THE J. DAVID GLADSTONE INSTITUTES

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW & RESEARCH SCIENTIST 2010 SURVEY

SUMMARY REPORT

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Introduction

This report provides a summary of responses to the Postdoctoral Fellow and Research Scientist Survey that was administered from Tuesday, January 11 through Tuesday, January 25, 2011. The survey was extended for one additional day and closed at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, January 26, 2011.

The survey contained 35 questions in multiple formats. Questions were grouped in the following areas: training program, career development, salary and benefits, mentoring, communication, with additional questions regarding administrative and core services. The survey was administered by Human Resources using Survey Console, a web based software for creating and distributing surveys.

This year 79 out of 91 postdocs participated in the survey, a 87% participation rate. This is the highest participation rate this survey has received since it was first administered in 1998.

Past Postdoc Surveys

Year	Completed Surveys	Postdocs Population	% to Total
1998	28	60	47%
2000	25	53	47%
2003	28	57	49%
2006	60	78	77%
2008	68	97	70%
2011	79	91	87%

Survey Highlights

Overall Gladstone

When asked what they like best about Gladstone, there were several comments felt by most postdocs. Postdocs recognize that Gladstone's pay scale and benefits are better than most. Many feel that Gladstone cares about postdocs and that there is a lot of institute support, such as grant writing, core facilities, and cutting edge technology. They feel that Gladstone has an excellent scientific and research environment, and that there is a both a culture of excellence and a culture of support for postdocs. Postdocs also fell Gladstone has a nice work environment with friendly people and great teamwork, which encourages collaborations.

When asked what they like least about Gladstone, again there were many common themes. Some commented about administrative support getting in the way of science in the form of red tap or rudeness (much of this was directed at Facilities). The temperature in labs at night and on weekends was brought up by many.

There were many comments about core services. Some feel that the core services should not be recharged. They feel the cores need more support and attention paid to them. For example, the stem cell core currently does not provide services that are listed on their web, and they do not stay up-to-date with the most cutting edge techniques in the field. The microscopes in the stem cell core need to be better maintained.

Postdocs feel that there is limited access to knowledge about services offered by UCSF, as well as little opportunity to collaborate people at UCSF. They feel that mentoring standards should be enhanced and enforced.

Surprising there were many comments about Gladstone's self-promotion of itself. Some have found Gladstone's promotion of the Best Place to Work as arrogant. Many feel that Gladstone's self-promotion take up too much of their PIs time. They feel that great science will only happen if the PIs are free to commit their time discussing science with their postdocs.

Training Program

92% agreed or strongly agreed that they have access to the books and journals needed for their research, 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 1% were undecided.

70% agreed or strongly agreed that Gladstone's policies and procedures are transparent and easy to follow, 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 13% were undecided.

67% agreed or strongly agreed that information about Gladstone's policies, practices, and procedures is easily available, 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 18% were undecided.

93% agreed or strongly agreed that the research facility is clean and well maintained, 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 3% were undecided.

Overall 77% agreed or strongly agreed that they are treated equally by their PI and colleagues at Gladstone regardless of gender, 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 13% were undecided. 73% of females agreed or strongly agreed, 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 12% were undecided. 80% of males agreed or strongly agreed, 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 6% were undecided.

Overall 78% agreed or strongly agreed there is no discrimination against postdocs based on their race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or ethnic background at Gladstone, 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 14% were undecided. 71% of females agreed or strongly agreed, 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 17% were undecided. 86% of males agreed or strongly agreed, 3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 11% were undecided.

80% feel attending conferences with oral and poster presentations is very important or critical, 19% feel it is somewhat important or reasonably important, and 1% not important

59% feel that presenting at in-house research seminars is very important or critical, 40% feel it is somewhat or reasonably important, and 1% not important

24% feel journal club is very important or critical, 63% feel it is somewhat or reasonably important, and 13% not important

52% feel that it is very important or critical to have a forum to help each other with technical and practical issues, 45% feel it is somewhat or reasonably important, and 3% not important

67% feel that seminars with internal researchers/PIs is very important or critical, 32% feel it is somewhat or reasonably important, and1% not important

84% feel that seminars with outside researchers/industry are very important or critical, and 16% feel it is somewhat or reasonably important.

27% feel that Gladstone's scientific retreat is very important or critical, 57% feel it is somewhat or reasonably important, and 11% not important.

82% agreed or strongly agreed that have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to give presentations effectively, 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 6% were undecided.

73% agreed or strongly agreed that have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to write scientific publications, 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 11% were undecided.

79% agreed or strongly agreed that have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to write a grant application, 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 8% were undecided.

38% agreed or strongly agreed that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to manage a laboratory, 29% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 27% were undecided.

On average, 79% feel that access to computers, lab space, desk space, journals/books, lab equipment, and supplies are good to excellent. 13% feel that it is average, and 6% below average or poor.

63% rate the scientific integration and collaboration between the institutes and labs at Gladstone as good or excellent, 24% as average, 10% below average or poor, and 3% had no opinion.

42% rate the scientific integration and collaboration between Gladstone and UCSF as good or excellent, 28% as average, 24% below average or poor, and 4% had no opinion.

17% would participate in a buddy system for incoming postdocs, 60% might participate, and 23% would not participate.

49% would participate in connecting with postdoc alumni, 38% might participate, and 13% would not participate.

32% would participate in Gladstone's postdoc advisory committee, 50% might participate, and 18% would not participate.

23% would participate in community/student outreach activities, 54% might participate, and 23% would not participate.

At least 67% expressed an interest in workshops on job talks, interview preparation, getting published, laboratory leadership skills, mentoring and being mentored, and scientific writing. The workshops postdocs showed the least interest for were career options in scientific writing/editing and career options in policy, law, etc.

42% have written 1-2 grants or fellowship and 55% have written 2-3. Of those written, 54% have been awarded.

42% have published 1-2 papers, 10% have published 2-3, and 3% have published 4 or more.

74% have given formal scientific presentations: 47% have given 1-3; 19% have given 4-6, and 8% have given 7 or more.

For those who indicated 0-1 years of postdoctoral experience:

40% have not written grants or fellowship, 53% have written 1-2 and 7% have written 4 or more. Of those written, 13% have been awarded.

87% have not published, and 13% have published 1-2 papers.

73% have never given formal scientific presentations, and 27% have given 1-3.

60% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to give presentations effectively. 13% are undecided and 27% indicated not applicable.

60% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to scientific publications. 13% are undecided and 27% indicated not applicable.

74% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to write a grant application. 13% are undecided and 14% indicated not applicable.

20% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to manage a laboratory. 1% disagreed, 47% are undecided, and 27% indicated not applicable.
For those who indicated 1-2 years of postdoctoral experience:

11% have not written grants or fellowship, 42% have written 1-2, 26% have written 2-3, and 21% have written 4 or more. Of those written, 58% have been awarded.

58% have not published, 37% have published 1-2 papers, and 5% have published 4 or more.

26% have never given formal scientific presentations, 37% have given 1-3, 26% have given 4-6, and 11% 7 or more.

85% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to give presentations effectively. 11% disagree, 5% are undecided, and 0% indicated not applicable.

63% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to scientific publications. 16% disagree, 16% are undecided, and 6% indicated not applicable.

79% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to write a grant application. 11% disagree, 11% are undecided, and 0% indicated not applicable.

31% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to manage a laboratory. 47% disagreed, 21% are undecided, and 0% indicated not applicable.

For those who indicated 2-3 years of postdoctoral experience:

8% have not written grants or fellowship, 42% have written 1-2, 25% have written 2-3, and 25% have written 4 or more. Of those written, 75% have been awarded.

67% have not published and 33% have published 1-2 papers.

25% have never given formal scientific presentations, 67% have given 1-3, and 8% have given 4-6.

84% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to give presentations effectively. 16% are undecided.

83% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to scientific publications. 16% are undecided.

75% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to write a grant application. 8% disagree, 17% are undecided, and 0% indicated not applicable.

50% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to manage a laboratory. 25% disagreed, 25% are undecided, and 0% indicated not applicable.

For those who indicated 3-4 years of postdoctoral experience:

8% have not written grants or fellowship, 50% have written 1-2, 17% have written 2-3, and 25% have written 4 or more. Of those written, 75% have been awarded.

25% have not published, 67% have published 1-2 papers, and 8% have published 2-3 papers.

8% have never given formal scientific presentations, 67% have given 1-3, and 25% have given 4-6.

84% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to give presentations effectively and 16% disagree.

66% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to scientific publications. 25% disagree, 8% are undecided, and 0% indicated not applicable.

67% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to write a grant application and 33% disagreed.

50% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to manage a laboratory. 33% disagreed, 8% are undecided, and 8% indicated not applicable.

For those who indicated 5-6 years of postdoctoral experience:

6% have not written grants or fellowship, 28% have written 1-2, 39% have written 2-3, and 28% have written 4 or more. Of those written, 76% have been awarded.

6% have not published, 56% have published 1-2 papers, 33% have published 2-3 papers, and 6% have published 4 or more.

6% have never given formal scientific presentations, 56% have given 1-3, 22% have given 4-6, and 17% have given 7 or more.

94% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to give presentations effectively and 6% disagree.

89% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to scientific publications. 6% disagree, and 6% are undecided.

89% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to write a grant application and 11% disagreed.

44% agree or strongly agree that they have been given enough opportunities to develop the skills required to manage a laboratory. 28% disagreed, and 28% are undecided.

Career Development

48% rate career advising as above average or excellent, 34% rate it as average, and 9% rate it as below average or poor.

When asked about immediate career plans: 63% stated they are not actively seeking new position; 27% stated they are actively seeking new position because it is time to move to the next stage of their career; 3% stated they are actively seeking new position due to dissatisfaction with their present position; 3% have already found a permanent position.

When asked about employment objectives after their postdoc, 54% stated that their objective was to either move into academia, another postdoc or private research organization; 26% stated that their objective was to move into industry; 12% stated that their objective was to either move into consulting, intellectual property/patent law or scientific publishing; 4% want to move to government work; and 4% teaching.

68% agreed or strongly agreed that their principal investigator is willing to discuss career outlook and available options and opportunities, 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed; and 17% were undecided.

64% agreed or strongly agreed that there are comfortable discussing with their PI plans to apply/respond to job offers or advertisements, 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 13% were undecided.

57% agreed or strongly agreed that the scientific training they are receiving at Gladstone is preparing them for the current job market, 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 26% were undecided.

9% agreed or strongly agreed that their stay at Gladstone has been prolonged because of difficulty finding a job, 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 18% were undecided.

Generally postdocs feel that career advising is not lacking per say with the various career panels and alumni lunches. Many commented that Gladstone should have similar career resources as UCSF's Office of Professional Development. This is a training/communication issue since it is clear that most are not aware that UCSF's Office of Professional Development is available to Gladstone postdocs.

Where career advising is lacking is where it is needed the most: with the PIs. There is a feeling that PIs need to be more engaged and proactive in this area. Many say that their PI never talks or thinks about the future careers of their postdocs. Many postdocs are not sure how to move on after their postdoctoral training and look to their PIs for guidance.

When asked for suggestions to help improve career development at Gladstone, postdocs offered the following ideas:

1. Advertise availability of services.
2. Better networking with postdoc alum. Maybe something similar to LinkedIn but for only gladstone-affiliated members [This already exists, need to advertise more]
3. Further seminars on alternative careers.
4. Increase the number of networking events at Gladstone with scientists from industry.
5. Increase awareness of other career paths, such as IP law, consulting, policy, science publishing.

6. Direct emails when openings industry/academia positions open up
7. Establish a website for posting available fellowships/grants and jobs.
8. Foster joint programs between UCSF and Gladstone for postdoctoral advising.
9. More advise on transition to independency
10. More management training. This should range from interpersonal communication with employees and colleagues to book keeping.
11. Perhaps a job talk/interview seminar could be organized for all trainees applying for faculty jobs. Trainees could practice jobs talks and other relevant interview skills with one another.
12. Make a time-line for goals, both for publishing and for applying for other positions, at the beginning of the postdoc
13. Perhaps a more formal career development section could be added to the annual postdoc performance review, so postdocs and PIs can discuss the big picture plans for the postdoc and transitioning to independence.
14. Postdoc projects overseen by an independent committee (other Gladstone PIs) to ensure fair treatment and completion of projects within a reasonable time frame.

Benefits and Salary

50% are satisfied or very satisfied with their salary, 28% are neutral, and 20% are very dissatisfied or not satisfied.

58% satisfied or very satisfied with their ability to maintain a reasonable balance between personal life and work life, 28% are neutral, and 14% are very dissatisfied or not satisfied.

The top three benefits rated as good or excellent were relocation allowance, postdoc retirement program, and vacation/sick pay. The benefit that rated the least was the fitness reimbursement.

Generally postdocs recognize that salaries at Gladstone are much better when compared to UCSF, other universities, and other private research institutes. With that said many feel their salaries are extremely low considering the cost of living in the San Francisco Bay Area. Postdocs feel that Gladstone needs to account more for cost of living when comparing postdoc pay scales at other organizations.

There were also comments about postdocs in generally being under paid for what they do and the degree they have, and even though this is a national issue, some feel Gladstone should do more to pay postdocs a fair salary.

There is an overall misunderstanding on how the postdoc scale is structured. The current scale has several large increases in the beginning, but increase become increasing smaller the more one advances in the scale. The postdoc see this as unfair. They feel that experienced postdocs should get large increase. The philosophy behind the scale is to discourage postdocs from staying. This needs to be better explained. The scale also needs to be re-structured so increases in steps are more evenly distributed.

There were several surprising comments regarding PIs not allowing postdocs to take vacations or time off on weekends. The postdocs feel that vacation and time off in general is thought of by PIs as an unnecessary delay of progress or a lack of motivation. There is a definite disconnect with the PIs being understanding of their postdocs need to take time. Even though this issue occurs in all three institutes, it seems to be very prevalent in GIND and to a lesser extent in GIVI.

Mentoring

67% rate level of mentoring they are receiving from their PI/mentor as good or excellent, 21% rate it as average and 12% rare it as below average or poor.

83% agreed or strongly agreed that their PI makes time available to discuss issues that arise in their research, 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 9% were undecided.

70% agreed or strongly agreed that their PI communicates expectations and feedback clearly, 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 19% were undecided.

66% agreed or strongly agreed that their PI provides them with adequate research direction and advice, 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 23% were undecided.

72% agreed or strongly agreed that their PI ensures they receive appropriate recognition for their work, 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 17% were undecided.

74% agreed or strongly agreed that their PI ensures that they have the opportunities and support needed to establish collaboration with others, 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 18% were undecided.

80% agreed or strongly agreed that their PI encourages them to take progressive responsibility for their project(s), 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 10% were undecided.

34% stated that they meet with their PI/mentor to discuss their research monthly or every other month. 15% meet every other week, 28% meet once or twice a week, 17% meet when needed, and 6% other.

67% are satisfied or very satisfied with the frequency of their meetings, 7% are very dissatisfied or not satisfied with that frequency, and 27% are neutral.

28% have additional mentors besides their PI, 72% do not.

44% have a written project development plan/proposal detailing expectations, 56% do not.

The survey asked postdocs if they and their PI had written a project development plan/proposal detailing expectations of projects. Those who responded ‘Yes’ were asked if a written plan useful, and those who responded ‘No’ were asked if they would find a project plan helpful.

Of those who responded that ‘Yes, there was a project plan created’, 25 postdocs responded positivity and said they did find it helpful because it ensured PIs and postdocs were on the same page. 5 postdocs responded ‘Maybe’, due to changes in research direction.

Of those who responded to ‘Would a project plan be helpful,’ 29 postdocs said they would find one helpful because it could show where one stands and where one is expected to go. 6 postdocs responded ‘Maybe’, and 9 said ‘No’ because of the added pressure it would create (a defined time frame or expectations that are unreasonabe).

Generally postdocs not get enough constructive feedback on their performance out of the appraisal period. Many feel that outside of the appraisal there is little to no career advice or mentoring offered. Some commented on favoritism that occurs in labs; PIs give more attention to postdocs working on ‘pet projects’ of the PI.

Good mentoring is not being generous with reagents, but providing direction on projects.

Some commented on the fact that differences in scientific philosophy are ignored or not taken seriously. Rather mentor imposes his/her philosophy with disregard for plausible alternatives.

Communication

72% agreed or strongly agreed that information is communicated openly and honestly, 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 14% were undecided.

76% agreed or strongly agreed that organizational goals and objectives are clearly explained, 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 16% were undecided.

76% agreed or strongly agreed that people communicate respectfully with one another regardless of position or level, 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 12% were undecided.

Administrate and Core Services

In general, the postdocs are happy with the support they receive from Administration and the Cores. They feel that most of the admin staff is supportive and effective. The Administered Departments rated as follows:

Editorial	4.6
Grants	4.3
Purchasing	4.3
Human Resources	4.2
Accounting	4.1
Graphics	4.1
Information Technology	4.0
Web Services/Support	4.0
Facilities	3.8

Note: 50% of the participants selected the “Not applicable/Have Not/Do Not Use” option for Graphics, and 38% selected the “Not applicable/Have Not/Do Not Use” option for Web Services.

Participant Information

Invited	Completed	% To Total	iPod	
91	79	87%	69	76%

By Institute Affiliation

	Answer	Count	Invited	Percent
1.	GICD	27	34	79%
2.	GIND	14	24	58%
3.	GIVI	26	33	79%
4.	Declined to state	12	-	-
	Total	**79**	**91**	**87%**

Demographics

Gender			
	Answer	**Count**	**Percent**
1.	**Female**	**41**	**52%**
2.	Male	35	44%
3.	Declined to State	3	4%
	Total	**79**	**100%**

Institute Affiliation			
	Answer	**Count**	**Percent**
1.	GICD	27	34%
2.	**GIND**	**14**	**33%**
3.	GIVI	26	18%
4.	Declined to state	12	15%
	Total	**79**	**100%**