

New York City,  
November 2021

# Postdoc Periodical

Hello Postdoc community! We, the editorial team of the **ISMMS Postdoc Periodical**, are pleased to present to you the first post-pandemic issue. We sincerely hope that over the upcoming months we will be able to share with you stories that speak to you, reflect your experiences and hopefully, give you something to read besides research articles. Being new to the institution ourselves, we are going to start afresh. In this issue, you will be (re-)introduced to the **Postdoc Executive Committee (PEC)** who represent our wants and needs to the administration; members of the **Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA)** and the **Graduate School of Biological Sciences (GSBS)**; the various entities that support postdocs at Mt Sinai; resources that are available to us; and finally, some recreational content that- let's admit- we're all in need of. We truly hope you enjoy our efforts to rebuild what was one an active and vibrant community.

*Sindhu Vangeti, Piyush Kumar and Sohini Dutta*

## POSTDOC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The **Postdoc Executive Committee (PEC)** is a body comprised of postdocs at Sinai that represent the over 550 postdocs currently employed here. Their mission is to advocate for the postdocs at the administrative level, promote networking, support professional development, and overall, foster a sense of community among the mostly International, and wonderfully diverse community of postdocs. The PEC is organized into three working groups each with a distinct focus. The **Advocacy working group**, perhaps the largest group in numbers, represents the interests of the postdocs on a range of issues like salaries, benefits, retirement, vacation, taxes, sustainability and diversity. The **Professional Development working group** make career development tools available to postdocs in the form of courses, workshops and seminars on topics like grant writing, interview skills and transition to non-academic positions. And finally, the **Community working group** organize social events and coordinate outreach programs to strengthen the postdoc community from within, and give us an opportunity to give back to society. Together, the PEC members put in several hours each week to ensure working conditions for postdocs at Sinai continue to improve. Each issue we are going to try and introduce more of the PEC members to you so that when you need a friendly face and a sympathetic ear, you recognize them.

<https://webcommons.mssm.edu/pec/>

## NEW COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONALISM IN HEALTHCARE (COPHE)

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is dedicated to providing all trainees with an environment of respect, dignity, inclusion, trust, and support. To maximize trainees' scientific and personal growth, the educational environment must also be free of mistreatment, abuse, coercion, or fear of retaliation.

Mount Sinai Health System and the Icahn School of Medicine announced the launch of a program led by the new Committee on Professionalism in Healthcare (COPHE) that focuses on professionalism across the entire health system in July 2021. This program will enhance efforts to address and reduce instances of unprofessional behavior, mistreatment, and ultimately aims to improve educational and clinical outcomes.

A recent partnership between Mount Sinai and the Center for Patient and Professional Advocacy (CPPA) at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, an independent entity, represents an important development in these efforts. All reports of unprofessional behavior submitted to the Compliance Hotline, SafetyNet, or the ISMMS Feedback Form, also known as the Student/Trainee Reporting Portal, are now assessed by CPPA and a remediation plan is developed by them. Information about the incident is then returned to COPHE who in turn implements the plan. By addressing patient, co-worker, and trainee/student observations on professionalism in this way, we will be better positioned to create a healthy and inclusive work environment where all staff, trainees and students feel comfortable speaking up, with the knowledge that their concerns are being heard and acted upon. [https://mountsinai.formstack.com/forms/feedback\\_form](https://mountsinai.formstack.com/forms/feedback_form)

## POSTDOC APPRECIATION WEEK 2021

Since 2009, the **National Postdoc Association** has celebrated postdoc contributions to research and discovery. In 2021, after a pandemic-induced hiatus, the Postdoc Executive Committee, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and the Graduate School for Biological Sciences organized a week's worth of virtual and social distancing-compliant in-person events to acknowledge postdocs at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. The week began with a grab-and-go breakfast event hosted by the Community working group. Graduate school faculty and administrative staff sent out thoughtful video messages congratulating postdocs and highlighting their contributions to Mount Sinai (<https://gradschool.mssm.edu/postdoc-appreciation-week/>). A highlight of the week, was the Keynote address by **Dr. Marcus Lambert** from SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University on "**Addressing Structural Racism in the Biomedical Workforce**". A charismatic speaker, Dr. Lambert delved deep into the structural and institutional inequities that propagate and sustain discrimination in biomedical research.



*PEC Community working group hosting a Postdoc Appreciation Week event*



## MEET THE PEC MEMBERS

### Rachel Litke

Rachel Litke is a postdoctoral fellow in the Neuroscience department where she develops drugs to treat Alzheimer's disease using the model organism *Caenorhabditis elegans*. She received her MD in France where she trained in Endocrinology and Geriatrics and received her PhD in Aging Biology, studying the effects of excess glucose on aging in *C. elegans*. Her PEC roles include co-director of the **Advocacy group**, liaison representative for Women in Science and Medicine, Gender Equity Accelerator, Parent Postdoc issues, Mistreatment and Learning Committee, Faculty Diversity Council and coordinator for CoRE and shared Resources.



### Sindhu Vangeti

Sindhu Vangeti is a second-year postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Neurology where she studies human immunity to respiratory viruses in a systems immunology lab. She completed her doctoral research on monocytes and dendritic cells in human influenza and hantavirus infections at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden. She is passionate about mentoring, building communities, communicating science to a wider audience (@sindhuvangeti) and being a Big Sister (Big Brothers Big Sisters NYC). Sindhu is co-director of the **Advocacy working group**. She co-manages the PEC twitter (@MtSinaiPostdocs) and Facebook (@ISMMSPostdocExecutiveCommittee) accounts, and is on the editorial team for the PEC Periodical. Sindhu likes making friends and checking out ALL of New York's best eats. She will always listen to anything you have to say—especially if you bring her coffee.

### Piyush Kumar

Piyush Kumar is a postdoctoral fellow in the Environmental Medicine and Public Health Department working on diagnostic/detection techniques for exposomic research. He joined the postdoctoral executive committee (PEC) in 2021 to provide support to the community in this tough period after the pandemic. Piyush works with the **Community Working Group** and **Advocacy committee**. He also co-manages the PEC twitter (@MtSinaiPostdocs) and webpage and is an editorial member for the PEC Periodical. He likes poetry, music and movies.



### Yajing Xu

Yajing Xu is a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Neuroscience where she investigates microglial response to peripheral infections. She received her PhD from UCL in London, where she studied the role of microglia in the postnatal development of spinal cord pain circuitry. She is co-director of the PEC **Community Working Group**, where she helps to co-ordinate monthly social events for post-docs, and is also an active member of the Neuroscience Postdoc Association. (If you have any questions regarding Sinai, NY, or if you are also a glia fan, please reach out - she is always open for a chat over coffee!)"

### Sohini Dutta

Sohini is a first year postdoctoral fellow in the department of Neuroscience where she investigates epigenetic regulation in neuropsychiatric disorders. She completed her doctoral studies from Kent State University, Ohio where she looked at how different brain regions communicate to regulate fear memories in an anxiety-like model. Sohini is passionate about communicating science and helping STEM professionals in their professional development (**STEMPeers**). She works with the **Professional Development working group** and is on the editorial board of the PEC periodical. Sohini loves meeting new people and can be found wandering the streets of New York with her camera, scouting new tea, coffee and food joints!



### Bingyan (Jessica) Wang

Jessica has been a postdoc fellow in the Cardiology department since Summer 2020, currently working on multiple cell-based approaches for cardiac repair and cardioprotection during COVID-19. As a new postdoc joining Mount Sinai during pandemic, Jessica hardly knew anyone outside of her small lab. One day she tuned into a Zoom Postdoc town hall meeting, and was very impressed with PEC advocacy group (Shout out to Elza and Rachel!!!!) and their admirable work in advocating for postdoc community. She became a proud PEC **advocacy working group** member since then, and has felt inspired every day since!

### Mike He

Mike He is a second-year postdoc in the Department of Environmental Medicine and Public Health. His research interests include air pollution exposure modeling, the health effects of air pollution at different time metrics, and the health impacts of environmental exposures on vulnerable populations. Mike joined the PEC **advocacy group** because he wants to be an advocate for his postdoc community, and is eager to work with academic administration towards productive progress. Outside of research, Mike is an avid opera singer and classical music enthusiast.



### Tiphaine Martin

Tiphaine Martin is a postdoctoral fellow in Prof. Ramon Parsons's lab, Department of Oncological Sciences, Tisch Cancer Institute. She explores the role of nuclear PTEN and the utility of genomic and clinical data with functional genomics assays to identify individuals from different ancestries with risk of cancer. Before that, she performed her Ph.D. at King's College, London, in the Department of Twin Research, under the supervision of Prof. Tim Spector. Her project explored the utility of multi-omics data (genome, gut microbiome, epigenome, proteomic, glycome and metabolome) derived from twins in understanding human auto-immune diseases and the potential for development of personalized medicines. Prior to this, Tiphaine worked in Prof. Willem Ouwehand's group at the University of Cambridge, and at the CNRS in Bordeaux, France. She was the French representative of the bioinformatic user community for the "France Grilles – CNRS Grid and Cloud Institute" and the European Grid Initiative. She is a member of the PEC **advocacy group**.

(Every issue, we will introduce some of the PEC members)



## MEET THE GSBS AND OPA MEMBERS

### Basil Hanss

Basil Hanss, PhD, was recently appointed the **Senior Associate Dean for Student and Postdoctoral Affairs** in the Graduate School of Biomedical Science where he previously oversaw student affairs. With the expansion of his role, Dr. Hanss will play a leading part in advocating for and supporting our postdocs, as well as working closely with postdocs and mentors to help ensure trainees' success at Mount Sinai. A faculty member at Mount Sinai since 1994, Dr. Hanss has extensive experience working with students and postdocs. His energy, empathy, forthrightness, and deep knowledge of the challenges that trainees and Pls face in their careers have been instrumental in his successful mentoring and support of countless others. Dr. Hanss is also an Associate Professor in the Departments of Medicine, Medical Education, and Pharmacological Sciences, and he is the Associate Dean for Graduate School Well-being and Resilience.



### Bradley Gano

As the **Associate Dean** responsible for administration and finance, Brad leads the administrative staff and operations for the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and its programs. In 2020, he organized the structure of the GSBS Administrative staff into four teams that support our students, postdocs, and faculty: the Curricular Affairs and Program Administration team (which manages the PhD in Biomedical Sciences and Neuroscience, MD/PhD, Clinical Research Education, MS in Biomedical Sciences, MS in Biomedical Data Science, Biostatistics, SURP, and PREP programs); the Public Health and Health Administration team (which manages the MPH, MS in Epidemiology, MHA, and MS in Health Care delivery leadership programs); and the Student and Postdoctoral Affairs team; and an Administrative Operations and Program Development team. In addition to overseeing these four teams, Brad works closely with GSBS and ISMMS leadership, faculty program directors and others on strategic planning as well as operational and continuous improvement activities.

Brad has worked in the educational administration field for more than 24 years and he has held leadership roles in clinical, research, and education programs at several major academic institutions. Much of his career has focused on such areas as organizational systems, structure, and process transformation; information technology and systems; budget and finance; training and mentoring; personnel recruitment and management; and special project and strategic leadership. His graduate education and personal research interests have focused the roles that emergency preparedness and response, strategic planning, and communications can play in the field of education.

### Andrea Wells

Andrea Wells is the **Program Manager for Postdoctoral Affairs** in the Graduate School. Andrea oversees administrative matters and provides support for postdoc activities organized by the Grad School. Despite being new to Sinai and starting her position during the pandemic, Andrea has undertaken postdoc welfare as her personal mission. She is very approachable and resourceful. She works closely with the Postdoc Executive Committee and patiently listens to our long list of concerns and issues.



### Matthew Cipriano

Matt is the **Director of Student Affairs for Graduate Students and Postdocs**. He has experience in graduate school management through his previous work at Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences and the NYU Sackler Institute of Graduate Biomedical Sciences. The role is a fairly new one, and Matt is the first person to be in it. Overall, he oversees the non-curricular aspects of the graduate school, things occurring outside of the lab and the classroom, from orientation through commencement, and all that comes in between. He will also be overseeing Career Services and professional development efforts, with a focus on student wellness and on being an active part of the anti-racism efforts within the graduate school. One of the things that Matt does for students and postdocs is an open dialogue- **Chats with Matt** (second Tuesday of every month at 10am and the fourth Thursday of the month at 2pm), to come and chat, and bring up any issues that are impacting our life. Matt wants to make sure students and postdocs feel they have a voice and are being heard and that their issues are being directed to an individual.



### Shout out to the PEC Community Working Group

If you've managed to attend any PEC events in 2021- you know these postdocs fairly well. **Kirtan Kaur, Vishal Midya, Piyush Kumar** and **Yajing Xu** (L to R) are the driving force behind all of PEC's community outreach and social activities. They make friends, plan events and make sure at least once a month everyone has an opportunity to relax for a few hours. And in the post-pandemic world, their incredible efforts to reunite what was once a vibrant community are a shining beacon of warmth and friendship. So if you see them on campus, come up and say hello! And ask them about the upcoming **PEC Holiday party** in December.

**Feeling inspired to join PEC, make some more friends and maybe advocate for fellow postdocs? Think we can be doing more for the communities we belong to and live in? Come join us! Email [pecmountsinai@gmail.com](mailto:pecmountsinai@gmail.com) or any of the PEC members directly. We're always looking for new committee members, and friends. We cannot stress this enough- we're looking for more friends!**



### COFFEE SPOT OF THE MONTH!



Frenchy is a coffee shop and a bakery in the neighborhood of Spanish Harlem. The café was born out of the love for coffee and fresh baked food of Perrine and Aurelien, of French origin. The place has a great, cozy vibe with lots of sunlight pouring in through the windows. A quiet place with couches and tables to work at or just to grab a book out of their bookshelves and get lost in the pages! They have great coffee (and a lot of tea options too) and delicious French baked goods like muffins, quiches and buttery croissants, sandwiches, cookies and more (with vegan options too)! They also give a 10% discount to Mount Sinai employees so make sure you go grab yourself a warm cuppa as winter slowly starts to set in!



Address:  
129E E 102nd St, New York  
NY 10029

<http://frenchycoffeenyc.com/>





## What can you be with a PhD?

On the roster of upcoming events, the most exciting one is probably the bi-annual **What Can You Be with a PhD? Symposium** - the largest science and technology career symposium in the country. With over 40 sessions over 2 days (**20-21 November 2021**), the virtual seminar is an excellent opportunity for professional development and networking with over 2000 of your peers. The Keynote Speaker on Saturday will be Dr. Victor Torres, the CV Starr Professor of Microbiology and a 2021 MacArthur Fellow. Registration is **\$10** per person with the discount code **icahnsom2021** and includes admission on both days. All sessions will be recorded (with permission of all panelists), so you can view any sessions that you missed at a later time. Seats are limited so sign up early to be sure to get a spot!

## STEMPeers Global Conference

**STEMPeers** is organizing its second online edition of the **Global Conference** on **6-7 November 2021**, an annual career development international symposium, that aims to help STEM students and postdocs to network and receive career advice from experienced STEM professionals. We had an exciting experience organizing in-person events of STEMPeers in Boston, New York City and San Francisco on previous occasions in the United States and the virtual event in 2020. The overall theme of STEMPeers Conference 2021 is focused on career paths less taken and it will comprise of two sessions - **'Academia: Beyond the Retro'** and **'Empowering Scientists and Community'**. The goal is to discuss career options within academia that go beyond tenure-track positions and how to use our STEM education and training to empower other STEM trainees and enthusiasts with resources that may or may not be easily accessible.



## Optimizing LinkedIn for Your Job Search Workshop

LinkedIn is a powerful career development resource and tool. It is a place where employers and professionals are connecting on a daily basis. With the right strategy and approach, you can leverage and optimize all of LinkedIn's functionalities for your job search and professional development. Join Long Wu, Manager of Career Services & Alumni Relations on this workshop and discussion on LinkedIn. **November 16, 2021, at 12pm ET**

## Intersections Science Fellows Symposium

The **Intersections Science Fellows Symposium** was held virtually from **November 1-3, 2021**. 30 ISFS Fellows from diverse branches in the biomedical and life sciences, including neuroscience, immunology, cell biology, developmental biology, cancer biology, molecular biology, genomics, genetics, virology, microbiology, biophysics, quantitative biology, biochemistry, and cognitive sciences presented their work during the symposium. In addition, 30 ISFS Associates were selected to present pre-recorded flash talks of their research, which are available for all attendees to view throughout the symposium. This year, the keynote lecture was delivered by Dr. Shirley Malcom, from the AAAS SEA Change initiative. Four previous ISFS Fellows shared their experiences with the academic job market, plans for their new labs, and their journey as ISFS Fellows. Another panel discussion titled "Diverse voices" discussed how new faculty can establish a healthy balance between engaging in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion activities, while progressing as scientific leaders. In addition to **Mount Sinai** being an institutional partner for the symposium, Dr. Abha Rajbhandari, Assistant Professor, was a panelist on the session that discussed diverse voices and division of emotional labor. **Dr. Chrystian Junqueira Alves**, a postdoctoral fellow at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai was one of the selected fellows for the symposium. Dr. Piyush Kumar, Postdoc and PEC member, was a member of the organizing committee.



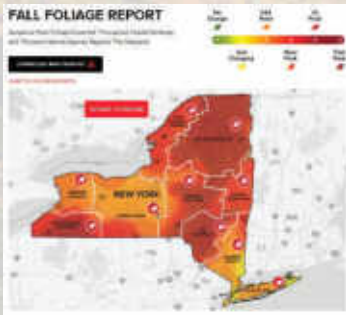
## FALL COLORS: NEW YORK CITY AND AROUND!

Autumn- a season of pleasant weather, glorious landscapes and the coziest of times. And perfect weather for long walks and hikes, around New York City and the rest of the state. And, the month also hosts several Halloween related events to welcome the feeling of chill in the air just before the onset of winter. And on that note, it is also the perfect time to engage in several outdoor activities before the freezing cold sets in. There are several blogs about the best places to see fall foliage. Without being overwhelming, we just want to point out some resources that will guide you for a good autumn, especially to those of us new to the city.

The first resource is of course the fall foliage report. Basically, it tells us the extent of fall foliage in different regions. This can help you plan which places to visit in a particular week. This webpage reports the same about New York. Each state has reliable indicators. (<https://www.iloveny.com/things-to-do/fall/foliage-report/>).

Of course, within the city, Central Park is THE hotspot for fall foliage and has several mesmerizing spots. You can subscribe to the Central Park webpage for regular updates on events. This link guides about other popular spots in the city. If you want to travel upstate or the Long Island, the Metro North train line connects all the major spots. Do check their webpage for special offers on tickets for local attractions. The views are beautiful be it from Hudson Valley or Catskills.

If you decide to go on hikes, the 'AllTrails' app is a good resource for your phone that provides information on hike routes, levels of difficulty and can be used to stay on the trails. For other activities and events in New York, one can check webpages like timeout, google, eventbrite, NYC govt, nyc.com, secret NYC, and several others. Enjoy the fall vibes!



### LINKS

<https://www.newyorkwelcome.net/explore/what-to-know/fall-in-new-york.htm>

<https://www.iloveny.com/things-to-do/fall/>

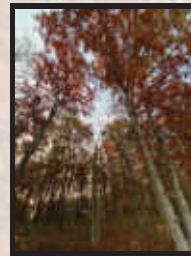
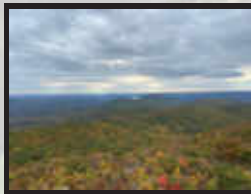
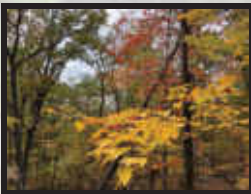
<https://www.timeout.com/newyork/things-to-do/where-to-see-the-best-fall-foliage-in-nyc>

<https://www.centralparknyc.org/>

<https://www.alltrails.com>

*Note: All the links provided are for reference purposes only and we have no collaborations with them. They have neither sponsored this article nor are we part of any affiliate program of these web pages.*

### MOUNT BEACON, UPSTATE NEW YORK



### PENNSYLVANIA

### CATSKILLS, UPSTATE NEW YORK



*Photo credits: Piyush Kumar, Sohini Dutta and Sindhu Vangeti*