



**In this issue:**

**Page 1:**

Future Leaders in Science Education & Communication Training Program

**Page 2:**

Co-chair Corner

**Page 3:**

Interview with Dr. Sonja Schmid, PhD

## My Experience as a Participant of the “Future Leaders in Science Education & Communication Training Program”

By Laura Lecce

Last year, I attended the *Future Leaders in Science Education & Communication Training Program* co-directed by two postdocs at ISMMS, Drs. Alison Sanders and Rosa Vinas-Castells. This fantastic course was honored with an award in 2015 from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, which supports applications that aim to provide career guidance for trainees. Participants are required to attend 8 classes covering topics related to science education, teaching, and communication, and are delivered by well-spoken and highly knowledgeable individuals with experience across a variety of careers. To me, the most interesting part of this course was hearing about the different avenues and career choices available to postdocs and the experience we can begin to acquire (even as we work as research scientists) if we want a future job in those areas.

The second part of this course was learning how to plan and deliver a science lesson to a fifth grade class about a topic related to our research. I have to say that adapting our level of scientific knowledge in an interesting and interactive way for children was quite a challenge. Having had experience lecturing to university students, I was surprised at how different the environment is in a class room full of kids. Fifth graders are highly interactive, enthusiastic, and energetic. It was rewarding to see the children excited about learning - absorbing the information given to them and then asking very intelligent questions. You got the sense that it was such a treat for them to have a guest scientist in their classroom, and a wonderful experience for me to see so many kids excited about things that I take for granted! Teaching a classroom full of children was an experience I was initially very hesitant about but it actually ended up being my favorite part of the course and a wonderful memory. A huge thank you to the course directors, my fellow classmates, and the children at the Boys & Girls Harbor for a fantastic experience.

### Course details:

- Co-directed by Drs. Alison Sanders and Rosa Vinas-Castells
- Consists of 8 scheduled classes (one/week for 2.5 hours each)
- Teach one (45 minute) fifth grade class about your research and receive peer feedback
- Observe two fifth grade classes taught by fellow course participants and give feedback
- Course participants receive a \$500 honorarium and a certificate of completion

The next course is tentatively scheduled to start in April 2017- keep your eyes open for emails! For more information, please email [Alison.sanders@mssm.edu](mailto:Alison.sanders@mssm.edu).



A.Sanders



Greetings fellow Postdocs,

As 2017 moves into full swing, we all try to uphold our resolutions and steer away from old habits we want to avoid. What were your New Year's Resolutions for 2017? Improve your work-life balance? Fight the fear of public speaking? Dedicate some more time to making a career plan? Finally learn to code?

At the Postdoc Executive Committee (PEC), our mission remains strong in its essence: to advocate for and represent the postdoctoral community at ISMMS, promoting a sense of community and fostering professional development opportunities. Throughout the last year the PEC stood up for postdocs with many initiatives. We helped establish the **Trainee Mistreatment Resource Panel (MRP)**, a resource that postdocs can turn to in potential situations of mistreatment, with guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. We defended postdocs best interests by working with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and the Postdoc Advisory Committee to develop guidelines for a smooth implementation of the 5-year term for postdocs at ISMMS following the recommendation by the National Academy of Sciences. Importantly, in the wake of the Fair Labor Standards Act, we successfully advocated for an increase in minimum postdoc salary, which is now above the recommended NIH minimum and equal to the recommendation made by the National Academy of Sciences.

To help you keep track of all that is going on at ISMMS, we created and administer the PostdocPro Listserv that brings you upcoming events, job opportunities, and updates on resources of interest to postdocs every two weeks - spam free! The Future Leaders in Science Education and Communication Training Program, developed and directed by ISMMS postdocs, brought us an unparalleled opportunity for teaching training and hands-on experience. This course, together with the Leadership and Conflict Resolution and Future Leaders in Project Management short courses, allow us to develop our skills to become professionals of excellence.

The PEC's annual postdoctoral survey and the annual Postdoc Symposium that took place last September both hit record participation numbers, and our work was recognized with the National Postdoctoral Association 2017 Distinguished Service Award – the first time the award has ever been given to a postdoc entity.

This year we renew our commitment and, among other things, an updated Postdoc Handbook and guidelines on teaching opportunities for international postdocs are under way. Our professional development initiatives will still continue: there are renewed opportunities for postdocs to improve their writing and learn about science policy, and we'll continue our efforts to improve other aspects of postdoc life, such as housing, child care, and mental health and wellness resources.

Lastly, we'll keep organizing fun events for postdocs to get together - socials, hiking, ski trips, and more! We hope to see you at the next Monthly Postdoc Social (Friday, February 24 at 5 PM in the Icahn Alcove)!

Best,

Catarina

Catarina Saiote and Delaine K. Ceholski are your PEC co-chairs

### Ways to keep in touch

- Our website: <http://icahn.mssm.edu/education/post-doctoral-training>
- Follow our Twitter account: [@MtSinaiPostdocs](#)
- Join our Facebook page: ["Mount Sinai Postdocs"](#)
- Follow us on LinkedIn ([Mount Sinai Postdocs and Postdoc Alumni](#))

### The Mount Sinai Postdoc Periodical

Chief editor: Delaine Ceholski Editors: Przemek Gorski, Alaa Abdine, Natasha Eliyahu-Shtraizent, Laura Lecce, Chiara Mariottini, Salvador Sierra, Victor Leyva-Grado, Elena Sanchez-Rodriguez, Elisa Nunez-Acosta

# Interview with Dr. Sonja Schmid, PhD

By Victor Leyva-Grado

***What is the name and approximate size of company you work for?***

I work for Nature Communications – a part of Springer Nature. At Nature Communications we are approximately 60 scientific editors and, in addition, we have editorial assistants, production editors, etc. We also work closely with editors from other Nature research journals.

***What is your current title?*** Associate editor

***What graduate degree(s) have you received?***

I have a Masters in biology (immunology and biochemistry) and a PhD in virology

***What city and state do you work in?***

I work in New York City, but we have also offices in London and Shanghai

***Did you have any jobs between this one and your postdoc?*** No

***Can you give us a brief (2-3 sentence) description of your current position? (e.g. What is the overall purpose of your job?)***

***What are your daily activities like compared to your postdoc?***

Nature Communications is an open access journal and we publish high-quality research in biology, physics, chemistry, and Earth sciences. I handle manuscript submissions in virology and parasitology.

***What do you wish you had known before accepting your current position?***

Actually, nothing comes to my mind.

***What, if anything, do you miss about being a postdoc?***

I think as a postdoc it was easier to control my own workload.

***What did you learn during your PhD/postdoc that is most helpful to you in your current position?***

The knowledge I gained from reading papers, going to journal clubs, and attending scientific conferences is invaluable now.

***What was the most important event or factor that contributed to your transition into an alternative career outside academia?***

Going to networking events, talking to people working in different industries, doing an internship with Mount Sinai Innovation Partners- all of these played a role but primarily learning about alternative options.

***How many hours a week do you spend in meetings?*** Maybe 2 or 3 hours

***Approximately how many hours do you work per week?*** 40 to 45

***How frequently do you work in the evenings and/or on the weekends?*** Rarely

***On a scale of 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), how much autonomy do you have in your current position?*** 8

***Does your position require that you travel? If/when you travel, how long is your trip?***

We attend scientific conferences 3 or 4 times a year.

***Do you work with other people and/or in a team? If so, please describe the circumstances and structure of your group work.***

We have teams of approximately 5 editors who are specialized on similar topics and we discuss manuscripts or interesting topics of the scientific area.

***How did you learn to do your job? (e.g., structured training program, mentor, studied materials on my own time, learned on the fly)***

Each new editor works closely with one or two training editors for at least 6 months.

***What is the average salary range for your position?*** \$65-75k

***Is a PhD necessary to apply for this type of position?*** Yes

***Was your publication record important in getting this position?*** Yes

***Is it valued to have a PhD in your current position?*** Yes

***Is it valued to have completed a postdoc in your current position?*** Not sure

***Did your PhD/postdoc research focus matter to get this position?*** Yes



Dr. Sonja Schmid, PhD