



**Boston University** Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs



# Collaboration and Community

*Annual Report | FY2023*



# Letter from Assistant Vice President & Assistant Provost

Putting together this year's report was such an amazing joy. For me (and I think for so many others within our community), this academic year was a complete and total whirlwind. There are times I have mentally wondered where all the time has gone! We have been so busy, there seems to be little time to remember how much we've done.

We have strived and climbed and achieved bold and innovative new heights—expanding our PhD Progression program, re-launching visits for UR BU (pronounced “Your BU”) post-pandemic, building new grant writing programs for post-docs, and taking on PhD student writing support, all while generating top notch research and scholarship... and so much more. I am deeply proud of the work we have accomplished, which reflects the core values of our team: aligning our actions with our words; creating welcoming, open, and inclusive environments; contributing ideas that are innovative and forward-thinking; creating collaboration and community in our work; using evidence, evaluation, and feedback toward continuous improvement; and advancing ourselves as allies and advocates. And we did it while having so much fun with one another.

But we, like so many of our colleagues across the University, have been outpacing ourselves for far too long. With vulnerability, I admit it: I could use a moment to recharge. There can also be immense joy and beauty that comes from making time for self-care, reflection, stocktaking, and planning.

Before our team identifies the next set of mountains that we would like to build, climb, and summit, I'd like to invite you to take a moment to breathe with us. We will be visiting departments and programs in the coming year, and would love to look back and think forward with you, remembering and enjoying our collective accomplishments and partnerships (before they fly by us!) as we plan for an exciting future ahead. I look forward to chatting.



**Sarah Hokanson,  
Assistant Vice President  
& Assistant Provost**

# Overview

**Boston University** is committed to providing a supportive and competitive training environment for PhD students and postdoctoral research and scholarship. We also want to provide the right research support to enable our faculty to pursue innovative collaborations and large-scale grant proposals. Our team offers programs, resources, and services across both our Charles River and Medical Campuses that are tailored to meet the specific needs of PhD students, postdoctoral scholars (postdocs), and their faculty mentors.

Our office continued to expand in staff and in the areas we support this year and we are excited for the possibilities created by these new directions! We have expanded our role in graduate student affairs and the work we do to support PhD students, mentored new postdoctoral associates connecting our practice to our grant-funded scholarship, and welcomed a new research fellow for program evaluation.

## Quick Stats

**486**  
Postdoctoral scholars

**30**  
Advising appointments  
for postdocs

**65**  
PhD student events

**51**  
Postdoc events

**116**  
Total events

**400+**  
Postdocs attended  
events

**1,109**  
Total PhD students  
attended events

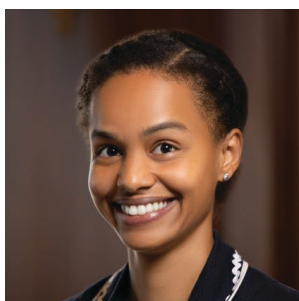


# Meet the Team



## **Pallavi Eswara (she/her/hers)**

Pallavi serves as Director, Postdoctoral Affairs. Her primary role is to direct the professional and career development programs for postdoctoral associates. Her portfolio includes working on learning communities for Postdoc Academy and developing programs and resources around grant writing for all postdocs. Further she works with BU's Postdoc Association to grow community-driven events for postdocs from all campuses. She also works on postdoc tracking, an annual survey, newsletters and reports, and related administrative tasks around postdoc training.



## **Bénédicte Gnangnon (Béné, she/her/hers)**

Béné joined the PDPA office as a Postdoctoral Associate in February 2022, after completing a PhD and a first postdoc in STEM. She spent the rest of 2022 creating badges for the PhD Progression program, communicating about Skillsmatch—a tool designed to match job seekers' skill sets and interests with career areas—and co-organizing workshops for PhD students. She transitioned to the Postdoc Academy project in 2023, to create new faculty toolkits and activities for postdocs and their mentors to have productive and meaningful conversations on the topics covered in the Postdoc Academy.



## **Sasha Goldman (she/her/hers)**

In her role as Director of PhD Resources, Sasha oversees several programs, including PhD Progression, the Vitamin PhD Podcast, and PhD Writing Support. She is co-PI of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Innovations in Graduate Education project, which brings industry knowledge to the PhD Progression micro-credentials. Sasha also develops and coordinates regular programming, workshops, and training for current doctoral students in areas of career planning and professional development, project management, writing and communication, and teaching.



## **Sarah Hokanson (she/her/hers)**

As Assistant Vice President & Assistant Provost, Sarah is responsible for postdoctoral affairs, professional development programming and resources for doctoral students and postdocs across the University, supporting the development of University policies related to postdoctoral scholarship, and developing research development resources to support faculty in obtaining and leading extramural funding programs. She also provides resources for faculty mentors and is the Director of Boston University's Responsible Conduct of Research program. Sarah is co-PI of multiple research grants and serves in leadership positions nationally, including most recently on the AAMC Postdoctoral Leaders Steering Committee.



# Meet the Team

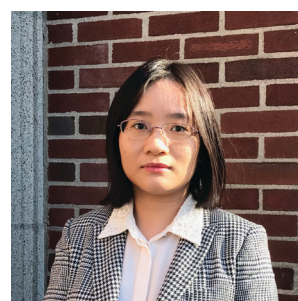
## **Daria Ivleva (she/her/hers)**

Daria joined Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs as a Research Fellow in July 2023 after completing her PhD in higher education at Indiana University Bloomington where she also served as a project associate for the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education. Her primary role in the PDPA office is to assist with the evaluation of Boston University's Ignition Award program and other workforce development programs involving graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and faculty.



## **Kuang Li (she/her/hers)**

Kuang joined the PDPA team as a Postdoctoral Associate in January 2023 after completing her doctorate in language education at BU Wheelock College of Education and Human Development. Her primary role is to assist the PDPA team in the development, organization, implementation, and assessment of the professional development training program known as PhD Progression, including the creation of a collaborative, multi-institutional consortium to develop badge content and foster blended learning opportunities.



## **Alexandria Yen (Alex, she/her/hers)**

Alex joined Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs as a Postdoctoral Associate in September 2022. Her work focuses on PDPA's two multi-institutional grant-funded projects, the Inclusive STEM Teaching Project and the Postdoc Academy. She helps with researching the impact of learning communities in Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), facilitating learning communities, moderating discussions boards, and overseeing outreach for the Postdoc Academy's second course. She has assisted in inclusive teaching workshops and programming run by BU's Postdoctoral Association.



## **Emma Zheng (she/her/hers)**

Emma joined the PDPA office as Assistant Director for Graduate Training and Programming in March 2022. Her portfolio consists of assisting in maintaining University-wide compliance with the Responsible Conduct of Research program, overseeing the internal graduate fellowships process (Clare Booth Luce, Martin Luther King Jr., Whitney Young Jr., Lu Lingzi, Hing Wah Cheung, and the William V. Shannon), and implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and programming for BU graduate students, as well as organizing pipeline programming for prospective underrepresented PhD students.



# Landscape for Postdocs and PhD Students

The work that we do connects to many initiatives and working groups, helping us to extend our impact and collaborate with colleagues across the University.

## **Changes to postdoctoral appointments and salary/stipend levels**

We were pleased to join several of our peer institutions in raising our minimum postdoctoral salary and stipend level to \$65,000 as of January 1, 2024. New National Institutes of Health guidance also allowed us to re-categorize Ruth L. Kirschstein funded postdocs (previously called Postdoctoral Fellows) as regular employees. This was a critical step and allowed these important postdocs within our community to receive full University benefits.

## **Office of Research DEI Committee**

The Office of Research DEI Committee was formed in 2021 to ensure that research leadership and staff have a mechanism for ongoing input, advice, and programming around fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace. The committee currently is focused on advancing diversity and inclusion across Office of Research areas via the development of equity-focused recruitment and retention practices and launching a Teams channel where research staff can come together to share resources and build community. Sasha Goldman is the co-chair of the committee and Sarah Hokanson is the leadership liaison.

## **Taskforce on the Future of PhD Education**

Sarah Hokanson was part of the Taskforce on PhD Education, which discussed and developed recommendations to address the challenges at the forefront of the national dialogue on PhD education: access and diversity, culture and inclusion, student wellbeing and mental health, mentoring, professional development, and career advancement. The taskforce has produced a report to the interim President and Provost, and many members of the PDPA team will play integral roles in implementing the recommendations next year.





# PDPA Research and Scholarship

## New publications from PDPA:

Sun, T.; Drane, D.; McGee, R.; Campa, H.; Goldberg, B.B.; Hokanson, Sarah C. A national professional development program fills mentoring gaps for postdoctoral researchers. PLOS One. Accepted for publication. (2023)

Opher, M.; Richardson, J.; Zank, G.; Florinski, V.; Giacalone, J.; Sokol, J.; Toth, G.; Buxner, S.; Kornbleuth, M.; Gkioulidou, M.; Nikoukar, R.; Van der Holst, B.; Turner, D.; Gross, N.; Drake, J.; Swisdak, M.; Dialynas, K.; Dayeh, M.; Chen, Y.; Zieger, B.; Powell, E.; Onobogo, C.; Ma, X.; Bair, E.; Elliott, H.; Galli, A.; Zhao, L.; Adhikari, L.; Nakanotani, M.; Hill, M.E.; Mostafavi, P.; Du, S.; Fuo, F.; Reisenfeld, D.; Fuselier, S.; Izmodenov, V.; Baliukin, I.; Cummings, A.; Miller, J.; Wang, B.; Ghanbari, K.; Kota, J.; Loeb, A.; Burgess, J.; Hokanson, Sarah C.; Morrow, C.; Hong, A.; Boldon, A. Solar wind with Hydrogen Ion charge Exchange and Large-Scale Dynamics (SHIELD) DRIVE Science Center. Frontiers in Astronomy and Space Sciences. Accepted for publication. (2023)



## Selected team presentations:

Eswara, P. (2023, April 22). Applying a Project Management lens to job search [Talk], 20th Annual National Postdoc Association Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Gnangnon, B., Li, K., Rezaei, D. F., Marks, M. M., Dellarocas, C., Hokanson, S. C., Goldman, S. B. (2023, May 24). The potential of PhD Progression for Boston University Medical Campus (BUMC) PhD students [Poster presentation]. 18th Annual McCahan Education Conference, Boston, MA.

Goldman, S. (2023, February 17). Career Planning for Non-Academic Careers in the Arts [Presentation]. 110th College Art Association Annual Conference. New York, NY.

Goldman, S. (2023, March 23). Microcredentials as a Bridge to Employment [Presentation]. 2023 UPCEA Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.

Yen, A., Eswara, P., Hokanson, S.C. (2023, April 21). Adapting DEI Content for STEM to Humanities Postdocs [Talk]. 20th Annual National Postdoc Association Meeting, Philadelphia, PA

## New PDPA grant programs:

### **2022-2025 PhD Progression: Creating Workforce-driven Flexible Credentials for Doctoral Students (\$462k)**

This NSF Innovations in Graduate Education (IGE) award will support the expansion of our PhD Progression microcredentialing content and integrate perspectives from the workforce through the creation of a consortium of academic and non-academic institutions.

### **2022-2024 Creating Productive Postdoc-Mentor Conversations (\$150k)**

We learned from our own research that postdocs often seek professional development to address gaps in their mentoring relationships. This NOSI supplement to our Postdoc Academy project creates new dialogue frameworks and design-thinking workshops focused on creating productive postdoc-mentor conversations focused on the themes within our Postdoc Academy courses.

# PDPA Research and Scholarship

## Current PDPA grant programs:

### **2018-2023 Inclusive Learning and Teaching in Undergraduate STEM instruction (\$3m)**

This project created a massive open online course tailored to future and current STEM faculty focused on research-based inclusive teaching practices. To date, our program has reached over 9,658 participants, held learning communities at 79 institutions, and has trained 281 facilitators.

### **2018-2023 Postdoctoral Pathways: Broadening Access to Career Advancement (\$1.9m)**

This project created a national professional development program featuring two massive open online courses tailored to postdocs called the Postdoc Academy. To date, our program has reached over 7,000 postdocs, held learning communities at 47 institutions, and has trained 118 facilitators.



## TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

**Sarah Hokanson** gave an invited talk on the outcomes and research insights from the Inclusive STEM Teaching Project at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

**Bénédicte Gnanon** and **Kuang Li** received the Best Resident/Fellow Abstract Award at the John McCahan Education Day Conference (Boston University Medical Campus).

**Bénédicte Gnanon** hosted a workshop at the 2023 National Postdoc Association Annual Conference for leaders to share their best practices for efficient management of their association and activities (45+ attendees, two articles published in POSTDOCKet).

**Sasha Goldman** was nominated for Supervisor of the Year by student employee **Mishonne Marks**, whom Sasha nominated for Graduate Student Employee of the Year.

**Emma Zheng** was selected to serve on the steering advisory board for the Equity in Graduate Education Consortium.

**Pallavi Eswara** completed her second and last year as an elected member of the executive committee of the Graduate Career Consortium.

**Alexandria Yen** attended and presented at the National Postdoc Association. She also presented a poster at the June Graduate Career Consortium in Indianapolis.



# Inclusive STEM Teaching Project

The Inclusive STEM Teaching Project is a free, online course that centers identity, power, positionality, and privilege to shift faculty mindsets followed by course strategies.

Our interactive, asynchronous online course includes embodied case studies, optional local learning communities led by trained facilitators, and facilitated, virtual, affinity-based discussion groups.

The primary sponsor for the Inclusive STEM Teaching Project is the NSF, Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR), and Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE). This project is supported under DUE grants 1821684; 1821571; 1821528; 1821510; 1821574. The project is a collaboration between Boston University, Northwestern University, University of Michigan, University of Georgia, University of Utah, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Des Moines Area Community College.

## Quick Stats



## Connect with us



[inclusivestemteaching.org](https://inclusivestemteaching.org)



[inclusivestemteaching@gmail.com](mailto:inclusivestemteaching@gmail.com)



[@inclusivestemteaching](https://www.instagram.com/inclusivestemteaching)



[@inclusivestem1](https://twitter.com/inclusivestem1)

## edX course page

[edx.org/course/the-inclusive-stem-teaching-project](https://edx.org/course/the-inclusive-stem-teaching-project)

# PhD Progression

PhD Progression is an online program that provides BU PhD students from all fields with professional development in seven core capacities: Career Development, Communication, Discipline-specific Knowledge, Management & Leadership, Research, Self-Awareness, and Teaching. The badges are organized in three levels: Skill Exploration (Level 1), Skill Development (Level 2), and Skill Application (Level 3).

## 2022-23 Milestones

### Badge Creation

- 60% Level 1 badges updated
- 71 Level 2 badges released
- Level 3 badges in progress, anticipated 2024 launch
- 10+ new badges co-developed with BU institutional and industry partners

### SkillsMatch

BU PDPA subscribed to the SkillsMatch tool, developed by Lightcast, to provide better support for PhD students' career and professional development. SkillsMatch is a skill inventory tool that enables students to assess their current skill set, explore potential career paths, and receive personalized recommendations for PhD Progression badges to increase their marketability.

- 110+ students utilized Skillsmatch since 2022
- Identified 35+ skills through Skillsmatch
- Received 80+ relevant PhD Progression badge recommendations

## Quick Stats

**201**

PhD students  
earned badges,  
2022-23

**1,500+**

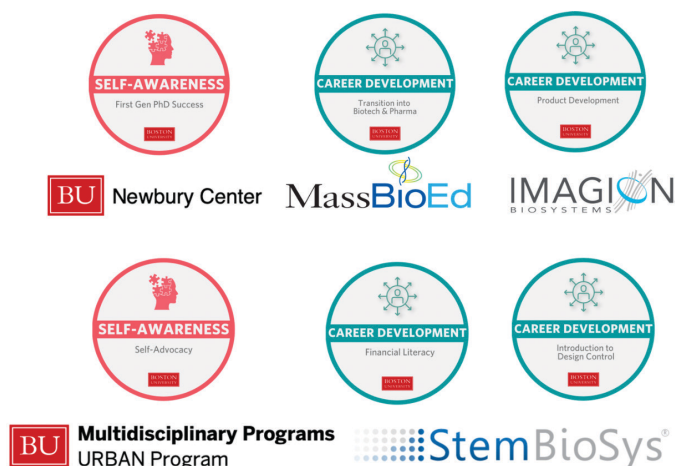
Badges awarded  
since 2021

**162**

Badges available  
since 2021

## BADGE SPOTLIGHT

Funded by the NSF Innovations in Graduate Education Grant (Award No. 2224988), this year we have expanded PhD Progression badges to incorporate workforce training content via collaborations with BU's Newbury Center, BU URBAN, and industry partners in the biomedical fields (i.e., MassBioEd, Imagination Biosystems, and StemBioSys). These badges are ideal for first-generation PHD students and for PhD students who are interested in exploring career paths in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry.





# Vitamin PhD Podcast

The Vitamin PhD podcast was created in 2019 to provide another way for PhD students at BU and beyond to engage in professional development and foster community.



Each season of Vitamin PhD is hosted by a pair of current PhD students at BU. Hosts research, plan, and produce seasons focused on a topic aligned with the PhD Core Capacities and current PDPA programming

Season 8, hosted by Emma Bortz (Biomedical Engineering) and Alyssa Kreikemeier (American Studies), guided listeners through a series of conversations about leadership and management. Their guests range from theorists and practitioners to engineers, historians, and scientists. Conversations cover the practical and the philosophical, exploring how to apply doctoral training to meaningful work and probing the sources and impacts of inequities in our society. Season 8 was our most popular season yet, with over 1,000 downloads. A particularly popular episode was entitled “Thinking About Thinking: Harnessing Metacognition in Learning and Life,” which featured Dr. Shari Tishman, Senior Research Associate at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Season 9, hosted by Táchira Pichardo (Molecular & Translational Medicine) and Grace McGowan (American & New England Studies), is the fifth season in the Core Capacities series. In conversation with a range of guests, Grace and Táchira explore how to build the core skill of self-awareness and how to apply that skill to diverse aspects of life, including communication, financial literacy, project management, and the mind-body connection.



All seasons of the podcast are available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify, which connect the show to a worldwide audience. Listeners can access additional information about the podcast on our website, [bu.edu/vitaminphd](https://bu.edu/vitaminphd), and get updates via Twitter/X ([@BUvitaminphd](https://twitter.com/BUvitaminphd)).

## Season 8 Hosts



**Emma Bortz**  
PhD candidate,  
Biomedical Engineering



**Alyssa Kreikemeier**  
PhD candidate,  
American Studies

## Season 9 Hosts



**Grace McGowan**  
PhD candidate,  
American & New  
England Studies



**Táchira Pichardo**  
PhD candidate,  
Molecular & Trans-  
lational Medicine

## Quick Stats

**3k+**

Downloads  
2022-2023

**12.7k**

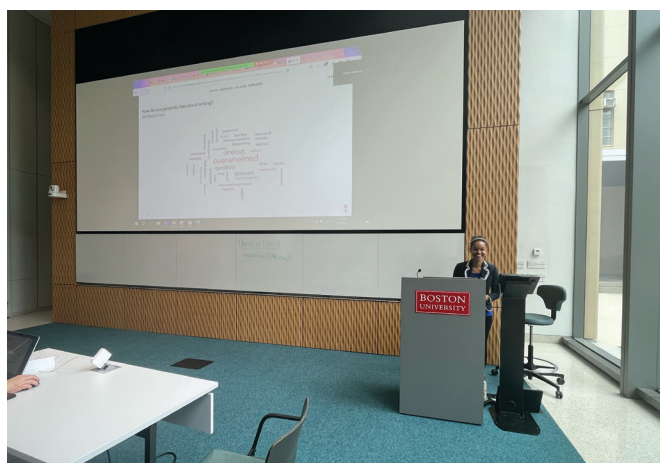
Downloads  
since 2019

# PhD Resources

This year, PDPA took responsibility for PhD writing support, which was formerly housed in the Educational Resource Center. This transition gives PDPA the opportunity to integrate the PhD Progression badges into the existing writing support programs, as well as tailor these programs to PhD students when previously they had been available to all graduate students.

## Dissertation Writing

PDPA offers multiple supports for PhD students working on their dissertations, including a Dissertation Writing Group for peer support; a Dissertation Writing Institute, a workshop focused on planning research and writing, literature reviews, incorporating feedback and research, and combatting writing challenges; and a Dissertation Writing Intensive, made up of writing sessions for dissertation writers to spend a focused week making progress in order to jumpstart their semester.



## Accountability Partners

Accountability Partners runs each semester, matching PhD students with an interdisciplinary group of 3-4 other graduate writers for one-hour, weekly writing check-ins. During each meeting, participants report on their progress over the past week, reflect on challenges, and set goals for the coming week. Groups are also encouraged to maintain a shared daily writing log, and each group is provided with a private Slack channel where members can share updates and resources throughout the week.

## Workshop Circles

Workshop Circles place BU PhD students in similar stages of their degrees into interdisciplinary groups where they can share their works-in-progress and receive feedback from scholars outside of their committees and departments. Groups meet at least four times during the semester to workshop their members' writing on a rotating basis. Workshop Circles receive guidance and best practices for offering and receiving peer feedback.





# PhD Resources

## PhD Virtual Office Hours

Since 2020, PDPA has offered Virtual Office Hours either monthly or bi-monthly for PhD students to speak with PDPA staff about a variety of topics, including job document review, career exploration and preparation, mentorship challenges, and funding. This year, PDPA staff met with 40 students, with several students scheduling follow-up appointments for additional accountability and document review.



## 21 Days of Unlearning Racism and Learning Antiracism

This year, PDPA offered its popular program, the 21 Days of Unlearning Racism and Learning Antiracism, in February, in alignment with Black History Month. This asynchronous program provides an opportunity for participants to engage directly in antiracist texts and multimedia each day for 21 days. There were 98 people registered, primarily PhD students and postdocs, but also a small population of other graduate students, staff, and faculty. We also held two Community Conversations for participants to come together to discuss their learning.



# Graduate Student Awardees

Our office oversees the prestigious graduate fellowships (Clare Booth Luce, Martin Luther King Jr., Whitney Young Jr., and Lu Lingzi) that award full tuition, fees, student health insurance, and an annual stipend to a select cohort of exceptional incoming and current graduate students. The criteria for these awards honors our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and academic excellence. Below we highlight some of our most recent fellowship winners.

## Clare Boothe Luce Fellowship



**Madison Fletcher, incoming PhD student for Biomedical Engineering at BU's College of Engineering**

Madison Fletcher is currently completing her senior year at Tufts University, studying biomedical engineering, with a focus on tissue engineering and regenerative medicine. Outside of the classroom, she is involved in glioblastoma research in the Kaplan Lab at Tufts' department of biomedical engineering. Additionally, she is a member of Tufts' women's club soccer team. Outside of research, Madison hopes to use this opportunity to encourage the next generation of young Black students to join the engineering field.



**Sofia Alejandra Castillo Cieza, incoming PhD student for Biology at BU's Graduate School of Arts & Sciences**

Sofia, who goes by her middle name, Alejandra, is a senior at Wellesley College completing her major in Chemistry. Her strong application impressed the Biology department at BU, which they noted was due to her evident passion for environmental and molecular biology, her overall academic brilliance, her strong commitment to elevating first-generation, low-income, underrepresented minorities (URM) in science, and her interdisciplinary research interests. Her tenacity is further evident in her early completion of an NSF GRFP proposal (almost entirely on her own according to her nominators) before entering graduate school. for underprivileged populations after graduation.

## MLK Jr. Fellowship



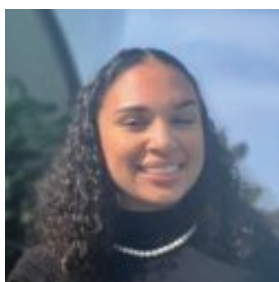
**Jasmin Norford, incoming Educational Policy Studies (MA) student at BU's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development Studies**

Jasmin Norford is a senior double majoring in English and Philosophy and minoring in Brazilian studies at Vanderbilt University. Jasmin has concentrated her focus on racial and cultural phenomena within both the literary and ethnographical world. During her time as an Ingram Scholar at Vanderbilt, Jasmin has discovered new and unique ways to combine her passions for identity and language with her desire to serve and give back to her community. Before beginning her academic career at Vanderbilt, Jasmin was involved with service ventures at the Atlanta Community Food Bank, local nursing homes, and Northside Hospital in her home state of Georgia.



# Graduate Student Awardees

## Whitney Young Jr. Fellowship



**Shalom Entner, current Biology PhD student at BU's Graduate School of Arts & Sciences and the URBAN Program**

Shalom is a graduate student in the BU URBAN Program funded by the National Science Foundation. Her research focuses on toxicological impacts on the physiology and genome of the sea anemone, *Nematostella vectensis*. Her work is primarily based in the Belle Isle Salt Marsh, the last persistent salt marsh in Boston, but includes other marshes in the area. Prior to beginning her PhD education at BU, Shalom graduated from Howard with a Biology major and Chemistry minor.

## Lu Lingzi Award



**Han Chen, current Master of Education (EdM) in Counseling student at BU's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development**

Han is currently pursuing her Master of Education (EdM) in Counseling at BU's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development. Her primary research area focuses on child and adolescent mental health. Personal experiences with family members and mental health struggles in her hometown of Wuhan, China, and their lack of access and resources, has influenced Han's academic and professional pursuits. She hopes to return to China to work on improving the mental stigma and education around mental health challenges.

## PhD Professional Development Grant Awardees

The Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs offers professional development grants to support doctoral students' scholarly work and preparation for a wide variety of academic and non-academic careers.

**Nicholas Cicero, PhD Candidate, Graduate Program in Neuroscience**

Udemy Course + Supporting technology

**Emily Pennoyer, PhD Student, Environmental Health**

Marine Biological Laboratory Summer Course: Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (ECHO)

**Varuna Jasodanand, PhD Candidate, Behavioral Neuroscience**

Elsevier Complete Anatomy application

**Kuizhi Lewis Wang, PhD Candidate, Philosophy**

Center for Canon Expansion and Change Summer Program, University of Minnesota

**Olivia Britton, PhD Candidate, Political Science**

15th Annual Black Europe Summer School

**Josefina Senese, PhD Candidate, Educational Studies**

Winter School in Methods and Data Analysis, Universita Catolica del Uruguay

# Responsible Conduct of Research

Responsible conduct of research (RCR) broadly describes the awareness and application of established professional standards and ethical principles in the execution of research-related activities. Since the 1980s, the term RCR has also become associated with educational programs designed to teach graduate students and postdoctoral scholars about ethical practices associated with scientific investigation and developing scholarship with integrity.

The RCR curriculum at Boston University now integrates required RCR topics with themes such as social justice definitions, setting mentoring expectations, implicit bias, and managing difficult conversations effectively. For example, the training uses improv techniques to help students and postdocs practice having conversations that name

and overcome power differentials with faculty, including acknowledging the financial power faculty may have in mentoring or supervising roles.

Over 500 members of our research community have participated as discussion facilitators since 2006.

## Fall 2022

Workshop 1 Attendees

**116**

Workshop 2 Attendees

**104**

Workshop 3 Attendees

**106**

Workshop 4 Attendees

**71**

## Spring 2023

Workshop 1 Attendees

**87**

Workshop 2 Attendees

**109**

Workshop 3 Attendees

**89**

Workshop 4 Attendees

**117**

## Course Model

The former RCR workshop format was phased out after summer 2023. In fall 2023, we transitioned the program to a one-credit course. This offering will allow us to meet new requirements from the National Science Foundation and provide more in-depth, interactive activities for our postdoc and PhD student participants.

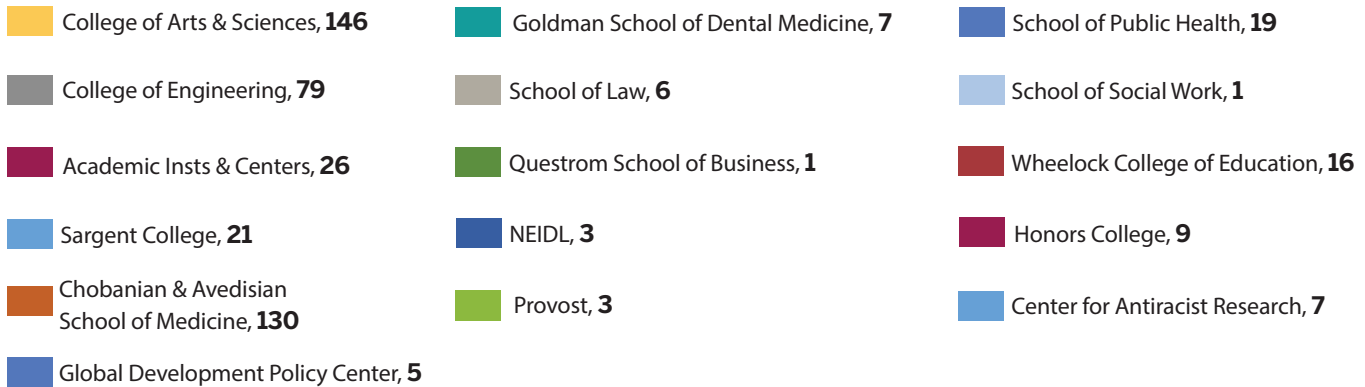
To update our records, we ask that programs and departments that use their own course(s) to fulfill RCR requirements send the course number and syllabus to [burcr@bu.edu](mailto:burcr@bu.edu). For departments and programs with NSF-funded PhD students and/or postdoctoral scholars, please describe how your syllabus is responsive to the new topic areas required by the CHIPS Act.

## RCR Advisory Committee Members

Sarah Hokanson (Director)	Paola Divieti Pajevic
Emma Zheng (Admin)	Daniel Kleinman
Tom Bifano	Andrew Henderson
Deborah Carr	Francesca Seta

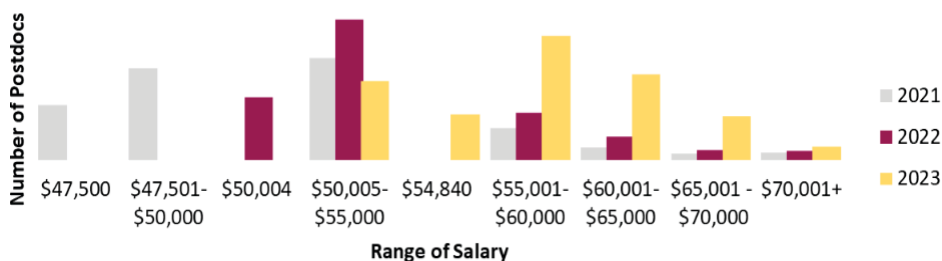


# BU Postdocs: At a Glance

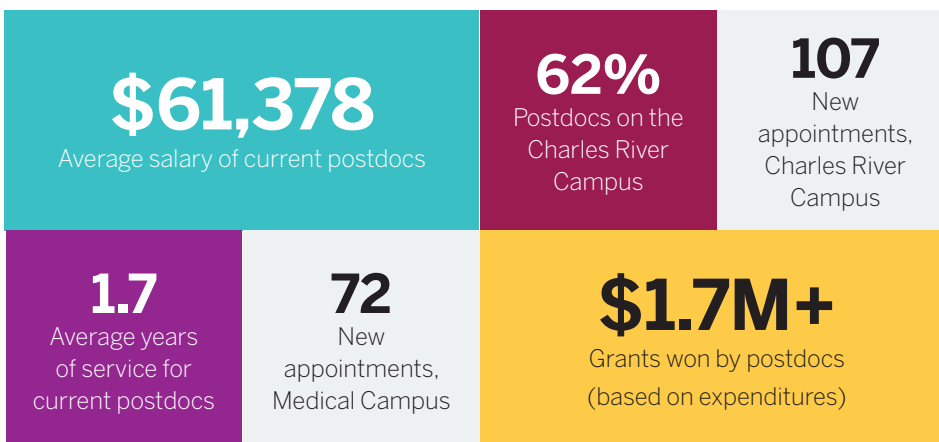


## Salary distribution

Minimum salaries for postdocs: FY21: \$50,004, FY22: \$53,760, FY23: \$54,840



## Quick Stats



## Postdoc Fellowships at BU

- \* NIH T32 & F32 Fellows
- \* NIH TL1 translation science postdoc fellowship
- \* NSF Postdoctoral Fellowship in Math
- \* Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship, Canada
- \* Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange Postdoctoral Fellowship
- \* Walter Benjamin Fellowship, Germany
- \* Japan Society for Promotion of Science Postdoctoral Fellowship

## COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

BU postdocs represent 52 countries. The most common countries of citizenship are:

United States **214**  
China **60**  
India **42**  
South Korea **16**

## RACE/ETHNICITY

White **192**  
Asian **171**  
Black **16**  
American Indian **2**  
Multiracial **2**  
Hispanic/Latino **20**

*Race data is unreported for 99 postdocs.*

# BUPDA

The Boston University Postdoc Association (BUPDA) was founded by postdocs to create opportunities for the University's postdoc community to connect. The group is an active partner to the PDPA office and works closely with us to organize community and professional development events and to advocate for policy changes to improve the postdoctoral experience.

## BUPDA Events, 2022-23

**Postdoctoral Seminar Series:** This year, the BUPDA re-launched its monthly seminar lunch series in which BU postdocs present their research, receive feedback, and network. The series included five in-person seminars on the Medical Campus and three on the Charles River Campus, with 16 postdocs presenting and 113 postdocs attending. Postdocs used this platform to practice for job interviews and conference presentations and to hone their skills conveying research to a broad audiences.



**Postdoc Retreat:** In summer of 2022, BUPDA organized writing workshops for postdocs interested in working on their writing goals and papers. In collaboration with PDPA, BUPDA organizes the Postdoc Retreat, which was held over National Postdoc Appreciation Week in September 2022. With topics ranging from how to transfer skills acquired during postdoc training to leveraging LinkedIn and social activities, the retreat allowed postdocs from both campuses to learn and network.

**Monthly Social Events:** The BUPDA also hosts monthly social events for postdocs to meet one another and explore Boston. This past year, they hosted happy hours at the BU Fuller Pub and TimeOut Market and family-friendly events such as a night at Boston Commons, a trip to the theater for "Much Ado About Nothing," visiting the Metropolitan Waterworks Museum, The New England Aquarium, and the Museum of Science—all to brighten and build the postdoc community.





# Highlighting BUPDA Leaders

## Meet Our Leaders



**Dr. Razan Alnahhas**



**Dr. Shambhavi Tannir**



**Dr. Kanchana Ayyar**



**Dr. Hayley Knox**



**Dr. Sayantani Chatterjee**



**Dr. Alexandria (Alex) Yen**

**Dr. Razan Alnahhas** is a postdoc in the lab of Associate Professor Mary Dunlop, Biomedical Engineering (ENG). Her current research focuses on antibiotic resistance and persistence in *E. coli* using time-lapse fluorescence microscopy.

**Dr. Kanchana Ayyar** is a postdoctoral associate in the lab of Professor Alan Moss, Medicine (CAMED), at Boston Medical Center. Her current research focuses on identifying biomarkers for inflammatory bowel disease from extracellular vesicles.

**Dr. Sayantani Chatterjee** is a postdoctoral associate in Professor Joseph Zaia's research group at the BU Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine. Her current research focuses on exploring viral glycoproteomics, particularly of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 viruses, to aid in the development of effective therapeutics.

**Dr. Shambhavi Tannir** is a postdoctoral associate in Professor Malika Jeffries-EL's group in the Department of Chemistry (CAS). Her current research focuses on the synthetic design and device development of organic light emitting diode materials and organic solar cell/photovoltaic materials.

**Dr. Hayley Knox** is a postdoctoral associate in Professor Karen Allen's research group in the Department of Chemistry (CAS). Her current research is on the structural characterization of glycosyltransferase enzymes involved in the biosynthesis of glycoconjugate biosynthesis.

**Dr. Alexandria (Alex) Yen** is a postdoctoral associate in the BU Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs office. She works on the Postdoc Academy and the Inclusive STEM Teaching Project.

**BUPDA is always looking for new postdocs – get involved!**

Email: [bupda@bu.edu](mailto:bupda@bu.edu)  
Connect: [facebook.com/BUPostdocs](https://facebook.com/BUPostdocs)

# Professional Development for Postdocs

PDPA offers professional development for postdocs on topics that will help them in their training as a postdoc, understand their career paths, and prepare them for a successful transition into their chosen career.

In a new monthly program, Career Chat, presenters shared various career paths available to postdocs. Two six-week sessions on grant writing supported postdocs writing proposals for F32 fellowships, K grants, loan repayment programs, and diversity supplements. Postdocs had opportunities to learn about best practices for giving presentations and creating individual development plans, CVs, resumes, and cover letters. We adapted the STEM-based Postdoc Academy to an inaugural cohort of

humanities postdocs, which proved to be an informative experience that will influence how we adapt the program to discipline-based cohorts in the future.

PDPA also offered intensive workshops and consultations to prepare postdocs to transition to faculty careers, with a focus on developing reflective diversity statements. This year, two BU postdocs accepted faculty position offers in R1 universities.

## 2023 Postdoc Travel Awards

Every year, PDPA gives out travel awards to support the professional development of postdocs.

### **8th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN DEEP-SEA CORALS: Steven Auscavitch, Biology, College of Arts & Sciences**

Dr. Auscavitch presented research on recent deep-water coral biodiversity discoveries in the poorly explored waters of the central Pacific. Using a combination of recently collected coral specimens and museum voucher collections, he presented on the most extensive efforts to date at constructing an octocoral genetic reference library for this underwater region.



### **SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE: Johana Chaparro-Moreno, Education Leadership and Policy Studies, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development**

Dr. Chaparro-Moreno presented on her work, which integrates knowledge from the fields of developmental science, education, and engineering to create linguistically-sensitive methodologies to analyze the linguistic experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and investigate how these experiences influence their language development.

# Postdoc Academy

The Postdoc Academy offers two MOOCs, Succeeding as a Postdoc and Building Skills for a Successful Career, and learning communities to address the professional development needs of postdoctoral scholars, from the beginning to the end of their experience.

The Postdoc Academy is a collaborative initiative between Boston University, Northwestern University, Michigan State University, and University of Wisconsin-Madison, funded by the National Institutes of Health Grant No. R25121257.

This year, we obtained a NOSI supplement to fund the creation of new content focused on postdoc mentoring: (1) 10 postdoc activities and faculty toolkits to empower postdocs and their mentors to have productive conversations on the topics covered by the Postdoc Academy MOOCs, and (2) four mini-modules to support postdoc mentors in setting and revising goals and expectations, supporting postdoc resilience and wellness, cultivating inclusive research teams, and supporting professional and career development for postdocs.

## Connect with us



**Postdoc Academy**



[postdocacademy.org](https://postdocacademy.org)



[postdocacademy@gmail.com](mailto:postdocacademy@gmail.com)



[@postdocacademy](https://www.instagram.com/postdocacademy)

### MOOC 1 edX course page

[edx.org/course/the-postdoc-academy-succeeding-as-a-postdoc](https://edx.org/course/the-postdoc-academy-succeeding-as-a-postdoc)

### MOOC 2 edX course page

[edx.org/course/the-postdoc-academy-building-skills-for-a-successful-career](https://edx.org/course/the-postdoc-academy-building-skills-for-a-successful-career)

## Quick Stats

**10k+**

Learners enrolled

**90%**

Participants recommend training program to peers

**25%**

Participants from underrepresented groups

**550+**

Participants in learning communities



# Provost's Mentor Fellows Program

Mentoring relationships between faculty, doctoral students, and postdoctoral scholars across all fields foster the development of innovative scholarship and new knowledge. These relationships are also critical to shaping the independence of early career scholars.

PDPA has developed a model for mentor training called the Provost's Mentor Fellows program. This cohort-based program, sponsored directly by the Provost, meets monthly throughout the academic year to promote peer learning across disciplines, highlight mentoring successes among faculty, and collectively commit not just to updating personal strategies for mentorship, but also to empowering change in others.

This year's cohort was committed to deepening their mentoring practices, identifying new mentoring strategies, and developing new mentoring structures within their local departments and research centers. Each faculty member developed a project that represented their learning and skill development within the program. For example, one faculty participant created a mentoring handbook that covered the essential practices for researchers within the Slone Epidemiology Center.



## Quick Stats

**11**

Fellows in  
Recent Cohort

**8**

Schools /  
Colleges

**63**

Total Faculty  
Fellows Since  
Program Start

**18%**

Professors

**36%**

Associate  
Professors

**36%**

Assistant  
Professors

# Summary

Our mission is to ensure that Boston University provides a supportive and competitive environment for PhD and postdoctoral scholarship and training, and to provide support to faculty mentors.

## Professional Development

- In-person workshops
- Self-paced learning opportunities and podcast episodes
- Professional development and travel awards
- Business cards
- One-on-one advising and office hours

## Postdoc Appointments & Onboarding

- Offer letters
- Postdoc guidebook resource
- In-person and virtual orientation sessions
- Non-employee / trainee benefits

## Creating Community

- Family-friendly events
- Social events
- Wellness programs
- Postdoc association (BUPDA)



## Connect with PDPA



### In Person

#### Charles River Campus:

1 Silber Way, Room 909,  
Boston, MA 02215

#### Medical Campus:

72 E. Concord Street,  
Boston, MA 02118



### Online

[bu.edu/postdocs](https://bu.edu/postdocs)  
[bu.edu/grad](https://bu.edu/grad)  
[postdocacademy.org](https://postdocacademy.org)  
[bu.edu/vitaminphd](https://bu.edu/vitaminphd)  
[inclusivestemteaching.org](https://inclusivestemteaching.org)



### On Twitter/X

[@postdocacademy](https://twitter.com/postdocacademy)  
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