate for Engineering on programs that transform the frontiers of STEM fields using innovative multidisciplinary approaches and inter-institutional collaborations. In her second year, she worked at the Office of International Science and Engineering on programs that provide international research opportunities for U.S. students and researchers and supported the establishment of cooperation agreements within the Americas.

Given her diverse experience, attendees had the opportunity to ask several questions related to science policy and program management. Student and postdocs learned what qualities one must have to be successful in these fields. According to Dr. Fortis-Santiago, those with strong interpersonal and communication skills and leadership abilities with a passion for their field tend to be successful in science policy. Additionally, diplomacy is an important characteristic for people in the field. Dr. Fortis-Santiago also shared several resources that would be beneficial to graduate students and postdocs that are interested in pursuing a career in science policy.

Dr. Fortis-Santiago noted that a common way for students to enter the field of science policy is through fellowships. Several fellowships offer the opportunity to work with members of Congress or federal agencies. Examples include: the [AAAS Science and Technology Policy fellowship](#); the [Christen Mirzavan Science and Technology Policy graduate fellowship program](#), National Academy of Sciences; the [Presidential Management fellows program](#), which matches outstanding individuals with exciting Federal opportunities; and [others](#).

There also degree programs, such as the [Master of Science](#) in Biomedical Science Policy and Advocacy program at Georgetown University, that provides a solid understanding of advocacy and policy principles.

In closing, we would like to thank Dr. Yaihara Fortis-Santiago (center) for coming and Arian Abdulla for organizing the event.



Dr. Bingbing Lu, Biostatistician, State Street Financial Corporation, Boston, MA

On Sunday, June 28th, 2015, Dr. Bingbing Lu, a recent 2015 graduate of Yale University in Biostatistics, joined us to discuss his transition from biostatistics research to the financial world. He shared insight regarding his current position at State Street Financial Corporation and explained how he made such an interesting career transition. He summarized the types of financial and statistical questions to prepare for in the interview, and he also detailed why he chose to take special finance and management courses to better prepare for the job itself, which was a key selling point for him in his interviews. At the end of the discussion, he provided his contact information to those in attendance in order to answer further questions and solidify connections for those interested in pursuing a similar career path.

In closing, we thank Dr. Bingbing Lu for joining us and Nayi Wang for organizing the event!



CNSPY Events



CNSPY Mixers

This summer, CNSPY hosted two mixers: one on Thursday, June 25th, and one on Thursday, August 13th, both of which were held at Kelly's Gastro Pub.

The mixers featured free appetizers and chances to win free drinks in our ice breaker games! Also, based on your feedback, we revamped our August mixer to make it more useful to our members by inviting four guests of honor to share their varied experiences.

Our invited guests included **Tenaya Vallery**, former CNSPY President who recently attended "The Whole Scientist" course at the Jackson Laboratory (top left); **Ellie Schmelzer**, a former postdoc at Yale who now serves as an Associate Director in the Office of Career Strategy at Yale (top right); **Arian Abdulla**, a postdoc at Yale who successfully applied for and attended a workshop hosted by the American Society for Cell Biology titled, "Managing Science in the Biotech Industry: An Intensive Course for Students and Postdocs" (bottom left); and **Kaury Kucera**, a former postdoc at Yale who now serves as an Associate Director in the Yale Center for Teaching and Learning.

Current, new, and prospective CNSPY members enjoyed the opportunity to learn many important lessons from these individuals. Due to the success of this format, CNSPY will host similar mixers in the future. Look for details about our next mixer in the CNSPY emails!



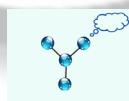
SPYcast

Last Spring, CNSPY instituted SPYcast, the official podcast of CNSPY. SPYcast features exclusive interviews with career mentors from a variety of backgrounds and gives CNSPY members the opportunity to learn from career mentors remotely. With SPYcasts, you can listen in at any time that's convenient for you!

Our first SPYcast was launched in June 2015. We interviewed Dr. Michael Fielder, an Associate Director at Infusion, a Medical Communications company in Haddam, CT. As a graduate of Yale himself, he happily shared his journey with us here in [SPYcast Episode 1](#).

The second episode of SPYcast was recently launched in August 2015. Here, we interviewed Dr. Lynn Mar, an expert in Clinical Research. She currently serves as the in-house Clinical Monitor at Quintiles, Boston in MA. Hear about her journey from academia to Clinical Research here on [SPYcast Episode 2](#).

Send your requests for future SPYcast interviews from certain fields or specific individuals to CNSPY President, [Prabitha Natarajan](#).



CNSPY Blog

The CNSPY blog continues this year with biweekly posts offering advice to help improve your networking and interpersonal skills. Every other Wednesday, CNSPY Blogger, Victoria Schulman, highlights many small things that could make a big difference. To get direct access to this content, subscribe to the [CNSPY Blog](#).

This past summer, we opened up the blog to guest writers, and CNSPY member, **Dianna Bartel**, wrote a fantastic Summer Series of posts on how to improve your writing skills. In her 4-post series, she covered topics including, the purpose of good writing and [where to start](#), [word choice](#), the importance of [location](#) (for impact) in sentences and paragraphs, and, lastly, she highlighted some great [resources](#) for improving your writing skills. Her posts have received rave reviews, so be sure to check out these featured blog entries!

Due to the success of our guest blogging program, we will continue to accept proposals for blog ideas from guest bloggers. If you have an idea or a strategy for successful networking, interviewing, or communicating in general, consider guest blogging for CNSPY! If you'd like to write for the CNSPY blog, contact [Victoria Schulman](#).

There are always new developments, opportunities, events, and programs hosted by CNSPY. Stay tuned by signing-up on our [website](#), joining our [LinkedIn](#) group, or following us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter @cnspy](#)

Upcoming CNSPY Events

Publishing Workshop with Discussion of Careers in Publishing

When: Thursday, October 1st, 2015. 6pm.

Where: Cohen Auditorium, YSM

What: We've invited three distinguished career mentors in the field of scientific publishing to come present about 1) the publishing process to help graduate students and postdocs improve their chances of getting published, and 2) provide a panel discussion of careers in publishing.

Distinguished Panelists:

- 1) Emilie Marcus, CEO, Cell Press
- 2) Cathleen Sether, Publishing Director, Physical Sciences Books, Elsevier
- 3) Paul-Andre Genest, Associate Publisher, Life Sciences, Elsevier

Schedule of Events:

6:00 pm - Insights into Publishing with Cathleen Sether and Paul-Andre Genest

7:00 pm - Careers in Scientific Publishing with Emilie Marcus

7:30 pm - Panel Discussion on Careers in Publishing

8:00 pm - Open Networking Session

Register for this event [here](#).

Science Communication Discussion with National Public Radio Correspondent, Joe Palca

When: Friday, October 23rd, 2015. Time TBD.

Where: Mason 211

What: Joe Palca, Ph.D., a science correspondent for National Public Radio will be joining the Yale community for the launch of the new Quantum Computing Center taking place at 3pm on October 23rd. Prior to the launch, Dr. Palca will meet with students and postdocs in both a Small Group Discussion and a Panel Discussion to discuss careers in science communications, specifically careers with National Public Radio (NPR).

More about Joe Palca:

Dr. Palca is a science correspondent for NPR. He comes to journalism from a science background, having received a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of California at Santa Cruz where he worked on human

sleep physiology.

Since joining NPR in 1992, Dr. Palca has covered a wide range of science topics, including everything from biomedical research to astronomy. He is currently focused on the eponymous series, "Joe's Big Idea." Stories in the series explore the minds and motivations of scientists and inventors (like you!).

Dr. Palca has also worked as a television science producer, a senior correspondent for *Science Magazine*, and a Washington news editor for *Nature*.

Dr. Palca has won numerous awards for his work, and he also co-authored *Annoying: The Science of What Bugs Us* (Wiley, 2011) with Flora Lichtman.

More details coming soon. Look out for registration information in the CNSPY emails.

Annual Networking Event

When: Thursday, November 5th, 2015. 6pm.

Where: TBD.

What: Each fall, the CNSPY hosts its Annual Networking Event (ANE). Last year, the ANE brought together 15+ career mentors from a variety of career paths and over 100+ graduate students and postdocs. The ANE provides Yale trainees the opportunity to network with professionals in fields such as Academia, Science/Medical Communications, Pharma, Industry, R&D, Biotech, Tech Transfer, Sciency Policy, Consulting, and more.

Event Structure:

- 1) Multiple **Small Group Discussions** allow students and postdocs the opportunity to meet mentors and ask questions in a more intimate setting.
- 2) A series of **Presentations** from campus groups and company representatives gives attendees a preview of what companies offer and ways they can become more involved to meet more professionals.
- 3) The **Open Networking Session** allows attendees to freely mingle with career mentors, exchange business cards, and continue more personalized conversations about job opportunities.

The ANE is a great way to begin a non-academic job search by making key contacts with professionals at area companies - 80% of jobs are filled via referrals, so make sure you attend the ANE to make those connections!

More information coming soon. Look for registration details in upcoming CNSPY emails.

Career in *focus*: Start-ups

This issue focuses on the brave career choice of launching a start-up company. For this, we interviewed Dr. Rudy Bellani, the cofounder and CEO of Oystir based in New York, NY. Dr. Bellani earned his PhD in neuroscience from Rockefeller University in New York, NY. He then passed up a chance to pursue the “academic dream” when he landed a coveted position as a consultant at McKinsey & Co. He never looked back on academia, but after 2+ years with McKinsey, he had an idea to fill a void for academic trainees. He then convinced his coworker, Zach Marks, to join him as he launched Oystir, a company that matches students and postdocs to their ideal non-academic job positions based on their specific skillsets. Learn more about start-up careers in general below, and continue reading for an exclusive interview with Dr. Bellani!



FAQs

What is a start-up company?

A start-up company is a new entrepreneurial venture that aims to create a new business, occasionally with a novel business model. Additionally, start-up companies often seek to provide a service or product that fills a current void or gap in needed services or products. Moreover, start-ups usually need to acquire seed money or form partnerships with existing companies to get the start-up company up and running in hopes of becoming successful on its own.

Why consider a career in the start-up culture?

If you have a novel idea that could change or improve the way certain tasks are currently performed, launching a start-up company may be a viable option for you. The more necessary this service or product is, the more likely you'll be successful if you execute your idea properly. Additionally, if you are driven and passionate about this idea of yours, that's also a sign that you'd be a great candidate for the start-up culture. Finally, start-up companies are a great way for creative individuals to innovate and solve problems.

Additionally, if you want to be your own boss, set your own hours, and work when and how you want to, running and owning a start-up company would be a great career fit for you. However, be aware that start-ups require a lot of work to be successful, so be prepared to potentially encounter more work than your current position requires!

Alternatively, instead of starting your own company, you could join an existing start-up company to either help get it off the ground or continue its previous work to make it more successful going forward. If you are passionate about an idea but don't want to take the leap by yourself, working for a start-up company - in any number of positions! - may be a good career fit for you. For example, at a biotech company, PhDs can work in sales, marketing, or Research and Development (R&D), and at a tech company, PhDs are often hired as data scientists, developers, sales and/or marketing managers, writers, and customer support representatives. Keep in mind though, that if you go this route, you likely won't be your own boss, but you'll still be able to explore your creative side and come up with new innovative ways to solve key problems for others on a daily basis.

What kinds of skills are needed to be a successful start-up entrepreneur?

Start-up companies require a lot of work. Thus, hard work and dedication to the new idea or product is a must. Additionally, there will likely be good times and bad times, so perseverance is key as well. Since a majority of the work takes place early on to get things moving, start-up entrepreneurs need excellent negotiation skills (to work with investors and/or create partnerships), and they may even need to be good at hustling to get their foot in the door.

Opportunities at Yale:

If you're interested in exploring the entrepreneurial route, there are many ways to gain experience in this field:

- 1) The [Yale Entrepreneurial Institute](#) offers numerous programs, courses, seminars, and internships to help students and postdocs learn about entrepreneurial ventures and turn them into successful businesses.
- 2) [Jonathan Rothberg](#) is a successful biotech entrepreneur who has started and sold numerous companies, including CuraGen, 454 Life Sciences, RainDance Technologies, Clarifi Inc., and Ion Torrent Systems Inc. He also founded the Rothberg Institute for Childhood Diseases. As an alumnus of Yale himself, he often returns to campus to host [seminars and recruiting events](#) (three last year alone!) for his latest burgeoning companies: [LAM Therapeutics](#), [Butterfly Network Inc.](#), [4Catalyzer](#), and [4Combinator](#). Be sure to attend his next seminar - be on the lookout for details!

Can you share your career path with us?

I did my graduate work at Rockefeller University in New York, NY, and earned my PhD in neuroscience, working under Fernando Nottebohm. I thought about doing a postdoc after graduating because I thought maybe it would rekindle my love for science and perhaps I could get my science career back on track (i.e., publish great papers) in order to take another shot at the academic dream, but then I got a job as a consultant at McKinsey and Company - by a lot of luck actually - so I passed up academia and accepted the position at McKinsey. However, after two and a half years with McKinsey, I realized it just wasn't for me, so I left to start [Oystir](#) with one of my coworkers at McKinsey.

What inspired you to create a start-up company?

Consulting never quite fit me - I hardly ever enjoyed the types of problems we worked on, I didn't like being so distant from the action, and I really hated the lifestyle. Nevertheless, I stayed for two and a half years - the people were great, so was the pay, and I didn't have a clear idea of what I'd do afterwards.

Then, in the Spring of 2015 I became more and more anxious to leave and build something myself but I had no idea what it would be. Somehow, I convinced Zach Marks, a terrifically gifted guy I knew from McKinsey to join me, and on day one of being unemployed, we came up with the initial idea for Oystir. I don't even remember the exact moment that the idea hit us. What I did know was that many of our friends were phenomenally anxious about jobs and felt lost even knowing where to look for jobs outside of academia. Worse than that, there were few, if any, resources available to them to do so, and therefore everyone fended for themselves. So, we decided to plug that hole and build tools to help PhDs and MSs find non-academic work. That's what led to [Oystir](#).

What was the most challenging part of your transition from academia to where you are now?

There wasn't one. For over a decade, being a scientist was more than a job, it was an identity. I loved it and breathed it obsessively. When I got my position at McKinsey, I felt really embarrassed and hardly told anyone - it felt like I was admitting defeat, that I was saying I was mediocre at science, and that I was selling out by not pursuing the academic dream.

Then, eight months in to the new job - that I didn't enjoy a ton - I served on a panel discussion and was asked what I missed most about science, and, to my own surprise, I realized that I missed nothing. Science and academia were no different than a past girlfriend - I used to love her, we broke up, I got over her, and now I've moved on for good. :)

Can you describe the process of creating a start-up?

People say that it's a massive roller coaster ride, but it hasn't felt that way to me. There have been real moments of angst - will we get the funding? Will we be able to recruit great technical talent? Will we get more funding? But it always just works out. I'm also overly optimistic - always - so that helps a lot, too.

From idea to launch it took us six months, but about half of that time was spent getting Robert Parks and Kiran Vajapey, two super talented developers with big brains, to quit their jobs on the West Coast and move to NYC to join Oystir and get it up and running.

How do you promote a start-up once it's launched?

Social media is huge. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Reddit drive half of the traffic on the website. Being savvy on these platforms is important - many thanks to Zach on our team for being our internet cool-guy guru.

What is a typical day like for you?

9am: team run-through of our day's goals. Lots of calls and emails. Say bye to the guys and go play with my kid before bed. Lots more emails.

What were the most important skills you had to develop to be successful in your current position?

I don't consider myself successful yet, but the best qualities I have for my job have been social skills, salesmanship, and hustling. And I think Zach in particular wishes I had more email organization skills!

What are your most and least favorite aspects of your current role?

The best aspects of the job are getting to dream up new things and then just doing them. Kiran has created a newer, better, cooler look and feel to the site so many times, it's insane. Robert creates beautiful answers to technical problems that none of us can solve by "taking a few days to think about it." Zach thought up doing a mail campaign at the start that got us our first 3K emails. I thought up doing an AMA one day and then we did it. You just do stuff and see the results - it's wonderfully fun.

There aren't any aspects that are worse than others - it all feels like you have to 'will' it to life. I'll say this though, the lowest moment was getting rejected by [YCombinator](#) because I didn't know what "TAM" was. At the very end of what felt like a great interview, I got asked "what's your TAM?" and I had never heard of TAM before, so I looked down and tried to figure it out (Total Annual... Marketing?), but I had nothing. And then the beautiful 'we-love-each-other' moment passed and everyone felt really bad and awkward in the room. Turns out, it stands for Total Addressable Market - noted!

**What does the future look like for you and Oystir?
How will you grow Oystir?**

Right now, we are working to more than double the size of the team and continue to build out more resources, career planning, and job search features specifically for PhDs and MS students. We have so many thousands of folks using the site already, and we want to make sure to continue to push the technology to be better and more helpful. Eventually we will be a global platform (it's really a US focus for now) with thousands of companies searching for talent on our site.

My dream is to be able to do this for the next decade. Worst case, it was a tremendous adventure with friends that I'll be proud to share with my son.

What kinds of activities can one do now to better prepare for a career as a start-up entrepreneur?

Start one or volunteer and join one! If you want to be a good baseball player, play baseball, don't read about it. It's no different here.

Is there any last advice you would give to someone looking to make a similar transition from academia into a career as a start-up entrepreneur?

Yes, do it with friends who are smarter than you! And if you don't want to look for a job, just create one by starting a start-up company. I'd say that's 70% why I did it. That may turn out to be a terrible reason - check back in two years! But even then, I still wouldn't regret it. Again, it's already been a great adventure with great friends that I can't wait to tell my son about when he's older. I hope he'll be proud of me for taking a leap of faith on something I believe in, and I hope to be a great example for him of how to take risks and follow your dreams.

We extend our greatest thanks to Dr. Rudy Bellani for his time and for participating as our featured scientist in this issue's Career-in-Focus section to provide insight here in the Career Network SPYglass for those who are interested in starting their own companies or curious about the start-up culture!

Curious about the Oystir service?

Here's what you need to know...

Oystir is a company that asks you to identify your skills as well as the degree to which you have mastered these skills, and based on your self-declared skillset and levels of proficiency, Oystir will generate a list of jobs that are seeking candidates with your specific qualifications.

To use the service:

- 1) First, create a free account.
- 2) Select a category shown on the left, i.e., "Biology Skills."
- 3) Within each category, you'll find different bubbles/circles with different topics. If you have experience with a given topic, i.e., "Bacterial Culture," select that bubble.
- 4) The next view provides you with an opportunity to define your level of expertise with this skill. For example:
A) I have no/very limited experience,
B) I've learned the basics,
C) I have experience but need help, or
D) I execute complex experiments by myself.
- 5) Select the most appropriate statement and click "Complete" to add this skill and skill level to your skillset.
- 6) Repeat 2-5 for other categories. Note that Oystir also includes categories such as Business, Finance, Outreach, Writing, Teaching, Engineering, and Manufacturing to help you parlay your research skills into diverse, non-academic roles for which you may already possess some basic skills.
- 7) After completing the skills assessment, Oystir identifies jobs that meet your qualifications. Click on the "Job Matches" tab to see the long list of jobs that are seeking candidates with your specific expertise.
- 8) Click on the jobs that interest you to learn more, and either go straight to the application page or save the job in your "Favorites" for later.

It's that simple.

Thank you for reading!!

CNSPY Leadership Team

Co-founders - Thihan Paddukavidana, Rebecca Brown; Executive Board - Prabitha Natarajan, Jimi Miller, Claudio Bertuccio, Victoria Schulman, Tenaya Vallery, Daniel Mori, and Seongseop Kim

Advisors - Yan Gao, Lu Jin, and Shalini Nag

Career Network SPYglass - Editor-in-Chief Victoria Schulman, Elaine Guevara, and Contributors