OFFICE OF POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS

The News Digest
June 11, 2020

Webinar - Navigating Pandemic-related Visa and Other Challenges Faced by International Students and Postdoctoral Scholars

Foreign students and postdoctoral fellows from different academic disciplines and professions bring great value to the biomedical, STEM and health care research, and professional communities. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has increased hurdles in the immigration process – making it very difficult for those trainees to come to the United States to train in research labs, health care offices and workplaces. This free webinar provides discussion by expert panelists on current and long-term impacts on the international community and potential legal avenues for remedy. Join us for Navigating Pandemic-related Visa and Other Challenges Faced by International Students and Postdoctoral Scholars – Sponsored by the National Postdoctoral Association and the American Psychological Association. Unable to attend live? Register and we will send you the recording after the live event.

Webinar date: June 11 from 12 – 1 PM ET. Register here: http://pages.apa.org/staying-on-track/

Postdoctoral Association (PDA) Career Development Workshop

The Postdoctoral Association (PDA) is organizing a Career Development Workshop through Zoom for Friday August 21st from 1 to 4:30 pm. The objective of the workshop is to prepare you for a successful job
1) Personal Branding and Communication

2) Your application package: How to write successful Research statements, teaching statements and diversity statements (this section will be held in concurrent rooms so you will need to register for one)

3) Interview preparation: Postdoc volunteers will be mock interviewed by faculty.

In order to help with the organization we will appreciate if you could fill this three-question form

https://forms.gle/tX8HVvEKLin23qgXT7 More information about the workshop and a registration link will be send later this summer.

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**UROP Research Mentor Information**

Call for UROP Project Proposals for the 2020-2021 academic year

*Thursday, July 9 – 3:00-4:00 PM*

*Wednesday, August 12 – 3:00-4:00 PM*

As UROP research mentors, faculty, postdoctoral scholars and graduate students are eligible to apply for [UROP materials grant funding](#) and may be nominated for an [Undergraduate Research Mentor Award](#).

*Wednesday, June 17 – 2:00-3:00 PM*

The [Center for Undergraduate Research and Academic Engagement (CRE)](#) is recruiting UROP project proposals for the 2020-2021 academic year from faculty, postdoctoral scholars, graduate students, and campus partners to broaden the options for our Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) students. Learn more about how to become a UROP Research Mentor and help FSU students get experience in their field by looking over our website or joining one of our virtual UROP Research Mentor Information Sessions this summer.

**UROP Project Proposal deadline: August 17, 2020!**

[UROP Project Portal](#)

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**Do You Need a Stress Outlet During the Pandemic?**

Are you interested in relief from stress during the Covid-19 pandemic? Here are a few ideas to assist you while working remote.
Even though the Leach center is closed, they are offering a variety of classes via zoom. Find out more information here.

If you just need to speak to someone, or get more information on how to handle stress during a pandemic, consider contacting the Employee Assistance Program staff.

Also do not forget that your advisor is also there to help you make it through during this time.

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**FFCRA Leave Provisions Highlights**

Postdocs are eligible for emergency paid sick leave if they are not able to complete their work/research remotely. Postdocs that are performing essential duties, such as maintaining labs, are ineligible for the Emergency Sick Leave under the Governor's Safer at Home Order and would have to designate a different reason (see required form to submit below).

**Emergency Paid Sick Leave – Includes Postdoctoral Scholars**

- Eligibility: Available to employees when remote work is not available or job duties cannot be performed remotely, including OPS employees.

- Provides fulltime employees up to 80 hours of paid sick leave when the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.

- Provides fulltime employees up to 80 hours of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee’s regular rate of pay if the employee is unable to work onsite or work remotely due to the need to care for an individual subject to quarantine or care for a child whose school or childcare provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

- May be used in addition to or in conjunction with the Emergency FMLA Expansion.

- Application: [Emergency Sick Leave](#) and the [School/Childcare Certification form](#).

**Emergency Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Expansion**

- Eligibility: An employee must be employed for a minimum of thirty (30) days and is unable to work remotely due to child care needs related to COVID-19 day care and school closures.

- Provides employees with up to twelve (12) weeks of emergency FMLA. The first two weeks are unpaid.
• Application: Emergency FMLA and the School/Childcare Certification form. These leave benefits are available to employees with a qualifying reason when remote work cannot be performed. Supervisors and department heads are responsible for evaluating the ability of an employee to work remotely, even on a part-time basis.
EMPLOYEE RIGHTS
PAID SICK LEAVE AND EXPANDED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

PAID LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS
Generally, employers covered under the Act must provide employees:
Up to two weeks (80 hours, or a part-time employee's two-week equivalent) of paid sick leave based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, paid at:
- 100% for qualifying reason #1-3 below, up to $511 daily and $5,110 total;
- 2/3 for qualifying reasons #4 and #5 below, up to $200 daily and $2,000 total; and
- Up to 12 weeks of paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave paid at 2/3 for qualifying reason #5 below for up to $200 daily and $12,000 total.
Apart-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES
In general, employees of private sector employers with fewer than 500 employees, and certain public sector employees, are eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons (see below). Employees who have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request may be eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave for reason #6 below.

QUALIFYING REASONS FOR LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19
An employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:

1. is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. has been advised by a healthcare provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2);
5. is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or
6. is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

ENFORCEMENT
The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has the authority to investigate and enforce compliance with the FFCRA. Employers may not discharge, discipline, or otherwise discriminate against any employee who lawfully takes paid sick leave, or expanded family and medical leave under the FFCRA, files a complaint, or institutes a proceeding under or related to the Act. Employers in violation of the provisions of the FFCRA will be subject to penalties and enforcement by WHD.

WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For additional information or to file a complaint:
1-866-487-9243
TTY: 1-877-889-5627
dol.gov/agencies/whd

Covid-19 Adjustments - Upcoming FSU Postdoctoral Professional Development Events, Hiring, PPFP Appointments, and Travel Awards

If you received a Postdoctoral Professional Development Travel Award in January 2020 and did not have
request that you try to use this award by December 2020, but it will be possible for you to extend the use of the award through June 1, 2021 (end of the 2021 fiscal year). Due to the precariousness of domestic and international travel, there will be no Travel Award Opportunity for the July 2020 cycle this year. The next Travel Award Opportunity will be set for January 1, 2021.

We are all undergoing adjustments to the modified research and teaching demands of our job duties. Many of you have been asked to help your laboratories design predictive research measures and some of you have been thrown into the world of online education and instruction. It is a difficult time in which we cannot map out the future or plan well for our careers. I have heard from some of you that you were able to complete interviews and will be relocating soon to permanent positions - this is wonderful news! For those of you that are still in the process of interviewing - I wish you the best success. Please consider to participate in the mock interview workshop planned by the PDA at the end of the summer. To those of you who are continuing their training please reach out to your fellow postdoctoral scholars for intellectual and social engagement - check out the facebook page for announcements of zoom virtual happy hours that are being hosted by the PDA on the third Thursdays of the month. For all of us that belong to many cultural, ethnic, and race backgrounds, I encourage you to read a wonderful letter addressed to our black scholars from our black faculty during this time of community struggles.

If you have concerns regarding the pandemic or community events that are affecting your postdoctoral training, please feel free to reach out to me. There is a weekly Research Zoom meeting held by the VP for Research every Tuesday at 1:30 pm if you want to join in to understand the nature of changes to research on campus - Meeting ID is posted and updated here.

All the best
Debi
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