

University of Iowa Postdoctoral Association (UIPDA)  
**2012 Postdoc Survey**  
 Prepared by Margaret Chorazy and Jared Leisner, September 2012

### Survey Description

- Developed using Qualtrics Online Survey Software
- Approved by UI Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Survey period – March 22 through April 5, 2012
- Distributed via all-postdoc listserv
- Only current postdocs were able to participate
  - Must have valid HawkID and password
  - Must be listed as FP01 or FP02 at the time the survey was distributed

### Survey Domains

- Postdoctoral work at the University of Iowa
  - Years as a UI postdoc, hrs worked, relationship with mentor, etc.
- Postdoctoral experience at the University of Iowa
  - Overall satisfaction with professional experiences and opportunities, professional development, social involvement
- Career Goals
  - For examples, academia vs. industry
- Demographics
- Open commentary

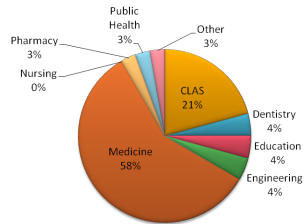
### Participation – 20.3% Response Rate

SURVEYED POSTDOCS	ALL POSTDOCS
■ 72 completed responses	■ 354 postdocs
■ Gender*	■ Gender
■ 49% female	■ 39% female
■ 40% male	■ 61% male
■ 11% prefer not to answer	
■ Domestic vs. International	■ Domestic vs. International
■ 50% US citizen	■ 40% US citizen
■ 50% other	■ 60% other

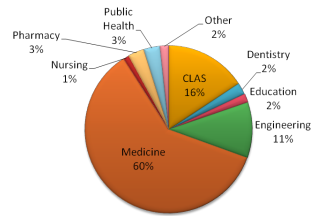
\* Question: Please select the sex that you most identify with. Answer choices included Prefer not to answer (n=8), female (n=35), male (n=29), neither (n=0); prefer not to answer set as default value

## Participation – By College

SURVEYED POSTDOCS



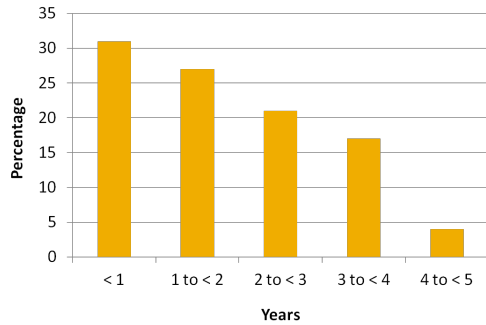
ALL POSTDOCS



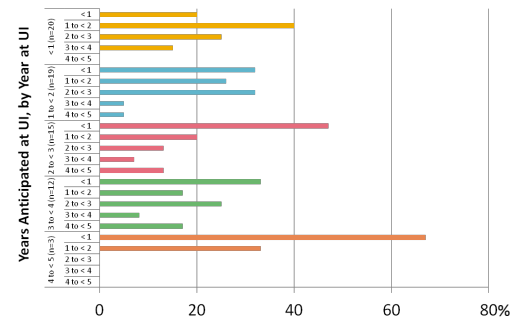
## Postdoctoral Work at the UI

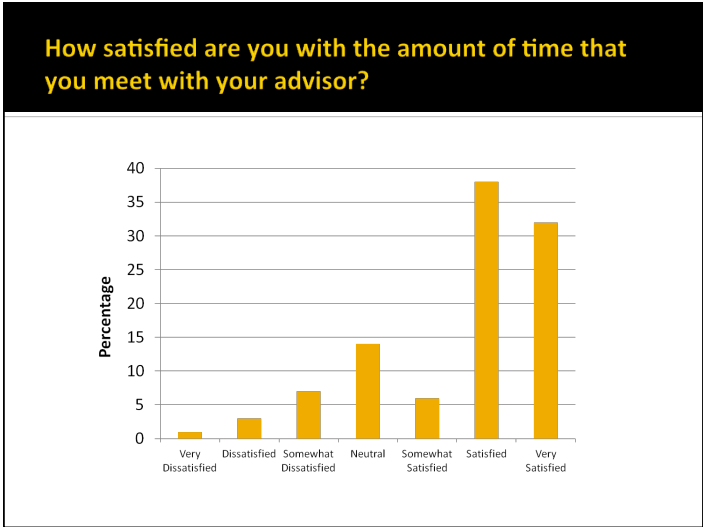
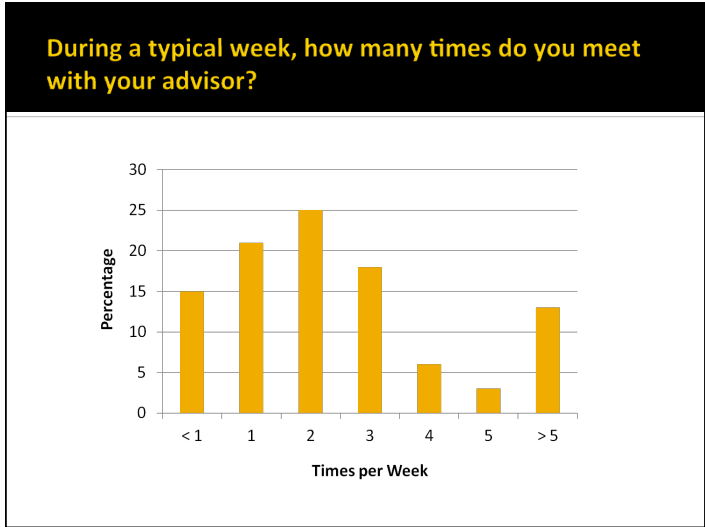
Years at the UI, Mentorship, Hours

## How many years have you been a postdoc at UI?



## How many more years do you plan to be a postdoc at UI?





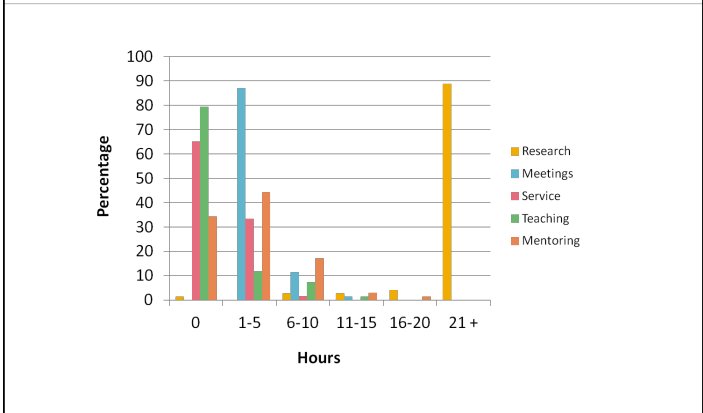
**With which aspects of the guidance that you receive from your advisor are you satisfied?**

Aspect	% Reported
Advice when I have an issue with my research	80%
Availability for one-on-one meetings on short notice	73%
Supports attendance at conferences to present my work	69%
Allows me to get experience by mentoring a junior member of the research group	44%
Regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings	44%
Advice on my possible career paths	41%
Advice on obtaining my own funding	40%
Assists me in networking at conferences	26%
<b>Other</b>	<b>3%</b>
- allows me to get teaching experience (n=1)	
- high degree of expertise (n=1)	

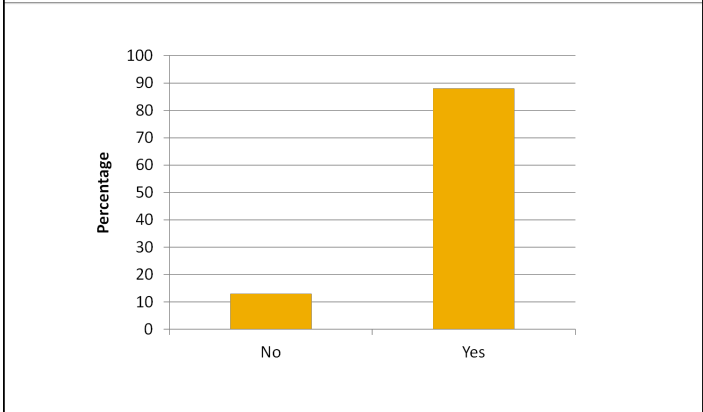
### In what ways do you think that the guidance that you receive from your advisor could be improved?

- 23 individuals provided a response (open text)
- Categorized respondents into the following general themes
  - Discussion of career goals/options, support of career goals (n=9)
  - Meeting more often to discuss projects/project load or having more in-depth conversations about projects (n=7)
  - Show more interest (n=4)
  - Too busy (n=2)
  - Other: involvement in collaborative projects (n=1), treated like an employee rather than a colleague/mentee (n=1), lacks expertise (n=1), provide opportunities to teach (n=1), networking (n=1), or writing (n=1)

### During a typical week, how many hours do you spend on the following tasks?

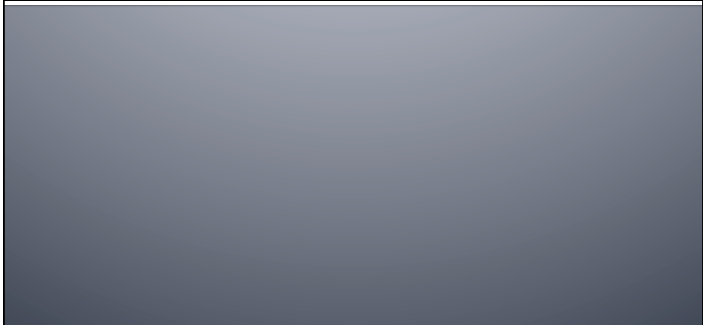


### Do you complete work related to your postdoc on the weekends?

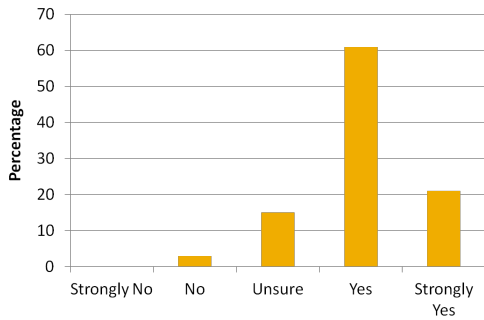


## Overall Postdoc Experience

Especially, professional opportunities and experiences at the UI



**Based on your professional experiences and opportunities at UI, would you recommend a postdoc at UI to someone else?**



**What do you like about the professional experiences and opportunities for postdocs at UI?**

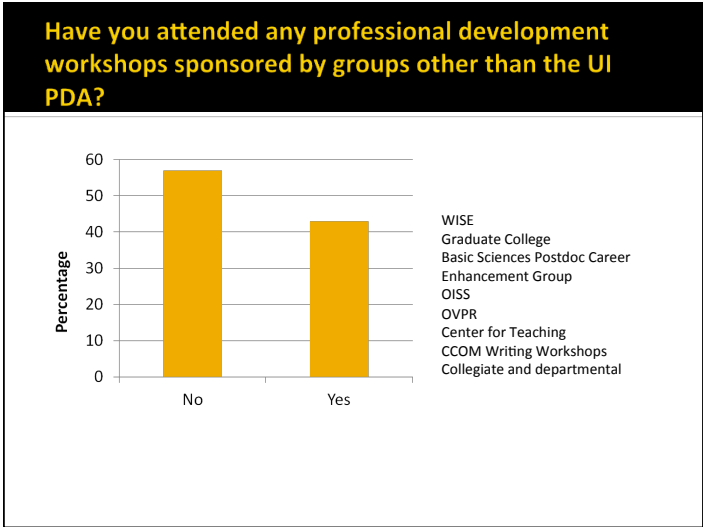
	%
Academic and intellectual freedom and/or flexibility	80%
Research support (e.g. journals, material, equipment)	81%
Professional interactions with advisor, colleagues, other members of the research group	61%
Professional development opportunities	54%
Funding information, support and opportunities	36%
Networking opportunities	36%
Teaching opportunities and support	17%
Other (postdoc group, n=1)	1%

**What do you think could be improved about the professional experiences and opportunities for postdocs at UI?**

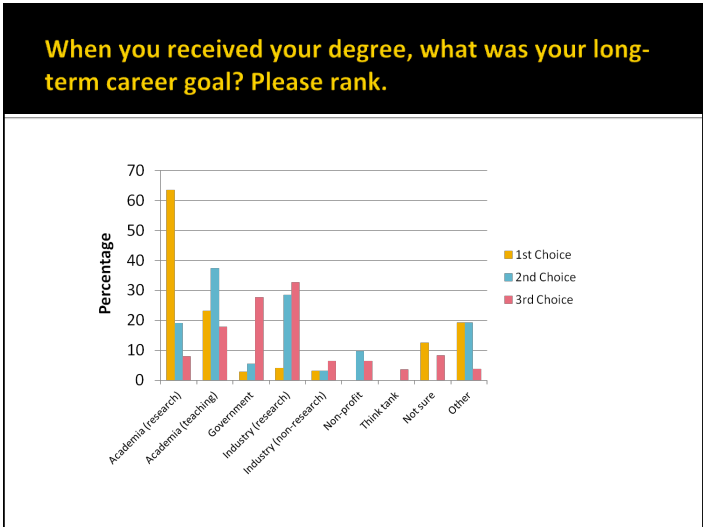
- 20 individuals provided a response (open text)
- Categorized respondents into the following general themes
  - Opportunities to learn about how to teach and opportunities to practice teaching (n=6)
  - Categorization – staff vs. student (n=3)
  - Career development plan, guidance (n=3)
  - Benefits (n=3, general, child care, retirement)
  - Grant-writing – support, peer review, workshops (n=2)
  - Networking (n=2)
  - Other – better salary (n=1), opportunities hard to find (n=1), travel awards (n=1), social science vs. biomedical science (n=1)

**What professional workshops would you be interested in the UI PDA sponsoring? Select all that apply.**

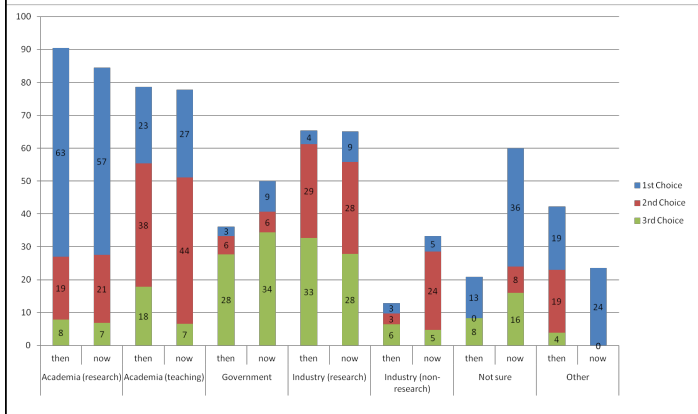
	%
Grant writing (General)	68%
Grant writing (NIH)	60%
Mentoring (How to mentor)	54%
Teaching	54%
Writing for scientific journals	54%
Public speaking (scientific meetings)	52%
Grant writing (NSF)	41%
Time management	40%
Work/life balance	38%
Mentoring (How to get the most out of your relationship with your mentor)	35%
Public speaking (non-scientific or non-expert audiences)	33%
Other	6%
- Finding a job, n=2 - How to supervise effectively, how to make the next career step (asst. prof), n=1 - Writing for social science journals, public speaking (scholarly meetings), n=1	



## Career Goals



### Side-by-side Comparison – Career Goals



### Career Goals - Changes

- Of the 40 individuals who ranked academic-research as #1 then, 13 individuals no longer rank academic-research as #1
  - 5 rank “not sure” as new #1
  - 3 rank academic-teaching as new #1
  - 2 rank industry-research as new #1
  - 1 ranks industry-not research as new #1
  - 2 didn’t rank their new #1

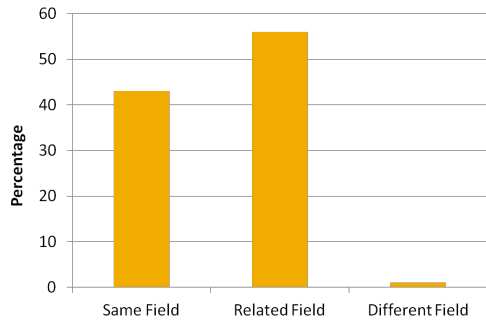
### Career Goals - Changes

- Of the 13 individuals who ranked academic-teaching as #1 then, 5 individuals no longer rank academic-teaching as #1
  - 2 rank “not sure” as new #1
  - 1 ranks academic-research as new #1
  - 1 ranks government as new #1
  - 1 ranks industry-research as new #1

### If your long-term career goals have changed since receiving your degree, why have they changed?

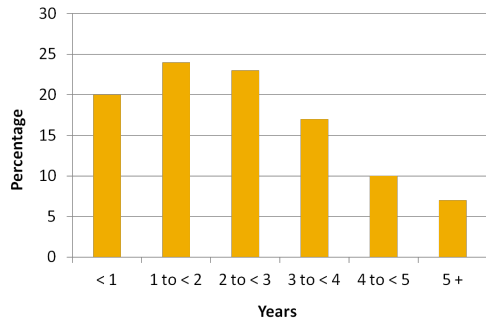
- 30 individuals provided a response (open text)
- Categorized respondents into the following general themes
  - Lack of research funding, poor funding environment (n=12)
  - Prefer teaching to research (n=6)
  - Prefer a better work/life balance (n=5)
  - Poor job market, can’t find jobs (n=5)
  - Choosing clinical practice or policy over research (n=4)
  - Not what they thought it’d be (n=2)
  - Other: wants to make a direct impact on people (n=1), poor economy in general – I’ll take any job (n=1)

At the moment, do you think that your career path will be in the same field as your degree, in a related field, or in a completely separate field?



## Additional Demographics

How many years has it been since you received your degree?



Do you have any postdoctoral experience from before coming to UI?

