



# The Einstein Postdoc Newsletter

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## A word of welcome from the Editors

Well it wasn't easy — but here it is — the first volume and issue of the Einstein Postdoc Newsletter. Our goal is to communicate information relevant to postdoc life, such as the EPA events, science news, etc. In this issue we bring you news on the presidential candidates' views on science; we present an interview from a medical educationalist; and update you on Einstein's initiative to bring daycare to our campus. The Einstein Postdoctoral Association (EPA) co-chairs, and the Postdoc Senators' co-chairs introduce themselves. We have tried to incorporate announcements of interest such as: Einstein postdoc achievements of the first quarter of the year, upcoming and funding notices, etc. We appreciate hearing your feedback. Also, we welcome contributions in the form of articles, news, letters, cartoons, etc. Email us your ideas. Helene, Aviva and Nirupama (email address: [postdocnews@gmail.com](mailto:postdocnews@gmail.com))

## Presidential Politics and Science

Science and politics aren't always discussed in the same breath, but the truth is science is heavily influenced by politics. With the 2008 Presidential campaign underway, we decided to take a look at the candidates' stand on scientific policies and science issues — Helene Eisenman ([heisenma@aecom.yu.edu](mailto:heisenma@aecom.yu.edu))

Republican Candidates		Democratic Candidates	
<b>John McCain</b>	<b>Mike Huckabee</b>	<b>Barack Obama</b>	<b>Hillary Clinton</b>
<b>Research ethics:</b> Opposes using federal money for stem cell research and expresses concern about human cloning. <b>Space:</b> Is a proponent of space research and expresses a need for strong support of NASA. <b>Environment:</b> Sees environmental issues as critical to the security of the USA, has been critical of the Bush administration's lack of action on global warming. Views protecting the environment as a "patriotic responsibility." ( <a href="http://www.johnmccain.com">www.johnmccain.com</a> )	<b>Evolution:</b> Famously raised his hand to show that he did not believe in evolution. <b>Research ethics:</b> Favors a constitutional amendment protecting the sanctity of life. Clearly states opposition to embryonic stem cell research. <b>Research:</b> Successfully initiated a state referendum to use tobacco settlement money for research and disease prevention. <b>Energy:</b> Wants to make the USA energy independent by using alternatives to foreign oil. ( <a href="http://www.mikehuckabee.com">www.mikehuckabee.com</a> )	<b>Technology:</b> On his website, he expresses support of technology and improving information technology so that it will be more accessible to all people by appointing a "Chief Technology Officer." <b>Energy:</b> Proposes investing \$150 billion in alternative forms of energy. His goal is to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by the middle of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century. <b>Funding:</b> Supports research and wants to "double" federal funding for basic science research. ( <a href="http://www.barackobama.com">www.barackobama.com</a> )	<b>Plan:</b> Wants to see the USA remain an "innovation superpower." She has an extensive and detailed 9-point science policy on her campaign website. <b>Research Funding:</b> Wants to double the NIH budget over 10 years. She also wants to increase the number of NSF fellowships and support women and minorities in science. In a unique statement, she proposes that all federally funded agencies spend 8% of their budgets on "high risk" research. ( <a href="http://www.hillaryclinton.com">www.hillaryclinton.com</a> )

## Outside the Ivory Tower - An Interview with Ken Wiesen

In February of 2008, Ken Wiesen, PhD along with his Science and Medicine team participated in a Career Development Seminar, which outlined Medical Education and Ken's role as an Associate Scientific Director with Science and Medicine, a Publicis Healthcare Communications Group Company. Ken received his PhD from Einstein and has carved out a niche for himself in the world of Medical Education. He graciously co-operated for this interview section.

Like many of us during our PhD studies, Ken also felt institutionalized with his passion for science. He knew, however, that there were other options outside the ivory

tower and spent some time tutoring MCAT, LSAT, GMAT GRE, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Following his tenure in private education, he ran clinical trials for a CRO (Contract Research Organization) which broadened his scientific perspective and led him to understand business and development, until he stumbled upon Medical Education and Communication with Science and Medicine.

Science and Medicine focuses on providing consultative, non-accredited, educational programming for the pharmaceutical, biotech, and diagnostic industries, for instance, Science and Medicine may be hired to educate personnel such as physicians, pharmacists, nurses, consum-

ers etc. by means of presentations, brochures, CD/DVDs, peer-reviewed journal articles and evaluation tests. These projects generally include conducting meetings, discussions, and practical feedback sessions with key opinion leaders to develop the educational and informative material.

To successfully carry out these tasks, Science and Medicine teams comprise of professionals from the accounting, travel, science, creative, and finance fields. Ken interacts in a team environment with his colleagues as well as those from the various sister companies of the Publicis Healthcare Communications Group.

cont.

## Inside this issue:

<i>A word of welcome from the Editors</i>	1
<i>Politics and Science—what the presidential candidates have to say</i>	1
<i>Outside the Ivory Tower—An interview with Ken Wiesen</i>	1-2
<i>The inside story—Will we ever have daycare at Einstein?</i>	2
<i>A letter from the Einstein Postdoctoral Association Co-chairs</i>	2
<i>A letter from the Postdoc Senators' Co-chairs</i>	2
<i>Etc.</i>	2

## Einstein Postdoc Achievements:

- **Ananda**, Dept. of Physiology and Biophysics published first authored papers in *Wetlands Ecol Manage and Analytical Biochemistry*
- **Ruben Coen Cagli**, Dept. of Neuroscience published first authored papers in *The Proceedings of the 2008 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation* and *The International Journal of Pattern Recognition and Artificial Intelligence*
- **Jeffrey Chao**, Department of Anatomy and Structural Biology published a first authored paper in *Nature Structural and Molecular Biology* (this work was summarized as a research highlight in *Nature Methods*) and was awarded a Kirschstein-NRSA fellowship
- **Beibei Belinda Ding**, Dept. of Cell Biology published a first authored paper in *Blood*
- **Scott Garforth**, Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology was awarded an American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Postdoctoral Travel Fellowship
- **PJ Gaskill**, Dept. of Pathology was awarded a Kirschstein-NRSA fellowship
- **Mahmoud Ghanem**, Dept. of Biochemistry published 2 first authored papers in *Biochemistry*
- **James Heida**, Dept. of Neurology published a first authored paper in *Epileptic Disorders*, was invited to write a book chapter, and gave an invited lecture at *The Infantile Seizure Society's 11th Annual International Meeting* in Japan
- **Michaela Jansen**, Dept. of Physiology and Biophysics published a first authored paper in *J Gen Physiol*
- **Aviva Joseph**, Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology published a first authored paper in *J Virol*, and was awarded 5 travel awards
- **Eszter Lazar-Molnar**, Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology published a first authored paper in *PNAS* and was awarded a Belfer Institute travel award
- **Amber Wells**, Dept. of Anatomy and Structural Biology was awarded a Development Grant from the Muscular Dystrophy Association for up to 3 years of support (2008-end of 2010)

## The Inside Story: So ... are we ever going to have daycare at Einstein???

In my opinion, absolutely and unequivocally yes, but many things still need to fall into place to make it so. With the dean's backing, the most effective and efficient people at Einstein are working very hard to make it happen, so the question shouldn't be "are we ever going to have daycare", but rather "when are we going to have daycare" ... the answer is - "such a new facility might be available by next fall"!!! During the December Senate meeting Dr. Ed Burns, Executive Dean, gave an update on the daycare initiative at Einstein, which is summarized below:

1. A committee comprising Dr. Steve Lazar (Assistant Dean), Dr. Nadine Katz (Associate Dean for Students) and Dr. Burns, was formed to investigate and assess bringing daycare to our College.

2. Since it involves our children, the committee decided that Einstein wouldn't "do this by itself", but rather turned to reputable, national companies that provide professional daycare services and narrowed it down to several, holding extensive discussions with all.

3. In parallel, the committee conducted a survey of the Einstein community to determine what the needs

for daycare are. Over 500 people responded and the results are as follows:

~250 respondents currently use child care primarily Monday-Friday, 7:00 am-7:00 pm, i.e. 5-days/week 12-hour program.

The average childcare payments are ~\$800/child/month, and 60% of the respondents said they wouldn't be willing to pay anything more.

So what's the problem??

Well ... from the discussions with the various vendors, it was found that the average cost/child of any professional child care agency is ~\$1,600/month, i.e. someone's going to have to supplement ~\$800/child/month.

Secondly, where would the facility be placed, and how much would it cost to build it? There are national standards for high quality child care development which translate to ~20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of space for ~125 children, which translates to ~\$3-5 MILLION building costs of a new facility!!

*"such a new facility might be available by next fall"*

In summary, the facility would have to operate at a \$800/child/month gap for ~125 children (i.e. ~\$1.5 million would have to magically appear each year) and secondly, it'll cost ~\$5 million dollars to build the facility in the first place!

Despite these numbers, in the February senate meeting, Dr. Burns updated us that Einstein is now discussing the development of a childcare facility offsite of the campus, within a few minutes walk or drive, which should cut the cost of development, and the school is even considering some level of subsidization. Without giving too much away, Dr. Burns mentioned that such a new facility might be available as soon as next fall. In addition, Dr. Lazar said in an interview that while many things still need to come into place, the committee members are very committed to making daycare affordable and available as soon as possible. So, are we ever going to get daycare at Einstein? In my personal opinion - yes, and the sooner the better!

Aviva Joseph (Questions and comments are welcome: [ajoseph@aecom.yu.edu](mailto:ajoseph@aecom.yu.edu))

## Outside the Ivory Tower - An Interview with Ken Wiesen, cont.

Ken spends most of his time reading and writing, and the rest discussing projects with his teammates. His job also includes some amount of travel. He welcomes the various challenges associated with medical education, and finds his work rewarding. "It feels good most of the time... and well, stressful sometimes too. This of course helps get the work done accurately and on time!" His work hours are about 45 hours/week and may increase.

"I feel like someone who has not found their thesis yet," Ken said. While on track to direct a scientific team in the future, his current position has opened up several different avenues for him to choose from (ranging from free-lance medical writing to medical strategy and business development). Recruitment as a scientific professional in medical education requires immaculate reading, writing, presentation and fishing-out information skills that are generally found in PhDs. Although an impressive resume with publications, fellowships and awards would help, it is imperative to get your foot in the industry door

first (getting interviews and internships). Reading top periodicals in medical education such as MedAdNews, and Medical Marketing and Advertising (MMA) would be a good starting point to find lists that collate information regarding top drugs, top pharmaceutical companies and top medical education companies. Additional information can also be found at [www.publicishealthcare.com](http://www.publicishealthcare.com).

"The first job in industry is extremely difficult to get" Ken said. On the bright side, the efforts of the medical education companies in publicizing their work indicate a continuous demand for talented scientific professionals. "However there are several caveats to working in industry," Ken said. "We have to work and abide by deadlines and mistakes are not as easily forgiven as compared to careers in Academia. But of course these pressures make it all the more exciting!"

If you want to pursue the challenges in Medical Education, please feel free to write to Ken ([ken.wiesen@mededgroup.com](mailto:ken.wiesen@mededgroup.com)). We are appreciative of Ken Wiesen for his initiative in making the Einstein community aware of the myriad opportunities in Medical Education and Communications.

Nirupama Mulherkar (Questions and comments are welcome: [nmulherk@aecom.yu.edu](mailto:nmulherk@aecom.yu.edu))



### Important web addresses to know:

1. The Einstein Postdoctoral Association's (EPA) website: [einsteinpostdocs.info](http://einsteinpostdocs.info) — this newsletter will also be posted here

2. Private funding for postdoctoral research: [www.aecom.yu.edu/ogs/FundingSources/slpd.htm](http://www.aecom.yu.edu/ogs/FundingSources/slpd.htm)

## Letters from the Einstein Postdoctoral Association (EPA) and Postdoc Senator co-chairs

Unbeknownst to all of us until last year, the By-Laws of the AECOM Senate (body that discusses and recommends policy to the Dean) contained an overlooked but significant passage allowing postdocs to be elected to the Senate. This now means that the postdoc community is now present to hear and be part of policy-making at Einstein through departmental senators. As postdoc senators, it is our duty to bring up issues that require the attention of the school and the Dean. At present, for example, we are currently proposing modifications to the Senate By-Laws so that we are also included in the Senate Council and Senate Committees. We need, however, your help - in order to better represent all postdocs at Einstein. We need to hear from you regarding exciting ideas about improving postdoc life at Einstein, and if you would like to become involved in policy-making, please come forward and join us. The list with your department postdoc senator is available at [www.aecom.yu.edu/home/senate/index.asp?ID=124](http://www.aecom.yu.edu/home/senate/index.asp?ID=124).

Alfredo Fort and Aviva Joseph, Postdoc Senator Co-Chairs ([fort@aecom.yu.edu](mailto:fort@aecom.yu.edu) and [ajoseph@aecom.yu.edu](mailto:ajoseph@aecom.yu.edu))

March marks the beginning of new leadership at the Belfer Institute, since our previous director, Alan Wolkoff, is stepping down. A search is being conducted for a new director who will provide leadership and vision to ensure Einstein postdocs find a place in today's competitive market.

The Einstein Postdoctoral Association (EPA, [einsteinpostdocs.info](http://einsteinpostdocs.info)) was formed as an advisory board comprised of postdoc representatives from each department at Einstein. In addition to acting as an advisory board, the EPA also organizes, with Belfer's support, various events for the postdoctoral community, such as, last summer's BBQ, the interdepartmental seminar series, and career seminars. This past February, Laura Norwood Toro (Cell Biology) and Ellen Yang (Neuroscience) were elected as EPA co-chairs to act as intermediates between the EPA and the Belfer Institute Director. In addition, Christian Reibeling will now provide regular minutes of the EPA meetings by email; Erin McClelland will continue to organize interdepartmental seminars; Kerri McIntosh will conduct new postdoc orientations; and Radhashree Maitra will schedule career seminars with Sue Golding and Belfer. Please do not hesitate to contact us or your EPA rep! Ellen Yang and Laura Norwood Toro, EPA Co-Chairs ([eyang@aecom.yu.edu](mailto:eyang@aecom.yu.edu), [lnorwood@aecom.yu.edu](mailto:lnorwood@aecom.yu.edu))