

UVM Postdoctoral Association Meeting

1.29.2026 | Davis Center 106E, Rosa Parks Room

- I. Call to Order**
 - a. 3:30pm ET
- II. Attendance**
 - a. Jill Stockwell
 - b. Postdocs in attendance = 9
- III. Mode of Meeting**
 - a. Hybrid (in-person + virtual)
- IV. Agenda**
 - a. Welcome
 - b. Introduction of the new Co-chair and Treasurer of the PDA
 - c. PDA monthly meeting schedule
 - d. Results update from the Needs Assessment Survey
 - e. Postdocs professional development opportunities
 - f. By-law review updates
- V. Welcome**
 - a. The Chair welcomed all participants attending both in person and online
- VI. Introduction of the new Co-chair and Treasurer of the PDA**
 - a. For the appointment of the new officers (Co-Chair and Treasurer), an election was first conducted by the PDA
 - b. To elect each position, postdocs who expressed interest (collected via an “Expression of Interest” email) were listed, and voting was conducted for each position using a Microsoft Form
 - c. The voting opportunity was shared with 97 postdocs (based on the listserv), of whom 22 participated in the vote
 - d. To ensure the integrity of the voting system, once a vote was submitted, it could not be edited
 - e. Newly appointed executive members:
 - i. Co-Chair: **Dr. Monireh Dehabadi** - Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
 - ii. Treasurer: **Dr. Morgan Crump** – Gund Institute for Environment
- VII. PDA Monthly Meeting Schedule**

- a. Many postdocs have mentioned difficulty attending the monthly meetings due to the scheduled time (last Thursday of every month from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.), as this time conflicts with work and personal commitments
- b. Therefore, it was proposed to identify a new meeting time
- c. However, the monthly meeting will continue to be held during the last week of each month
- d. To determine the date and time, a poll will first be shared among executive members to vote on their available dates and one-hour time slots between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. This will help identify the times when most executive members are available. Based on these results, 3–4 time slots will then be shared with the postdoctoral community for final voting on the monthly meeting schedule

VIII. Results update from the Needs Assessment Survey

- a. Survey period: November 19–December 14, 2025
- b. Responses: 43 postdocs
- c. The survey results are currently being analyzed, and a report/summary of the results of the survey will be shared with all postdocs and relevant university officials
- d. Preliminary findings (to date):
 - i. Many postdocs reported satisfaction with their overall relationship with their advisor/PI and with the support provided by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, while many expressed dissatisfaction with childcare benefits
 - ii. Approximately 13% of postdocs reported dissatisfaction with their salary
 - iii. The biggest challenges and areas for improvement identified were salaries, career development opportunities, housing, and networking and collaboration
 - iv. Many international postdocs were satisfied with their advisor/PI and with the Office of International Education
 - v. Support that would have made the transition to UVM easier included help finding affordable housing, guidance on navigating administrative systems (e.g., HR), orientation sessions, and opportunities to connect with mentors and peers
 - vi. Additional comments from postdocs:
 - 1. Hold PDA monthly meetings earlier
 - 2. Include open-floor time during PDA monthly meetings so postdocs can share ideas and concerns
 - 3. Provide simplified explanations of health insurance and benefits

IX. Professional/Social Development Opportunities and Collaborations

- a. **Fellowships, Opportunities, and Undergraduate Research (FOUR)**
 - i. Postdocs can collaborate with FOUR on teaching, mentoring undergraduate students, and related activities
 - ii. FOUR suggested creating a 3–5 minute video introducing the most engaging and impactful aspects of postdocs' research. The PDA will provide updates on this initiative

b. Recognition of postdoc work

- i. It was suggested to establish a new centralized record system (e.g., a certificate or official letter from the Graduate College) to acknowledge postdocs' contributions that are often unrecognized, such as research, teaching, service, mentoring, and project management
- ii. Dr. Jill Stockwell will follow up on this initiative in collaboration with the PDA

c. Graduate Writing Center

- i. The Director of the [Graduate Writing Center \(GWC\)](#), Dr. Elizabeth Fenton, has reached out to the PDA to ask whether there is interest in starting a writing group for postdoctoral fellows
- ii. The GWC offers one-on-one writing support, as well as writing camps and workshops. This semester, they are piloting new writing groups that will meet regularly, with a writing consultant serving as the host
- iii. Postdocs are also welcome to join existing writing groups with graduate students
- iv. The Center would like postdocs to know that the GWC is available to them and that they are welcome to access all of its services

d. Postdoc career development events

- i. AI in Research
 - 1. As this is a broad topic, it was suggested to organize a series of sessions covering different aspects of AI in research, including:
 - a. Implementation
 - b. Ethical aspects
 - c. Resources

e. Social events

- i. Ideas for social events in 2026 are welcome

X. Review of By-Laws

- a. The existing by-laws will be reviewed and edited by each executive committee member. Members will not edit the original document; instead, they will add separate comments to indicate relevant edits and suggestions. This review process will continue until the end of February
- b. The postdoctoral community is welcome to suggest changes to the by-laws. Please contact any executive committee member to share your ideas

XI. Adjourn

- a. 4:45pm ET