

We welcome the new academic year with the September issue of the quarterly CNSPY Newsletter. Here, we report the most recent networking and career development events sponsored by CNSPY and provide a preview of upcoming events. This issue highlights many new beginnings for CNSPY. First, we introduce you to our newly elected officials who will lead the group with fresh perspectives this year. Amongst this team is your new Director of Communications, Lydia Hoffstaetter, who will be taking over the Newsletter as the new Editor-in-Chief going forward. CNSPY's new energy will bring many new and exciting renovations and improvements that we hope you will enjoy! Lastly, this issue also features an inside look at the grant awarding process in our Career-in-Focus section as we interview Dr. Kathryn Kalasinsky, Ph. D., Scientific Review Officer at NIH.

- 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 simultaneously building a community of peers and colleagues. We aim to establish new avenues for collaboration, business ventures, and job opportunities while also supporting an entrepreneurial environment among science trainees at Yale.

Newly Elected Leadership Team

Elections for CNSPY leadership took place mid-summer, and we are thrilled to highlight our new fearless leaders! They have plans to bring a fresh light to CNSPY, revamp many of the programs and communications from CNSPY, and better serve you!



President, Ira Kukic, Ph.D. (pictured left)
Vice President, Sandra Martinez-Morilla, Ph.D.

Executive Board Members

- Director of Events**, Supriya Kulkarni
Director of Communications, Lydia Hoffstaetter

Claudia Bertuccio, Leo Ma, Prabitha Natarajan, Victoria Schulman, & Tenaya Vallery

Business Team

Leo Ma, & Nidhi Vishnoi

Communications Team

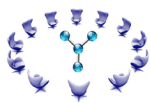
Lydia Hoffstaetter, Kristen Murfin, Victoria Schulman, Nidhi Vishnoi, & Tianyi Yuan

Events Team

Claudia Bertuccio, Jenny Cheng (Webmaster), Leela Dodda, Supriya Kulkarni, Jun Liu, Leo Ma, Anand Narayanan, & Caroline Rufo

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.

**Severina Haddad, Ph.D., Lecturer, and
Melanie Eldridge, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Department of Biology & Environmental Sciences at
the University of New Haven (UNH)**

On Thursday, May 5th, 2016, CNSPY welcomed Drs. Haddad and Eldridge to join students and postdocs at Yale to discuss careers in teaching at small liberal arts universities. Both Drs. Haddad and Eldridge hold teaching positions at UNH, but the expectations the university has of each of them are different. Dr. Eldridge is in a tenure-track position and conducts research in addition to teaching, whereas Dr. Haddad strictly teaches and holds a non-tenure-track position that is renewed every few years. Not surprisingly, Dr. Haddad's teaching load is heavier than that of Dr. Eldridge. However, both of them are expected to achieve "exemplary" university service, which includes participating in a number of faculty and academic committees, advising students, serving as the faculty sponsor for various student groups, and assisting with or hosting university-sponsored events on campus.

For those interested in pursuing careers in teaching at small liberal arts universities, Drs. Haddad and Eldridge offered great advice. First, teach in any and every opportunity that you can – experience is key. Second, describe those teaching experiences in strategic ways in your application to highlight your capabilities – and don't discount small teaching opportunities, such as a single guest lecture, because even those can help your application. Third, highlight the range of classes you'd be comfortable teaching beyond your specialty. To that end, it's wise to teach a variety of different topics when seeking out teaching opportunities. Fourth, point out some class topics you'd like to teach if given the opportunity to create a new course for the university to offer to its students. Fifth, include or offer to provide student evaluations (if you have them) as part of your application for a teaching position. These are invaluable in helping the selection committee decide whether or not you are an effective teacher, not just a content matter expert.

They emphasized that applicants should also ask a number of questions to as many people as possible during their interviews. Moreover, ask the same question to multiple people to get a feel for how each position/person

is treated differently within the same department to help you identify if a potential employer is a good fit for you. Specifically, they noted that candidates should ask about course-load expectations, service expectations (and what "exemplary" really means quantifiably), maternity leave policies, and summer expectations among other topics. Of note, Dr. Haddad has zero responsibilities during the summer and is not expected to appear at work at all, whereas Dr. Eldridge is expected to continue her research throughout the year. On the topic of research, Dr. Eldridge highlighted that the pressure to publish and bring in funding isn't nearly as high at UNH as it would be at R01 institutions. For example, her department gave her overwhelming praise for securing an \$11,000 dollar grant! She admitted that she was slightly embarrassed by this seemingly unworthy recognition, but it highlights the significant difference in funding expectations at a small liberal arts college with primarily undergraduates and only a handful of master's students.

Despite some of the key differences between their two positions, they highlighted that much of the day-to-day operational work is the same aside from the fact that Dr. Haddad does not have a research program to worry about. They both have an equal role in departmental meetings and are equally valued by the department heads. They collectively work on providing a great curriculum for the biology students at UNH.

If you love teaching and either want a small research program on the side or don't want to do research at all, positions like theirs are a great option for you. As a last bit of advice, they both pointed out that, if you're interested, just getting your foot in the door is key to working your way into a full-time teaching position, whether that be tenure-track or non-tenure track, so look into adjunct positions that allow you to be a part of the department. This gives the department heads a chance to get to know you and witness your teaching abilities and content mastery first hand. Then, when a full-time position opens up, they'll think of you first before opening the position to the public!

CNSPY thanks Drs. Haddad and Eldridge (both pictured far left in the image below) for their time and input regarding careers in teaching at small universities, and we also thank Dan Mori, CNSPY Executive Board member and Adjunct Lecturer at UNH, for organizing the event.



CNSPY Events

Catherine Peishoff, Vice President, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Global

On Thursday, July 14th, 2016, CNSPY organized a discussion on careers in Pharma with **Catherine Peishoff**, Ph.D. She provided great insight into the world of pharma, but she specifically offered three key points of advice.

(1) Mastery of one speciality is better than being a 'jack of all trades.' In terms of hiring, students and postdocs who have mastered a particular field are much more preferred over those with multidisciplinary knowledge. Depth is more valuable than breadth in pharma. Additionally, having quality publications relevant to your field of expertise makes you a much more attractive candidate for positions in pharma.

(2) Network with people at least two levels above you. Although many students and postdocs try to expand their network by connecting with those in the next position higher, it's better to network with those who are at least two steps above you. Doing so helps you communicate your thoughts and ideas to people in more influential positions, which can improve your chances of moving up the ladder and moving up quickly.

(3) Be proactive. Dr. Peishoff highlighted the importance of being proactive. Take the initiative and offer your help to people in other groups who need it or who could use your expertise. Of course, be sure to prioritize your own work first, but going beyond your duties to help other projects shows that you are a team player.

In closing, the event was a great success, and many attendees exchanged contact information with Dr. Peishoff. We thank her for sharing her time and advice!

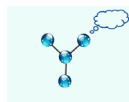


CNSPY Mixers

Quarterly mixers bring together former, current, and prospective CNSPY members. Most recently, we held a mixer on Wednesday, June 1st at Elm City Social. We invited Dr. **Daniel Mori**, Adjunct Professor at the University of New Haven (UNH) and former CNSPY Vice President, to come join us at the mixer to share his experiences about how he made the transition from postdoc to

Adjunct Professor. At the event, he highlighted that after serving as an Adjunct Professor for a few semesters, his department is now transitioning him to a full-time position. This highlights the value of accepting smaller roles to gain experience and how doing so can be vital for securing full-time permanent positions. All attendees at the mixer agreed that hearing Dan's insight was invaluable, and many decided to pursue current openings for adjunct positions at UNH after speaking to Dan.

Overall, the mixer was a huge success, and we invite you to see what opportunities you can find at our next mixer! If nothing else, come enjoy free appetizers and chances to win free drinks! Look for details about our next mixer in the CNSPY emails!



CNSPY Blog

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

This summer, the blog hosted its annual Summer Spotlight Series, featuring guest blogger and CNSPY Executive Board Member, Tenaya Vallery, who highlighted how to maximize your LinkedIn profile to help build your professional network. In her [first post](#), she compared LinkedIn and ResearchGate, favoring LinkedIn by far. Her [second post](#) addressed simple aspects of LinkedIn that make a big difference - your profile picture and professional headline. Her [third post](#) focused on how to maximize the impact of your Experience section by adding multimedia. She then concluded the series by discussing key strategies for connecting with people and building your network using invites and InMail in her [fourth post](#).

Lastly, we want to acknowledge the work of Victoria Schulman, the blog's creator. After two years of offering wonderful and immensely helpful advice to the Yale community, she is turning over the reigns to the new CNSPY Blogger and CNSPY Executive Board Member, Lydia Hoffstaetter, who will take over in October. We are so grateful to Victoria for making the CNSPY blog the wonderful resource that it is today, and we are excited to give the blog a new, fresh perspective from the viewpoint of an international trainee! To help shape the blog in this new direction, send your thoughts, comments, suggestions, and proposals for guest blog posts to [Lydia Hoffstaetter](#).

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](#)

Career in focus : Scientific Review Officer

In contrast to the bench side of science that produces research, there is the granting side of science that facilitates research. Here, we feature Dr. Kathryn S. Kalasinsky, Ph.D., a Scientific Review Officer (SRO) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD who more or less runs the granting side of science (from NIH) for her specific field of expertise. Dr. Kalasinsky earned her Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of South Carolina and eventually came to NIH after a long 40-year career as a principal investigator working in government-based research for the Department of Defense. Although she's in a more administrative role now, she is still surrounded by some of the best science and scientists in the world. Read more about her job as an SRO and how she made the transition from academia to her current position.



FAQs

What is a Scientific Review Officer?

A Scientific Review Officer (SRO) is a scientific administrative position that directs the review process by which scientific grants are critiqued and ranked in order of scientific merit for consideration for funding by the NIH. There are about 300 SROs at NIH covering about 300 different scientific disciplines. For example, Dr. Kalasinsky's scientific expertise is instrumentation development for disease diagnosis; thus, she is the SRO for the Instrumentation and Systems Development study section. An SRO will review the science in the grant applications when they come in to assure that they have been assigned appropriately to their scientific topic panel for review. Then the SRO will recruit scientific experts in the field to review the grant applications and assign specific reviewers to various grant applications as the primary reviewers. The SRO instructs the reviewers on the appropriate procedures for review, and once the experts send in their written critiques the SRO reviews them for completeness. The SRO then conducts a meeting (the study section) where the experts fly in from all over the country to discuss the top 50% of the grant applications (based on the preliminary critiques). After the meeting, the SRO writes a summary of discussion for each of the discussed applications. There are about 100 applications per study section discipline with about 30 experts from the field convening for the meeting, and this process repeats every four months.

Why switch to a career as an SRO?

An SRO position is good for those who want to stay in touch with the forefront of research science but do not want to continue in the laboratory themselves. SROs are involved in some of the top science in the world and associate with some of the top scientists as well, both as reviewers and applicants.

What kinds of skills are needed to be successful as an SRO?

Obviously, you need a strong background in research science and extremely good organizational skills. You also need to present a leadership command when you are in the panel meeting, where some of the top scientists have convened to discuss the scientific merit of the newest research ideas. Good communication skills in speaking and writing are also needed to complete the tasks of an SRO.

What kinds of activities can one do now to better prepare for a career as an SRO?

An SRO position is a good "end-of-career" position because you need a background as an established well-recognized research scientist before you can be considered for an SRO slot. However, some mid-career scientists have filled the roles of SROs as well.

Opportunities while you're at Yale:

If you're interested in exploring a career as an SRO, there are many ways to better prepare yourself for this field during your academic training period:

- 1) Practice your writing skills by starting a blog, writing a guest post for the [CNSPY blog](#), writing event summaries for the CNSPY Newsletter (apply to join the CNSPY team [here](#)), and applying for grants and fellowships.
- 2) Attend grant-writing workshops and classes; [author Angelika Hofmann](#) at Yale hosts [courses](#) every semester.
- 3) Review and edit manuscripts for the [Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine](#)
- 4) Volunteer to judge poster competitions to practice evaluating projects and providing constructive criticism: the [New Haven Science Fair](#), the [NYC Science & Engineering Fair](#), the [Science Media Awards](#) (video judging)

How did you get interested in scientific reviewing?

After 35 yrs in government research, the institution for which I worked was closing for budget considerations. I wanted to continue working in science but felt that I did not have the time left at the end of my career to start a new research program again, so I looked for ways to stay involved in top tier science without running a lab. During my job search, an SRO position became available in my specific field, and I jumped on the opportunity.

Can you share your career path with us?

I went directly into government laboratory service from grad school and began in pesticide chemistry at a state agricultural lab. From there, I tried industry in the field of toxicology and decided I preferred the government lab atmosphere better, so I then moved into a federal government position doing forensic toxicology. I later moved within federal departments to the Biological Agent Detection Division and then into Instrumentation Development for Disease Diagnosis. All of these positions were research-oriented where I wrote grants and published primary research. My final move was a transfer to NIH to become an SRO. This covers 40 years of work.

What was the most challenging part of your transition from academia to your current field?

Lab withdrawal - I love bench science! Although I am still associated with some of the top science in the world, I am not doing it. Also, the job can be very intense at certain times of the year and very slow at other times.

Can you describe the interview/application process?

Since I was coming from a government lab that was closing, my resume was sent to other government institutions in my local area for primary consideration over new federal service applicants. My scientific background matched an SRO slot that was specifically needed at NIH, so I was offered the opportunity and I accepted.

What did you highlight on your resume/CV?

I think what caught the eye of the administration at the Center for Scientific Review at NIH was the fact that I had served as the President of two different professional societies at the national level. This is the kind of scientific recognition that they are looking for in SROs besides a track record in productive research science. Joining in activities of professional societies and networking has many advantages, and starting early is very good.

What is a typical day like for you?

The work is very cyclical. Many times the work load is intense (when grant deadlines are nearing), but then there are several lulls where you are waiting in between deadlines, so it depends on what time of year it is. There are policies that dictate deadlines for various phases of your work to be completed within a grant submission cycle. Once the grant applications come in, you have to recruit the reviewers and assign the applications, and then you wait for the critiques to come in from the reviewers. Then the meeting occurs (the study section), and you have a set period of time to write all the discussion summaries from the meeting. Then the cycle starts again.

What skills do you need to develop to be an SRO?

Having been in academia will prepare you with most of the skills you need for an SRO position. You need to understand the grant application process, how to read science, how to write science, and how to communicate effectively both written and orally. Organizational skills need to be prominent as well. It also helps to have a good professional network of experts in your discipline that you can pull from to serve as reviewers.

What are your most & least favorite job aspects?

I like interacting with other scientists at NIH and the reviewers at the meetings. I least like writing the discussion summaries because I want to make sure that I capture the essence of the discussion to give the applicants and the institutes that will fund the science the most accurate description of the scientific merit, which takes time.

Is there room for career development & advancement for someone in your position?

You can move up the line in administration relatively quickly as an SRO, but the further you move up the further away from the science you get. I prefer to be more closely related to the science where I can make an impact.

Is there any last advice you would give to someone looking to make a similar transition like you did?

The hiring process for any federal government position can take ~6 months through USAJobs.gov, which is where the SRO positions are advertised. Sign up on the website long before you are interested in transitioning. The SRO positions are considered a "Health Scientist Administrator." Look for that topic, and check the website often, as positions are only posted for just one week.

Thank you for reading!!

CNSPY Leadership Team

Co-founders - Thihan Paddukavidana, Rebecca Brown

Executive Board - Claudio Bertuccio, Lydia Hoffstaetter, Ira Kucic (President), Supriya Kulkarni, Leo Ma, Sandra Martinez-Morilla (Vice President), Prabitha Natarajan, Victoria Schulman, & Tenaya Vallery

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