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Long Range Strategic Plan

Mission Statement

The mission of the National Postdoctoral Association is to advance the U.S. research enterprise by maximizing the effectiveness of the research community and enhancing the quality of the postdoctoral experience for all participants.

Core Values

The NPA believes that:

- Postdocs make invaluable contributions to the research enterprise.
- Postdocs share personal responsibility for the progression and outcomes of their careers.
- Inequities within the postdoctoral community should be rectified to the maximum extent practicable, while recognizing the unique needs of each stakeholder.
- The U.S. research community should make every effort to attract the best and the brightest men and women from all groups, including international scholars, under-represented minorities, and persons with disabilities.

The NPA values:

- Grassroots participation in the decision-making process, both internally and externally.
- Professional satisfaction and meaningful career opportunities for postdoctoral scholars, which recognize the importance of balancing work and personal needs.
- Collaboration and dialogue to achieve consensus among all stakeholders on the best methods for addressing issues and obtaining desired outcomes for the postdoctoral community;
- Objective data to inform critical decision-making.

Vision Statement

Working in collaboration with the entire research community, the NPA envisions changing the culture of those individuals and institutions engaged in the U.S. research enterprise so that the contributions of postdoctoral scholars are fully valued and recognized.

Goals

To achieve its mission, the NPA works to:

- I. Develop the NPA as a self-sustaining, democratic organization to empower all stakeholders in the postdoctoral community.
- II. Expand the capacity of all individuals that interact with the postdoctoral community to assume responsibility for their roles, create systems of mutual accountability, and foster professional development;
- III. Encourage the development and implementation of policies that promote positive change in the postdoctoral experience;
- IV. Collect and disseminate essential information for postdoctoral researchers and stakeholders to allow them to make informed decisions about their futures and guide policy considerations at all levels.

Priorities

In order to be effective in achieving these goals and objectives, the NPA must set priorities.

Organizational development will continue to be a top priority for the NPA. Without a strong membership base and cadre of supporters, the NPA cannot achieve its mission. These supporters must include organizational allies and collaborating partners that will work with the NPA to implement these goals and objectives. The second priority for the NPA is to advance the NPA's policy agenda within the NIH. As the financial supporter for most of the postdoctoral scholars in the U.S., changes in policies at the NIH will have a profound effect on influencing the policies of the larger academic and scientific communities. The final priority is in establishing a set of programs and services which are of benefit to the postdoctoral community. This priority includes maintaining a web site that has a depth and breadth of information developed both internally and externally that will serve as a comprehensive resource for all stakeholders.

NPA Strategic Goals and Objectives

Goal I: *To develop the NPA as a self-sustaining, democratic organization to empower all stakeholders in the postdoctoral community.*

Strategic Objectives: Goal I

- A. Create and maintain a leadership structure that is responsive, flexible, and collaborative.
- B. Create and maintain a decision-making process that maximizes participation by members, advisors, sponsors, and organizational partners.
- C. Create and maintain a committee structure that nurtures leadership development, enhances the knowledge-base of the members, and leads to sound organizational policies and positions.
- D. Recruit and maintain a mix of financial supporters that value the contributions of postdocs to the research enterprise consistent with the NPA business plan.
- E. Maintain a strong working relationship with AAAS to maximize the NPA's effectiveness and credibility.

Goal II: *Expand the capacity of all individuals that interact with the postdoctoral community to assume responsibility for their roles, create systems of mutual accountability, and foster professional development.*

Strategic Objectives: Goal II

- A. Engage in ongoing educational activities to promote the role and contributions of postdocs to the research enterprise, as well as the challenges and obstacles they are facing in the current system. These activities will target the research community and other key audiences, including: decision-makers and influential parties (scientific and non-scientific), institutions, Principal Investigators (PIs), postdocs, funding agencies and professional organizations.
- B. Work with organizational allies to facilitate institutional change that improves the environment for postdocs.
- C. Provide services and resources for individuals (graduate students, postdocs, and faculty) focused on mentoring, mutual accountability, professional development, and the other needs of postdoctoral scholars.
- D. Provide services and resources for postdoc associations, offices and other institutions focused on effective policies, professional development, and tracking career outcomes.

Goal III: *Encourage the development and implementation of policies that promote positive change in the postdoctoral experience.*

Strategic Objectives: Goal III

- A. Evaluate existing and emerging policies and make recommendations for needed changes.
- B. Articulate a platform of preferred policies (e.g., identifying the top four or five of the existing 15 recommended practices) and advocate for these through focused engagement with policy makers and institutions.
- C. Pursue and nurture relationships with individual, organizational, and institutional collaborators/allies to increase leverage for NPA policy positions.
- D. Encourage and facilitate the implementation of recommended practices at institutions.
- E. Develop an objective and consistent mechanism to evaluate policies and published information from institutions and professional organizations.

Goal IV: *Collect and disseminate essential information for postdoctoral researchers and stakeholders so that they can make informed decisions about their futures and guide policy considerations at all levels.*

Strategic Objectives: Goal IV

- A. Develop and maintain mechanisms to gather information and monitor postdoctoral initiatives from professional organizations and institutional policies that affect postdoctoral researchers.
- B. Create effective means to disseminate new or changing policies and evaluations of those policies to the membership in a timely manner.

**NPA Strategic Plan
Guiding Principles**

Overall

Place greater emphasis on advocacy for policy changes and developing complementary resources that can be used to affect change at the institutional and national levels. Priority should be given to opportunities that the NPA is in a unique position to capitalize on and will have the greatest impact.

Goal I

- Raise funds consistent with the current business plan of the NPA.
- Reduce number of current projects in committees to enable more proactive volunteer and staff leadership on organizational development.
- Track timelines of projects to ensure completion on an appropriate timescale.
- Place greater emphasis on leadership development within committees and cultivation of member-leaders through PDAs and PDOs.

Goal II

- Convene periodic group and one-on-one meetings with allies to request specific action in support of NPA goals.
- New NPA resources targeted at individuals should be unique and unavailable elsewhere. The NPA should direct people to existing resources for individuals available through other venues and NOT duplicate efforts.

Goal III

- Dedicate greater staff and board attention towards policy change on priority issues, including greater support for the Policy Committee to clearly identify immediate goals, long term, finite goals and long term, sustained effort projects.

Goal IV

- Prioritize the maintenance of a PDA/PDO database with current contacts and regular communications (even to non-members).
- Re-emphasize the importance of data collection on postdocs at all levels: institution, funding agencies, NSF, etc. and facilitate the establishment of standardised methods to collect data on populations of postdoctoral scholars using surveys or other tracking methods.