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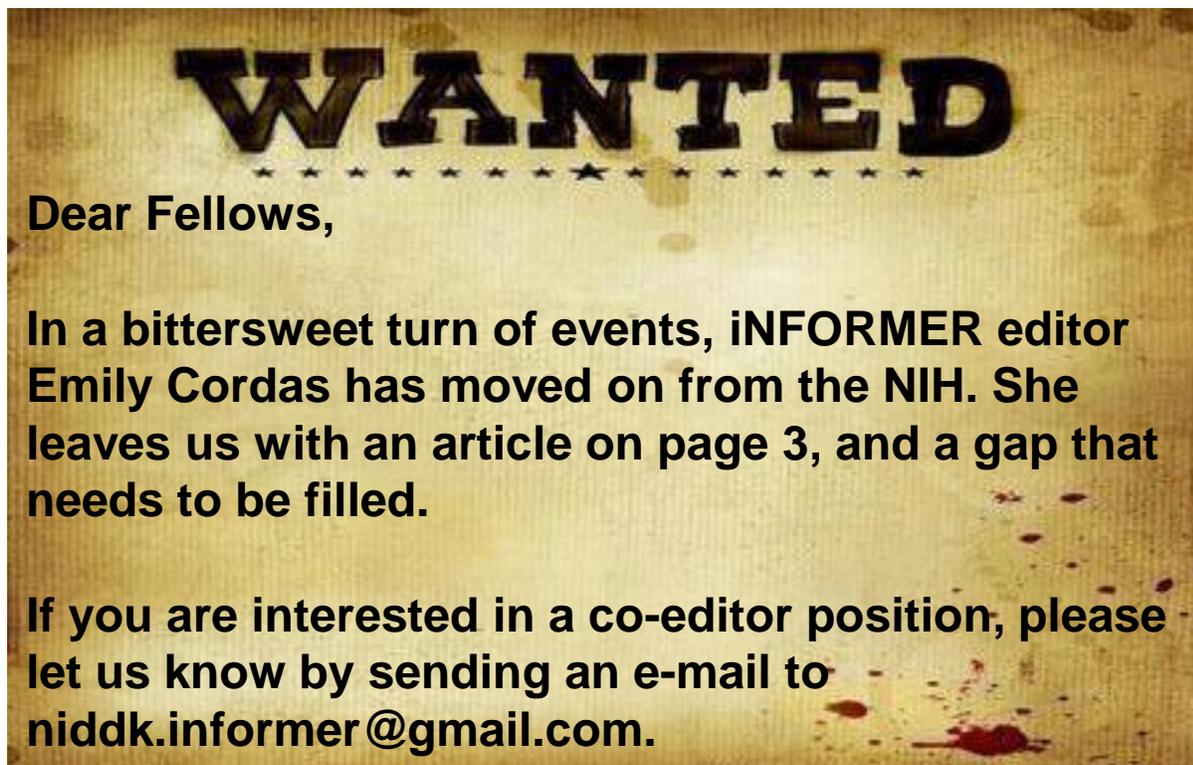
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The “End of Summer” Issue



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The **iNFORMER** is published by the Fellows Advisory Board (FAB) in collaboration with the NIDDK Fellowship Office

Announcing **GRANT WRITING 101** **GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP**

DATE Mondays, September 10 and 24,
and October 1, 2012

and

Wednesdays, September 12 and 19,
and October 3, 2012

TIME 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

PLACE Building 12A, Room 4055

A conversation with Dr. Michael Krause, the new Scientific Director of NIDDK

By Nadine L. Samara

Dr. Michael Krause received his Ph.D. Degree in Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and trained as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. He joined NIDDK as a Principal Investigator in 1993 and was granted tenure and made Chief of the Section of Developmental Biology in 2000. Dr. Krause has been Chief of the Laboratory of Molecular Biology since 2006, served as Director of the Genomics Core Facility from 2007-12, and was Acting Deputy Scientific Director for 8 months prior to being appointed Scientific Director.

I recently spoke with Dr. Krause about his new role and the challenges he will face as the new Scientific Director of NIDDK.

What made you decide to seek this position?

As Scientific Director, I have the chance to positively influence the science and scientists at NIDDK; that is an exciting opportunity. After 20 years at NIH, this is also a way of giving back to a community that has been good to me.

What are your main challenges as the new Scientific Director?

The biggest challenge continues to be dealing with limited resources and a flat annual budget that is not adjusted for inflation. We have to constantly figure out how to support the best research under these circumstances. Also, while the fiscal year begins October 1, we are often uncertain of our budget until many

months later, making it difficult to plan research programs, recruit the best scientists, and initiate new directions of study. If budget sequestration goes through (see page 5), the financial challenges will be even more difficult and the resulting financial pressures could lead to stagnation in our research program. It is important to note that these challenges are not unique to NIDDK and I am confident we will successfully navigate the road ahead.



What are your thoughts on the current state of NIDDK?

The quality of research within NIDDK is outstanding. We have a diverse group of PIs working on a wide variety of topics, which is a real strength of our IC. NIDDK is also in relatively good shape fiscally thanks to the effort of my predecessor. That said, there are areas where I see room for improvement that range from ensuring trainees are well prepared for career opportunities to promoting workforce diversity at all leadership levels.

How do you envision NIDDK 5 years from now?

Due to financial constraints, the enterprise as a whole will shrink in size. However, retirements will free up resources that will allow us to hire new faculty, although not one for one. So, five years from now, there will likely be 10-15% fewer principal investigators in the IC, but the faculty will have many new faces. It will be important to make sure this transition does not come at the expense of our resources for non-FTE positions (fellows, grad students, post-bacs). In fact, the proportion of these positions may actually increase over that time frame.

Your advice for Postdoctoral Fellows?

There is no doubt that the job market is tough. Postdocs need to be career oriented at the outset and they should work to build up their CVs while at NIH in areas appropriate for their career goals. There are academic positions available, but postdocs who are intent on going into academia must be flexible. For example, if you limit your geographic location, you severely minimize your chances of getting a job in academia. There are also many non-academic options to explore so they should think outside the box. PIs need to be supportive of non-academic careers and help their post-docs plan for the future. Good mentors know their fellows well and their career goals while having a realistic view of the job market. Regular and realistic conversations between the fellow and mentor regarding career goals

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and progress towards those goals is essential. Fellows that are engaged in the science and their careers will be successful independent of which career path they take.

Putting down the pipette: Pursuing an Internship in the NIDDK Extramural Review Branch

by Emily Cordas

After months of searching for a new job outside the academic path with no leads, no interviews, no news, and very little time left in my postdoc, I went to see our director, Lou, for some much needed advice. He proposed that I should consider doing an internship, also called a detail in the federal government, either in the Extramural Review Branch or the Technology Transfer Branch of NIDDK. It sounded like a good idea, but I had so much lab work. How was I going to get my lab work done, do an internship, and look for a job? I felt that I needed more publications to be attractive to potential employers, therefore, I need to be in the lab. But lets face it, I really needed a new skill set to be attractive to potential employers outside academia and research.

So I realized that I really did need to do the internship. You would think that would have been the hardest step, but it wasn't. The next step, convincing my PI that it was an important thing to do for my career in my few remaining months at the NIH was even harder. I had limited time left and had given my PI only short period of time to digest the idea. So I strongly advise anyone thinking about doing an internship to start talking early with their mentors to allow them to plan ahead and adjust to the idea. With my PI on board, I submitted my cover letter explaining why I wanted do the internship and how it would benefit me, and a CV to the Extramural Review Branch. Shortly after I interviewed with the Branch chief and section chiefs of the Branch. They quickly got back to me to inform me that I had been accepted for a detail with the Branch. However, it was a month later when I was finally able to begin, so in total it took three months to arrange the internship. This emphasizes the need to start early even if you are not

sure. In my first days I was tasked by my Review Branch mentor with reviewing incoming grant applications for all of the formalities, such as checking that all the reference letters were attached and all the appropriate components of the grant were present. Yes, it sounds a bit boring, but it wasn't and it was challenging. I needed to learn what was expected from each of the different types of grants types which were submitted. In the process, I learned more about the funding initiatives NIDDK supported, about the different types of grants, and how the branch operated.

In my short time at the Review Branch, I learned so much. Even if I had decided in the end to pursue a career in academia, I feel I developed a better understanding of what a reviewer looks for in a grant and a better idea of how to craft a good grant. Another great thing about the internship was that I gained several new mentors with whom I felt comfortable discussing career options. They provided a great deal of encouragement. Everyone I met in the branch was friendly and approachable if I had a question. I strongly feel that if you are not sure what you want to do after your postdoc, an internship can only help. And an internship in the Review Branch will give you valuable skills for both academia and other career paths.



"Piled Higher and Deeper" by Jorge Cham www.phdcomics.com

Unexpected Reflections from Management Boot Camp

By Frances Namuswe

Management Boot Camp is an intense two-day course offered by the NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education to NIH fellows. It is intended to provide management training that is not commonly taught in the lab environment. The course provides an overview of several subjects encountered in a managerial role in all sectors of employment including; transitioning to a management role, time management, emotional intelligence, culture and diversity in the work place, interviewing and staffing, communicating expectations and feedback, conflict management, to name a few. If you haven't taken the course, I encourage you to consider taking it.

https://www.training.nih.gov/leadership_training.

Because the purpose of this management training is to mold us into good managers, we were constantly reminded to approach the various topics from a manager's perspective. Despite this reminder, I found myself thinking about management from an employee's perspective on several occasions, pertinently evaluating the qualities of my PhD and Postdoctoral advisors that I thought made them good managers (or not). (To be clear, the management training was not meant to deconstruct past and current managers).

An even further digression from my management training that resonates with me more than my bosses' management skills is the role they have played or continue to play in my life as mentors.

Since taking this course, I have wondered how many other fellows actively think about this aspect of their training. For example, how many of us expect(ed) our PhD or postdoc advisors to be our mentors? How many of us think that they are our mentors? And how many of us know that they are indeed our mentors? What is the difference between a PhD/postdoc advisor and a mentor and why is it important? There is a difference between these two roles and to the detriment of our careers, some of us don't make this distinction early enough. This is not a new topic. It has been discussed in detail by various resources and I encourage you to look them up. However, in light of the current need to reinvent ourselves beyond our technical expertise to remain competitive in this vicious job market, I want to bring this topic to your radar if it not already there.

Broadly stated, advisors supervise your work while on their clock. They care about your success as it fits into the general goals of the lab and they guide you accordingly. For the most part, it is a two-way relationship because you certainly benefit from your own success in the lab, which is typically reflected by your resume/CV and many times in your letters of recommendation. Case in point, your successful publication record is important for your advisor's grant renewal, tenure and/or other review processes and subsequently the survival of the lab.



When you win competitive external fellowships, lab funds are freed up to be applied towards other lab expenses. Your happiness in the lab builds good rapport for new members to join.

The mentors on the other hand care about your development and success in your current role as well as after you leave the lab. This means nurturing your career growth even when it is not directly in line with their interests or when you are heading in a direction they don't know much about--the very reason why mentoring can be challenging for some advisors. But mentors do a lot more than that and are invested in more areas of your life than just your career development. More often than not, you will have multiple mentors. Overall, they provide information and offer multiple points of view, they listen and offer honest feedback and they challenge you to take healthy and constructive risks. This is by no means an exhaustive list of what you should look for in a mentor, because it is indeed a multi-faceted role. There are numerous resources on the internet about what mentors do and what to look for in a good mentor.

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For many of us, our bosses wear both hats--they supervise and mentor us at the same time. But for majority of us, this is not the case. Do you know if your advisor is also mentoring you? If not, here are a few questions to start thinking about. Do you talk to your advisor about your career goals, separate from your lab goals, and how you can achieve them? Can you talk to your advisor about getting involved in non-lab activities that will boost your career after you leave the lab? Can and does your boss recommend resources that might be useful for your chosen career path? If not, then you probably should not see your advisor as a mentor. This does not mean that your advisor is a bad advisor. It simply means that he/she is not your mentor and you should be actively looking for a good mentor (or several) if you haven't already. Given the current job market, nurturing your career after NIH is just as important as succeeding in your current lab.

A Stormy Summer

Photographer: Samarendra Singh



Location: clinical center, NIH, Bethesda campus
Camera: Canon, DSLR
Lighting condition: cloudy/stormy sky1

Budget Sequestration decreed by the budget control act of 2011 could result in a reduction of NIH funds starting January 2, 2013. This would result in an overall 41% decline in NIH extramural funds in 10 years. (Source: Bourne H.R. and Lively M.O. Iceberg Alert for NIH. *Science*, 337, July 27, 2012). Unless congress determines a way avoid sequestration, the cuts will occur, and will probably have adverse effects on intra- and extramural research.

Write and share your thoughts at niddk.informer@gmail.com.

Healthy food options on campus: Should we be better role models?

By Nadine L. Samara

Despite efforts to educate the population on living healthier lifestyles, the number of obese Americans continues to rise. Public school cafeterias still provide a few good options, and pizza is a vegetable. Researchers are attempting to find ways to curtail and prevent obesity. A tremendous amount of research is also conducted to better understand and treat diseases that are linked to obesity, such as diabetes.

The NIH works hard to promote healthier lifestyles, and some cafeterias on campus provide many healthy options. The NIH also took part in a four-part documentary on HBO called *Weight of the Nation*, which was intentionally provided free of charge to serve as a public service documentary that would spread the message on the importance of losing weight and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The NIH does a lot. But is it enough? We struggle to change our eating habits.

We cannot seem to quash our love for sugar. What more can we do? Should we be role models for the rest of Nation by banning “bad” foods on campus? Vending machines on campus mainly provide unhealthy options: chips, chocolate bars, and other sugary treats. The veggies chips and nuts are probably your best choices, and just because they place a little green leaf next to a sugar laden, fat free treat does NOT make it a healthy option.

Many eateries on campus continue to provide unhealthy options. One of the reasons for the continued unhealthy food options is that healthier options tend to be pricier. However, long term costs need to be taken into consideration when we make food choices; eating well now saves money on future prescriptions for cholesterol and diabetes medication. If we can make the NIH campus smoke-free, can we make it sugar-free? A ban on items with a lot of sugar (like

soda) would be consistent with promoting a healthier lifestyle at NIH and all over the country. On the other hand, smoke from cigarettes harms others, while sugar consumption does not have second hand effects, and should therefore remain a personal choice. It is more difficult to justify banning sugary substances. A ban may be too extreme, and there may be a middle ground.

Maybe we can minimize the unhealthy options, and provide access to more nutritious snacks. For instance, why not hire a vending machine company that sells health bars and apples, instead of chips and chocolate? Or at least, have both vending machine options for those who cannot resist a chocolate treat in the afternoon. If we want to push a healthier lifestyle agenda, it should start on campus, in same shape or form.



Welcome New Fellows!



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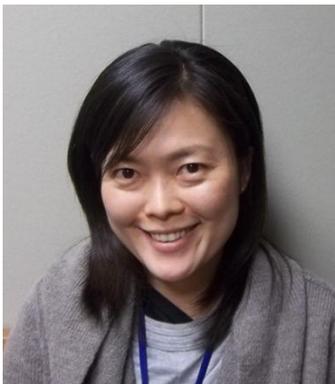
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Disease Branch
(Deng) Bldg 10



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Ph.D, University of
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Kidney Diseases Branch
(Star) Bldg 10

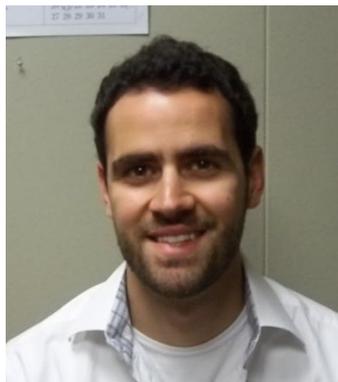


Kiran Meena
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PhD, Jamia Hamdaid
University, India
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(Germino) Bldg 10



Mi Sun Moon
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(Heller) Bldg 10

Welcome New Fellows!



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Institute
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Physics
(Bax) Bldg 5



Pilar Cossio Tejada
Visiting Fellow, Colombia
PhD, Sissa in Italy
Laboratory of Chemical
Physics
(Hummer) Bldg 5



Sandy Page
IRTA
Ph.D, George Mason
University
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(Heller) Bldg 10



Silvia Paoletta
Visiting Fellow, Italy
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Chemistry
(Jacobson) Bldg 8



Sunbok Jang
Visiting Fellow, South Korea
PhD, Seoul National
University
Laboratory of Molecular
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(Yang) Bldg 5



Ting Zhang
Visiting Fellow, China
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