



## FELLOWS & YOUNG

## INVESTIGATORS NEWSLETTER

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### From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to the latest issue of 2007 of the CCR-FYI Newsletter! In FYI news, the CCR-FYI steering committee would like to congratulate and welcome our elected CCR-FYI officers for this year. The chair is Dr. Jordan Irvin and the vice-chair is Dr. Veronica Hall. The elected secretaries are Dr. Gonzalo de la Rosa (Frederick) and Dr. Michael Rosu-Myles (Bethesda). Also, preparations are already underway for the next annual retreat in March. Please be on the lookout for the abstract and registration deadlines for the 2008 CCR-FYI Retreat in the coming months. In the interim, check out the pictures and survey results from the last retreat. Also in this issue, we discuss the benefits of professional society membership, the rules to writing a scientific paper, and a special article on outstanding mentors at CCR.

*Arti N. Santhanam, Ph.D*  
*Michal Legiewicz, PhD*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### CCR-FYI NEWS

From the CCR-FYI Chair 2

#### ARTICLES

Professional Societies: Is membership of any value? 3

The Fellows' Editorial Board on Structuring a Scientific Manuscript. 4

Who Are the Outstanding Mentors? 6

#### OF INTEREST

Survey Results from the FYI-Retreat 2007. 7

NIH Visiting Fellows Career Fair 2007 Survey Results. 7

Images from the FYI retreat 2007 9

IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO FUTURE NEWSLETTERS  
PLEASE EMAIL US AT [nciccrfyi@mail.nih.gov](mailto:nciccrfyi@mail.nih.gov), or [santhanama@ncifcrf.gov](mailto:santhanama@ncifcrf.gov)

## CCR-FYI News:

Hello Colleagues,

I would first like to thank the members of the CCR-FYI steering committee electing me to be the chair for 2007-2008. It was with great excitement that I accepted the position, the duties and challenges that it presents. I am looking forward to working with CCR director Dr. Robert Wilttrout, Scientific Director For Clinical research, Dr. Lee Helman, and Deputy Director Dr. Jeffery Strathern to improve the postdoctoral and postbac training opportunities the National Cancer Institute provides. I, along with my co-chair, Dr. Veronica Hall, secretaries Dr. Gonzalo de la Rosa, and Dr. Michael Rosu-Myles always appreciate hearing comments, concerns, and issues from the postdoc community at large, so please feel free to contact us!

The steering committee represents all the postdoctoral fellows and postbacs. Issues of primary concern are establishment of a NCI CCR alumni network database, creation of an exit interview, enhancing the postdoctoral evaluations, and the CCR-FYI annual retreat. We feel that creation of an alumni database will facilitate the employment process as postdocs transition from the NCI to outside institutions. Establishment of a mandatory exit interview will provide data to determine what portions of the postdoctoral and postbac training experiences are beneficial, and areas that could use improvement. Lastly, survey data and discussions we have had indicate that there is not a uniform annual postdoc review process and we wish to correct this.

We have decided, based on factors including cost, distance to travel, availability, conference and meeting space, to hold the 2008 retreat in Ocean City, MD, from March 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>. Some of the invited speakers include Nobel laureate Dr. Sydney Brenner (Salk Institute), Dr. Laurie Glimcher (Harvard), Drs. Wilttrout, Helman and Niederhuber. Coordinating the retreat this year are Drs. Tim Chan, Jonathan Jacobs, Ram Savan, and Selinda Orr and our friends at Palladian Partners. They all welcome questions and comments about the retreat.

The CCR FYI steering committee, largely composed of postdoctoral fellows, experiences a substantial turnover from year to year. As such, we have lost several experienced members who were critical to the liaison work that is essential for smooth operation. While we have lost some veteran members (typically because their careers have blossomed and they have moved to other positions) several new members joined the steering committee. We always welcome new members to join; we have a one-hour meeting on the last Thursday of the month at 11:00am. These meetings are video cast between Frederick, the ATC in Gaithersburg, and Bethesda. Three times a year we have joint meetings, once on each campus. The next of these joint meetings will be held in Frederick at the end of August, and we have invited Dr. Wilttrout to attend—hopefully to start biannual meetings with the senior leadership.

People interested in joining the steering committee can email the CCR-FYI SC listserv at [nciccrfyi@mail.nih.gov](mailto:nciccrfyi@mail.nih.gov), me directly at [jirvin@ncicrf.gov](mailto:jirvin@ncicrf.gov), or can visit the CCR-FYI SC website, <http://ccr.nci.nih.gov/careers/fellows/>

I look forward to serving the postdoc and postbac community as best I can over the next year.

Dr. Jordan Irvin  
CCR-FYI SC Chair

## ARTICLES

### Professional Societies: Is membership of any value?

A recent unofficial poll of NCI-Frederick postdoctoral fellows revealed that relatively few are members of a professional scientific society. I found this to be somewhat disconcerting since all societies need new and young members to stay viable. Given the highly focused nature of most research projects, fellows might not see the value of joining a society. Yet joining and participating in the activities of a scientific society can lead to many benefits that may not be readily apparent when one pays the annual dues.

For the purpose of this brief article, I will discuss my own personal experiences with both large and small professional societies. During my professional career, I have maintained membership in a number of societies, including the *American Society for Microbiology* (ASM, membership since graduate school), the *American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology* (ASBMB), the *American Association of Immunology* (AAI), the *Epigenetic Society*, the *American Association for the Advancement of Science* (AAAS), the *Society for Leukocyte Biology* (SLB) and the *International Society for Interferon and Cytokine Research* (ISICR). I am a member of these societies for various reasons, not the least of which is to have a general sense of being part of the broad scientific community.

With respect to individual societies, my thesis advisor was a former President of the ASM and a long time chair of the publication board. Although I have maintained my ASM membership for over 30 years, I rarely go to the annual meeting as microbiology has not been the focus of my research. Nevertheless, I cannot imagine not retaining my ASM membership. I did attend one year, however, when the meeting was in Washington D.C., and I was approached by the Chair of the ASM Immunology Division and asked if I would be willing to run for Chair—elect the next year. I agreed, and happened to have no opposition that year, so I served as Chair-elect for one year and Chair the following year. This opportunity provided me with interactions with many scientists outside my area of research, as part of my duties was to organize the Division symposia. This experience certainly broadened my immunological

perspective and provided me with real insight into what is required to organize a major national meeting. Being chair was also quite timely, as it occurred just about the time I was being put up for tenure at NCI, and holding office in a major national society certainly contributes to the strength of a C.V.

I joined the ASBMB as I was asked to serve on the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* [produced by ASBMB] editorial board and I thought it was important to be a society member. I am now finishing my second term on the board. Serving on the board has provided me the opportunity to see how science is performed on a wide variety of projects and it also has allowed me to provide my own fellows with the experience of reviewing papers. Participation on journal review boards is critical to the scientific process and all practicing scientists have an obligation to review papers and serve on such boards. Being a member of a specific society provides the opportunity to serve the community in this fashion.

I joined the AAI because it is the foremost immunological society in the world. There is no better opportunity to interact with top immunologists than by attending the annual meeting. I have also served on the *Journal of Immunology* editorial board and have occasionally chaired sessions at the annual meeting.

Joining the largest society in your discipline should be something one does without question, as it is important to have a large organization that will speak on your behalf. Clearly major topics, such as NIH funding and the NIH ethics rules, are influenced by the ability of these large societies to open doors on Capitol Hill and directly influence legislative action. With regard to changes in the NIH ethics rules, ASM, ASBMB and AAI officials went to Capitol Hill to speak to legislators and convince them that the new ethics rules were too harsh. Their efforts, based upon feedback received from their members, contributed to the call by members of Congress for the reevaluation and revision of many of the proposed rules. Changes in public policy and public support for basic scientific research are truly influenced by the activities

of large scientific societies, and such influence is not possible unless scientists join, support and participate in these societies.

Much can be also said for joining a small scientific society. When I reestablished a basic research lab after two years at a local biotech supply company (Bethesda Research Labs/Life Technologies, now part of Invitrogen), I decided to join a small society and try to attend its annual meeting every year. This was probably one of the smartest decisions I have made during my scientific career. Since one of the first topics of my research was the regulation



of Interferon-gamma gene expression, I decided to join the *ISICR* (then called the *International Interferon Society*). The first meeting I went to was in Clearwater Beach, Florida, and I remember that I knew only one person at that meeting (attendance was 300-400). However, as I went back each year, I got to know more and more people and got to present my work in places I might never have been able to visit (Kyoto, Florence, Nice, Vienna, and Shanghai). As I found the core group of interferon scientists to be very friendly and helpful, I decided to become involved with the society at many different levels. I first joined the membership committee, where we lowered dues to \$10 per year for fellows and provided students with a free 3 year membership. I mentioned to the officers

that the society would benefit from a newsletter, so they challenged me to produce one and we are now about to enter our 14<sup>th</sup> year of publication (3 times per year). I served on the International Council of the society and 5 years ago was nominated for President. Winning by 1 vote (or so I was told) led me to serve two years as President-elect and then two years as President. I do know that when I was up for both tenure and subsequent promotion, members of the society were contacted for letters of recommendation. I have no doubt that the letters written on my behalf were a result of my early decision to join and participate in a small scientific society.

So as fellows, I ask you to consider joining professional societies. Beyond developing important networks that can certainly help and advance your careers, you will be giving something back to the scientific community if you participate in that society. Membership may provide you with many benefits including travel awards, society scientific awards, the opportunity to participate in journal review boards, reduced registration rates at meetings and the opportunity to meet, hear and network with the leaders in your scientific discipline. If you take the initiative, you can make a difference to the society, to the scientific community and perhaps even the public at large.

Howard A. Young, Ph.D.  
Principal Investigator,  
Laboratory of Experimental Immunology,  
NCI-Frederick.

## The Fellows' Editorial Board on Structuring a Scientific Manuscript

The NIH Fellows' Editorial Board (FEB) is a confidential, all-volunteer editorial service that is provided to the entire NIH community. All NIH fellows may submit their scientific manuscripts, grant proposals, abstracts, and other scientific documents to FEB for feedback. Additionally, post-doctoral and clinical fellows, graduate students, and scientists from any NIH institute may serve on the editorial board. No prior editing experience is needed, and joining FEB is undoubtedly an excellent way to gain editorial experience and to improve one's own scientific writing.

Submissions are edited for grammar, structure, and style, but not for scientific merit. The editors strive to provide authors with the most constructive feedback in order to strengthen the clar-

ity, flow, and impact of the manuscript. For scientific manuscripts, each section is examined separately, and the following general guidelines are followed:

**Abstract:** The background, rationale, methods, results, and conclusions should be explicitly stated and easily identified. In addition to summarizing the key findings of a paper, the Abstract also acts as the main "advertisement" to persuade others to read it. Therefore, the authors should determine the appropriate level of detail based on the target journal and the expected audience; however, extensive detail in the experimental design and results should generally be avoided. The most important results should be highlighted and placed in the context of the field of

study, and their implications briefly discussed.

**Introduction:** The Introduction should provide sufficient background information so that the readers may appreciate the purpose and importance of the study. The reader should be brought from a broad understanding of the topic to the specific question being addressed. While sufficient background information is necessary to understand the study and the significance of the work, too much detail may distract the reader's attention from the key subject areas and should be avoided. Furthermore, the Introduction should selectively provide information that pertains to the main points of the study and should not read like a review article of all literature on the subject. To generate energy and interest, the specific aims of the study should conclude the Introduction in a clear and concise manner.

**Materials and Methods:** In the Materials and Methods section, the authors should provide enough information so that another researcher would be able to obtain the materials (include supplier, city, and state), carry out the studies, and analyze the data. This section should be clearly and succinctly written, allowing the reader to easily find and understand the details required. In order to minimize unnecessary detail, the authors may reference previously published work in which the procedure has been utilized and provide information on modifications, if necessary. This section is generally presented in the past tense (see Additional Comments).

**Results:** The results should be presented in a logical order that makes clear to the reader the reasoning and hypotheses behind the experimental approaches. Preceding each set of results, the authors may present a statement on the purpose of the experiment. Following the results, a summary statement that explains how one finding led to the next experiment will clarify to the reader the rationale behind the experimental design. The author should provide the results without interpretation or discussion although this may be modified if the Results and Discussion sections are combined (see Additional Comments).

**Discussion:** The information in the discussion should flow from the specific results to their broader implications, and discuss the subject in the context of the current literature. In the Discussion section, the authors may start with a brief summary of their results, highlighting the most

significant findings to the reader. Mention of excessive detail here should be avoided, as this section affords the author the opportunity to speculate on the broader implications of the work and should not merely reiterate the results that were found in the study. For example, previously published studies related to the findings, limitations and constraints, and surprising and contradictory results should be addressed. Finally, the authors may point out how the work added another component to the field and how it may affect clinical or health implications. A concluding paragraph with a "take-home" message will leave the reader with a strong appreciation for the main findings of the study.

**Figures and Figure Legends:** The figure legends should include sufficient information to allow the figures to stand alone, independent of the text. For example, the figure legends should contain a brief description of what is shown (eg. immunoblot) and should not state the results or interpretations of the results. All components of the figures should be clearly described within the figure legends, including all abbreviations used in the figures, lane markings, symbols, scale bars, etc.

**Additional Comments:** In addition to editing each section independently, the manuscript must flow and be properly formatted. The following comments pertain to the manuscript:

Is the information in the appropriate section? For example, would the information in the Discussion be better suited to the Introduction in preparing the reader to appreciate the study?

As a general rule, previously published (referenced) material is referred to in the present tense, while the new data being presented is described in the past tense.

Can the Results and Discussion be combined into one section, if permitted by the target journal? This sometimes aids the flow of the manuscript, particularly if the results must be discussed first before moving onto the next step in the study.

Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that sets the theme for the paragraph. Following this should be statements that follow from this topic sentence, including previously published work that supports this idea or that explains the connection to the current study. This will pro-

vide flow within each paragraph.

Paragraphs should be linked clearly. Transition words will aid in this (for example, in order to, however, therefore) as they allow the author to express conceptual connections.

Is the writing concise? Each sentence should stand on its own, be free and clear of excessive and unnecessary wording.

If something is difficult to explain, one approach is to explain the rationale or argument aloud, as you would to a fellow scientist. The flow will become clear and may be transcribed directly to paper. Following some editorial modifications, this may allow for the most direct presentation of complex ideas.

Figures should be ordered based on their presentation in the text. For example, one paragraph should be devoted to a figure, and jumping to the next figure within the same paragraph should be avoided. The titles of the figure legends should summarize or highlight the relevant findings of each image.

Once your manuscript is finished, please feel free to submit it to the FEB. Visit our website (<http://ccr.cancer.gov/careers/feb/>) for more information. And join our team! To become a member of FEB and gain more experience in editing and preparing manuscripts, visit our website or email us at [ncieditors@mail.nih.gov](mailto:ncieditors@mail.nih.gov). Happy writing!

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## Who Are the Outstanding Mentors?

"In 2001, the Outstanding Mentor Award was created to recognize NCI Investigators who have proven exceptional in their commitment to fostering the independent careers of their fellows, students, and other trainees. It is presented each year to individuals who have made significant contributions toward developing and promoting the talented trainees who will become the next generation of scientists." *Dr. John Niederhuber, Sept. 15th 2006.*

The winners of the 2006 Outstanding Mentor Awards were Dr. William Farrar, Dr. Susan Gottesman, Dr. Ira Pastan, and Dr. Alfred Singer. The Mentors of Merit were Dr. Andrew Byrd, Dr. Michael Emmert-Buck, Dr. Eric Engels, Dr. Dolph Hatfield, Dr. Dao Nguyen, Dr. Maria Turner, and Dr. Alexander Wlodower. Congratulations to all! The winners were presented with their awards at a special ceremony in the Natcher auditorium on Oct. 25th.

Dr. Brian Kawasaki is a post-doctoral fellow in Dr. William (Bill) Farrar's lab (Laboratory of Cancer Prevention, Cancer Stem Cell Section). We asked Brian why he decided to nominate Bill for the Outstanding Mentor Award. "After joining Bill Farrar's lab, I immediately noticed Bill's passion for science and desire to contribute to cancer research. He never appeared interested in glory or prestige, but merely to sit back and enjoy the moment of being first to discover something novel.

The most striking quality I observed in Bill (and the driving force behind my nomination) was his concern for the people working in his lab. On various occasions Bill went the extra mile for members of his lab including holding a position for a technician



who had visa problems and hiring a post-doctoral fellow who lost her job due to lab downsizing. When Bill hires a fellow, the first question

he asks them is about their aspirations after NCI. His aim is to tailor their project accordingly and strengthen the fellow's marketability for future jobs. As a last tidbit, Bill is probably one of the funniest, down-to-earth mentors I've ever worked with. His infectious sense of humor carries over into the laboratory creating a great working environment. How he maintains his sense of humor while surviving the bureaucracy, in-house government fighting and political squabbling at the NCI for the past 25 plus years, I'll never know. Maybe it's his love for science or his ability to realize there are more important things in life. That's a secret only Bill can answer."



## Survey results from the FYI-Retreat 2007.

It's been a long time since our 2007 retreat ended, but only now we have the results of the survey conducted during the retreat.

We are happy to announce that it was considered a clear success for most of the attendants, as 88% of the people that attended the retreat would like to come back next year, and of those that were not sure or didn't consider coming, many did so because they are leaving the NCI soon.



**Dr. Polly Matzinger: a charming speaker.**

Although the level of satisfaction was very high, many people complained about certain issues, such as the quality of the food, the weather, and the distance they had to travel to reach Ocean City. We apologize for such inconveniences, but it has to be kept in mind that the retreat is not designed for going to the beach and enjoy the sun;

what is more, as certain people pointed out, we were lucky to have most of the hotel facilities for ourselves, without being disturbed by many customers. And, regarding long distances... everything is far from Frederick!

The invited speakers were highly appreciated by the attendees, receiving the highest ranking in the poll. Among them, Polly Matzinger speech was one of the favorites. Her unorthodox and direct way of talking to the audience made her an attractive speaker. She was even proposed to repeat next year.

Within the workshops presented this year, two shared the highest score: "The Science Communications" and "The Interview Techniques and Resume Critique", although the rest were also fairly well scored. Regarding the "Career Fair" workshop, we would like to point out the difficulty of bringing a large amount of exhibitors, due to the dates, location and low interest; so those that complained about the low number present, we apologize, but we tried our best to bring more.

Our overall impression is that the retreat was satisfactory, and we leave this year with many things learned to improve next year's retreat. We would like to thank all the people that helped organize this great event, and especially those that participated in the retreat and completed the survey forms: you have helped us to improve our future retreats. We hope to see you all next year!

Gonzalo de la Rosa, PhD

## NIH Visiting Fellows Career Fair 2007 Survey Results

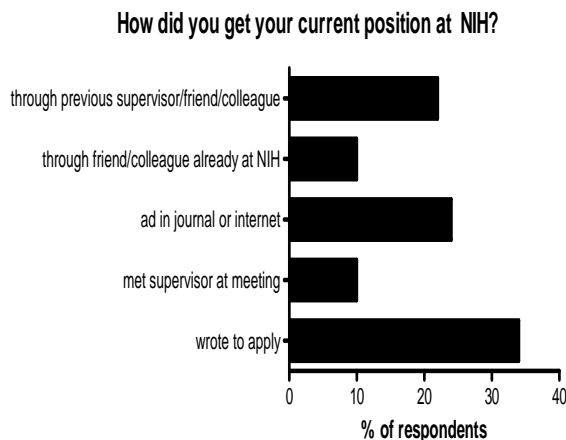
The 4th annual International Career Fair was held on May 10th at the Bethesda campus. The fair is organized by the NIH Visiting Fellows Committee (NIHVFC) and is designed to provide fellows with information on research and grant opportunities overseas. This year 26 embassies and international research organizations participated in the fair. The NIHVFC distributed a brief questionnaire, primarily to the visiting fellows at NIH. The NIHVFC received 125 completed questionnaires from fellows from as many as 24 countries. This included 4 fellows from the USA.

When asked how the fellow gained their current position at NIH, the answers were distrib-

-uted fairly evenly. About a third of the fellows sent an open application letter, 25% answered to an advertisement, while 25% obtained their current position through a previous supervisor or through a friend. While more than 30% had only been at the NIH for less than a year at the time of the fair, 20% had been at the NIH for more than 3 years. For 70% of fellows, this was their first postdoctoral fellowship, whereas approximately 20% are working in their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> fellowship (the remaining 10% consisted of predoctoral fellows and students).

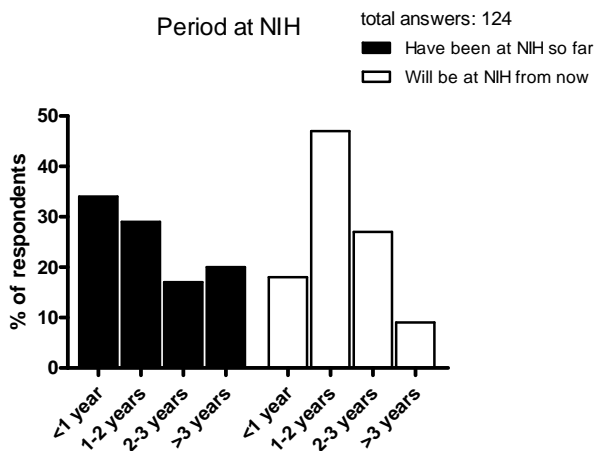
We also asked how long the fellow thought they would stay at NIH from the time of

the career fair. Approximately 65% answered that they plan to leave within the next 2 years. It is worth noting that fellows ending their fellowship in the near future are more likely to visit the fair, and thus may not represent the general opinion of all visiting fellows.

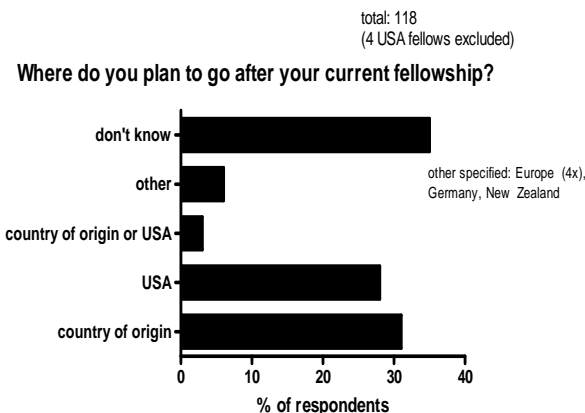


The same caveat should be considered when interpreting the answers to the question of where the fellow plans to go after leaving NIH. This was very evenly distributed among three answers: a third hadn't made up their mind so far, a third would prefer to stay in the USA, while the remainder wanted to return to their country of origin. The plans for career direction were much more uniform: more than 60% aspired a research career in academia or a research institute, while about 20% of respondents want to pursue a career in industry.

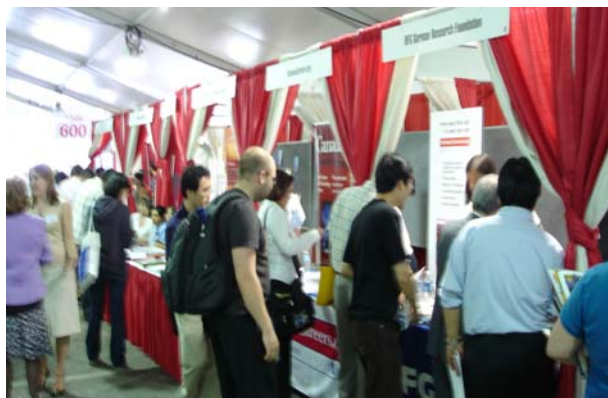
The last question intended to survey the awareness among visiting fellows about the existence of NIH grants that are available, or even specially directed, to non-US citizens. A large number of visiting fellows (42%) are not aware that non-US



citizens can apply for the K99/R00 grant. Furthermore, 79% of respondents are not aware of the existence of the GRIP grant; an award designed for postdoctoral fellows from developing countries (for more information on GRIP: see [http://www.fic.nih.gov/programs/research\\_grants/grip/](http://www.fic.nih.gov/programs/research_grants/grip/); for more information on K99/R00: see [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new\\_investigators/QsandAs.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/QsandAs.htm)).



The NIH Visiting Fellows Committee (NIHVFC) is composed of NIH post-doctoral visiting fellows (VFs) from all around the world. It is a self-governing body serving the interest of visiting fellows in their transition to life at the NIH, by working to make their experience here worthwhile; as well as creating the opportunities for visiting fellows to maintain continuity in their research upon returning to their home countries.



NIHVFC also encourages the establishment and maintenance of strong institutional links of VFs with NIH after they complete their training and go back to their home countries (see also our website <http://felcom.nih.gov/NIHVFC>). To help us



achieve these goals we are actively recruiting new volunteers to help in the organization of the 5<sup>th</sup> Career Fair in 2008, manage the successful “Science Voices from Home” project (see website), and other projects. The committee meets once a month

If you are interested, please contact Anna Simon ([simona2@mail.nih.gov](mailto:simona2@mail.nih.gov)).

Anna Simon  
Co-Chair  
NIH- Visiting Fellows Committee

## IMAGES FROM THE FYI-RETREAT 2007



