



Rutgers Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

December/January Monthly Announcements

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Dear students: Welcome back to a new semester and happy 2014! I hope everyone had a relaxing and wonderful holiday season, and that you are full of vim and vigor to accomplish new things and make great new discoveries. Be sure to do your annual committee meetings – they are actually helpful. I wish everyone the very best for the new year.

Jim

- 1. ASBMB Spring Hill Day, Washington D.C., April 1, 2014, Apply for this funded opportunity by Feb. 14. Get training in science policy and meet with your Members of Congress.**
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- 1. ASBMB Spring Hill Day, Washington D.C., April 1, 2014, Apply for this funded opportunity by Feb. 14. Get training in science policy and meet with your Members of Congress.**



You can significantly impact the debate over the importance of research funding. Representative Frank Pallone represents the 6th district in New Jersey and is the Ranking Member of the House Energy and Commerce's Health subcommittee that has oversight of the National Institutes of Health. Congressional leaders look forward to meeting with residents from their district and rely upon input from their constituents when making decisions. In describing your research to Rep. Pallone, you can highlight the importance and successes of your research, discuss the impact of government-funded research on human health and establish a personal connection with Rep. Pallone and his staff. So how can you accomplish this?

By applying now for the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology's Student/Postdoc Hill Day! Every year, the ASBMB brings together young researchers from across the country to meet with their Congressional leaders in Washington, D.C. This fully-funded opportunity gives participants the chance to help promote scientific research by directly interacting with government officials. The deadline to apply is Feb. 14.

Arriving on Monday, March 31, participants will take part in an orientation session focused on the federal budget process and communicating with members of Congress. On Tuesday, April 1, participants will convene on Capitol Hill to meet with members of Congress, before departing on Wednesday, April 2. In exchange for your time and efforts, we provide transportation, lodging and meals during your stay in Washington, D.C.

If you are an undergraduate or graduate student or postdoc interested in this opportunity, please fill out and submit a Hill Day application form. If you are a PI with undergraduate or graduate students or postdocs who may be interested in the ASBMB Hill Day, we would appreciate you passing this letter on to those trainees.

If you have any questions, please contact ASBMB Science Policy Fellow Shaila Kotadia. Thank you very much for your efforts. We look forward to reviewing your application and hopefully seeing you in Washington this spring!

2. Student Wellness Program- Mindfulness1 – How present are you really?

Do you find yourself living most of your time either looking towards the future (thinking about what needs to get done or where you would rather be) or the past (regretting decisions made or reliving moments that already happened)? In the midst of our busy schedules it seems we tend to forget to “stop and smell the roses” as the saying goes. Mindfulness, the concept of actually being present in the moment, observing thoughts and feelings as they are without judging them, has been found to be beneficial in improving one’s ability to manage stress. Unfortunately, we tend to operate on “autopilot” much of the time missing the many opportunities to connect with ourselves in the world and maximize on the positive moments that are happening around us. Jon Kabat-Zinn teaches there are seven attitudinal factors that help to create a foundation for mindfulness practice as follows:

(Please see attachment)

3. Student Wellness Program- Self-care in 2014

As students, life has the potential for being very rewarding; yet, one also needs to be aware of the fact that it can also be very challenging. Developing the unique skill-set of balancing the diversity of demands that are placed upon students, juxtaposed with one’s personal life can become a daunting proposition; and yet, it is vital that self-care measures be implemented. However, for many students, the value of individual self-care can easily be overlooked as one navigates the academic landscape.

(Please see attachment)

4. New Jersey Seeding Labs Chapter Hosts Kickoff Event and Fundraiser

Seeding Labs was founded by young scientists and we continue that tradition with a network of campus-based chapters. We believe in involving the next generation of scientists in the U.S. and abroad in all our work. After all, they are the ones who will use our equipment to make new discoveries and work together on projects we haven’t even begun to imagine.

We are thrilled to welcome our newest chapter, based at Rutgers University. They hosted a kickoff event in December to raise awareness of Seeding Labs and raise money towards their first project: supporting a shipment of equipment for the University of d’Abomey-Calavi in Benin. We hope this pairing between the Rutgers group and their counterparts in West Africa sparks some new relationships and scientific discussions to come.

Members of the Rutgers group shared a description and pictures of the event.

“The New Jersey branch of Seeding Labs held its first fundraising event, a happy hour at the Harvest Moon Brewery in New Brunswick, NJ. The event, featuring discounted drinks and appetizers, raised nearly two hundred dollars for seeding labs. Over 30 medical and graduate students turned out to help the effort and to enjoy a night of fun. These students got to learn about the purpose of Seeding Labs and to hear about other upcoming events we are planning.

Members of the group were proud to have the funds ready to send to Seeding Labs at our following meeting. At this meeting we not only discussed plans for more fundraising events, but also for equipment drives and having speakers come to talk with students. Overall, the fundraising event was very successful and an exciting first event for the New Jersey branch of Seeding labs.”

5. Sexual Assault Resources

“When You’re the Victim” and “Sexual Assault Protocol Resources”.

(Please see attachments)

6. Federal Tax Refund for Same-Sex Married Couples

As a result of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision invalidating portions of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the United States Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) have ruled that certain federal tax benefits are now extended to same-sex married couples. As such, employees may be eligible to receive a refund of federal income and employment taxes paid in tax year 2013 from Rutgers, and in previous tax years by filing an amended income tax return with the IRS.

Under this new ruling, same-sex married couples will be treated as married for federal tax purposes, including income and gift and estate taxes. This policy shift has implications for all federal tax provisions for which marriage is a factor, including filing status, claiming personal and dependency deductions, employee benefits, contributing to an IRA and claiming the earned income tax credit or child tax credit.

This new ruling applies to any same-sex marriage entered into in any of the 50 states, including the District of Columbia, any U.S. territory, or any foreign country. The ruling does not, however, apply to registered domestic partnerships, civil unions, or any similar formal relationships recognized under state law.

Legally-married same sex couples generally must file their 2013 federal income tax return using the “married, filing jointly,” or “married, filing separately,” tax filing statuses.

In order to comply with the new ruling from the federal government, Rutgers University Human Resources (UHR) is requesting that employees seeking to file for a 2013 tax refund or seeking to stop withholding of federal income taxes to provide a copy of the marriage license to UHR. Payroll will correct the additional federal income and employment taxes withheld in 2013 and a refund will be generated in a subsequent biweekly paycheck. Employees can also change their federal W-4 online through Employee Self Service based upon your individual tax situation.

More information regarding the record and benefit coverage level changes which may be made as a result of a legally-recognized marriage, civil union or same-sex domestic partnership can be found at <http://uhr.rutgers.edu/worklife-balance/life-events/marriage-civil-union-or-same-sex-domestic-partnership>.

Employees should also note that, generally, the statute of limitations for the filing of a refund claim is three years from the date the return was filed or two years from the date the tax was paid, whichever is later. As a result, refund claims can still be filed for tax years 2010, 2011 and 2012, depending on when the marriage license was issued. Taxpayers who wish to file a refund claim for income taxes should use Form 1040X, the Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return.

Additionally, employees should be aware that the beneficiary that they have designated through their retirement plan may change due to recognized marital status, and that a previously named primary beneficiary, such as a child, niece, nephew, etc. would now be super-ceded by the legal marital status change. In order to maintain previously named beneficiaries, it is recommended that you update or change your beneficiary information on file with the State pension system to which you belong.

If you have any additional questions regarding this new policy, please feel free to reach out to UHR at (848) 932-3020, or via email at info@hr.rutgers.edu.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Vivian Fernández,
Vice President for Faculty & Staff Resources

7. Student Personal Change Form

Please remember it is your responsibility to keep your address updated with the graduate school. You can find the student personal change form on this link http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/education/gpbs/current/documents/Student_Personal_Change_Form.pdf

8. RU Just in Case app

Introducing the free Rutgers Just in Case App. With the touch of a button on your smart phone or tablet, you can link to all the available resources on campus - RHS-CAPS, RUPD, and more - as well as local and national hotlines. Scan the code above or connect to <http://codu.co/cee05e> and you are ready to assist – just in case.



9. GSBS "Academic Forms"

Please visit the GSBS "Academic Forms" link <http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/education/gpbs/current/forms.html> and make sure you download the required most current form whenever needed.

Anyone who submits an outdated form will be asked to complete and obtain all required signatures again on the most current form.