

## Horn Point Laboratory Postdoctoral Mentoring Program

All HPL postdocs are involved in the HPL Postdoc Mentoring Program (PMP) as one aspect of a supportive, productive working environment. The program contains direct and indirect mentoring elements that promote postdoc professional advancement, training, and inclusion in the HPL community.

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

*Primary research mentor:* The primary research mentor (supervisor) 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 supervisors are held responsible for this mentoring through annual reviews.

*Postdoc mentoring committee:* All postdocs meet annually with a mentoring committee that does not include their primary research mentor, whose purpose is to provide the postdoc with a diverse set of recommendations for advancing their individualized career goals. The meeting with the committee is supportive, providing the postdoc with an opportunity to discuss issues that they may be hesitant to broach with their primary mentor. The committee is charged to provide feedback and advice from an external perspective, including on a postdoc's job application process, and to provide guidance from a broader, multi-disciplinary perspective. An initial meeting will occur within one month of arrival 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, following similar procedures as HPL annual faculty reviews. These reviews are discussed directly with the postdoc and submitted to the Laboratory Director. Prior to the annual review, the postdoc provides a CV, a short (one-page) narrative about their activities with respect to Discovery, Integration, Application, and Teaching, and a plan for the next year. These documents are then discussed by the postdoc and primary mentor, and a plan for the next year is finalized. The primary mentor provides written feedback to the postdoc after the meeting. 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** is accomplished through involvement in the HPL community, and includes an arrival orientation, inclusion in faculty activities, and fellowship 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.

*PROMISE activities and other resources:* UMCES participates in a University of Maryland system-wide program (PROMISE) that provides career development services targeted to postdocs. All postdocs have access to these diverse activities. The UMCES postdoc coordinator will also manage an UMCES wide postdoc network and virtual meeting space for postdocs to share their experiences and gain advice.

#### Additional details not relevant for NSF proposal

**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 is tasked with: providing detailed notes of the discussion to the postdoc, discussing career goals and aspirations as well as specific actions that could facilitate their path, asking about challenges and successes, and providing a broader research network when possible. The committee will also request information on the direct and other indirect mentoring activities to ensure they are being provided.

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.

Edited 10/11/2024

February 13, 2012 Version 1.0