



June 2013

ASN's Young Professional Interest Group (YPIG) serves as a source for information and support for career advancement of emerging young nutrition scientists. We support our membership primarily through programming young professional-centered events at ASN's Scientific Sessions and Annual Meeting at Experimental Biology (EB). Additionally, we aim to foster networking and communication among our membership by increasing our presence on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

What's New

Greetings from YPIG! In this newsletter, we have an exciting recap from the ASN Scientific Sessions and Annual Meeting at the 2013 Experimental Biology meeting in Boston, MA. Over 2,800 attendees were at Experimental Biology for the ASN sessions, and as always, these sessions provided exciting advances in nutrition science to our membership.

YPIG also held several events throughout Experimental Biology, including a Postdoctoral Research Award competition as well as several educational and networking events.

Connect with YPIG!

YPIG is beginning to expand our presence on social media. In the coming months, we will be providing content related to professional development and growing your career

Twitter: https://twitter.com/ASN_YPIG

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/ASN-YPIG/204983082971454>

LinkedIn: <http://www.nutrition.org/ypiglinkedin>

Sponsors

The YPIG would like to express our sincere appreciation to the following sponsors for their support:



YPIG is continually seeking and accepting opportunities for sponsorship. Such funds enable us to carry out our mission to provide networking and career advancement opportunities for the young professionals of ASN. We support our membership by hosting networking events and by scheduling high profile and prominent session speakers at our annual meeting. Contributing partners will also be recognized in the YPIG newsletter, as well as in other ASN communications and on the ASN website (www.nutrition.org). There is great potential for your organization to develop lifelong relationships with emerging experts in the field of nutrition through collaborations with YPIG.

If you or your organization would like to assist in our fundraising efforts, please contact ASN staff member, **Katie Oster** (koster@nutrition.org). All donation amounts are appreciated!

YPIG Executive Board

This month marks a changing of the guard in the YPIG executive board. **Holiday Durham, PhD, RD, LDN**, has completed her term as the YPIG chair and will be transitioning into the Past Chair role. In Dr. Durham's place we are welcoming **April Stull, PhD, RD**, as YPIG chair. Congratulations to both Holiday and April on their new roles!

We would also like to take this time to thank our previous Past Chair, **Victoria Veira-Potter, PhD**, for her dedicated service to YPIG. Dr. Viera-Potter has worked incredibly hard to support young professionals within ASN, so please join us in thanking her for her service.

Chair	April J. Stull, PhD, RD april.stull@pbrc.edu	Assistant Professor	Pennington Biomedical Research Center
Vice Chair	Eric Ciappio, PhD, RD eric.ciappio@dsm.com	Manager, Scientific Affairs	DSM Nutritional Products
Past Chair	Holiday Durham, PhD, RD, LDN holiday.durham@pbrc.edu	Instructor	Pennington Biomedical Research Center
At-Large Delegate	Joel G. Anderson, PhD, HTP jga3s@virginia.edu	Assistant Professor and Roberts Scholar	University of Virginia
At-Large Delegate	Mary N. Henderson, PhD, RD mnrhenderson@gmail.com	Postdoctoral Researcher/ Pediatric Dietitian	Children's Hospital and Research Center, Oakland
At-Large Delegate	Jennifer Lambert, PhD jennifer.lambert@utsouthwestern.edu	Postdoctoral Fellow	UT Southwestern Medical Center
Advisor	Christina Sherry, PhD, RD christina.sherry@abbott.com	Senior Scientist	Abbot Nutrition

Advisor	Elizabeth Parks, PhD elizabeth.parks@utsouthwestern.edu	Associate Professor	UT Southwestern Medical Center
ASN Staff	Paula Eichenbrenner peichenbrenner@nutrition.org	VP for Advancement	American Society for Nutrition
ASN Staff	Katie Oster koster@nutrition.org	Member Relations Coordinator	American Society for Nutrition

YPIG Elections Coming Soon! In recent weeks, a formal call for applications was sent out to the YPIG membership for a chance to be part of the YPIG Executive Board as an At-Large Delegate. After reviewing several amazing candidates, we have narrowed down the field to an elite few. A link with information on the final candidates will be sent out soon, and we ask that you please submit your vote for your candidate of choice.

YPIG Events at Experimental Biology 2013 Recap



Grand Prize Winner of the Postdoctoral Research Competition
Eunice Mah with **Ratna Mukherjea** from Solae, LLC

Postdoctoral Research Competition (supported from an endowment from Solae, LLC)

Six finalists were chosen to present their work in an oral competition at the 2013 EB meeting. We had a great turnout of spectators coming to hear the presentations by these emerging young scientists. It was a very tough decision, but in the end, the grand prize winner was **Eunice Mah** from The Ohio State University with her winning abstract "*γ-Tocopherol additionally improves vascular endothelial function following smoking cessation by decreasing pro-inflammatory responses*". Please join us in congratulating our finalists and our grand prize winner!

Finalists:

Zeynep Bostanci – The Pennsylvania State University
Naiman Khan - University of Illinois
Sarah S. Comstock - Michigan State University
Shilpa Bhupathiraju - Harvard School of Public Health
Laura Hauff - Cornell University

Grand Prize Winner:

Eunice Mah - The Ohio State University



*Postdoctoral Research Competition Finalists (From L to R): **Naiman Khan, Sarah Comstock, Shilpa Bhupathiraju, Zeynep Bostanci, Laura Hauff, Eunice Mah.***

2013 Career Development Symposium:

“Navigating the current job market – grab hold of your future now!” (Co-sponsored with the Nutritional Sciences Council)

We were fortunate to have a diverse array of panelists, representing career paths such as academia, industry, and “non-traditional” careers such as private biotech and communications consulting. The session was moderated by **Roger Lee**, a Human Resources Administrator at the Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University. Roger shared tips on interview preparation, stating that not doing background research on the position you are applying for is one of the most common mistakes that applicants make. Taking some time to learn about the laboratory or company you are applying to and understanding their goals and challenges is one of the biggest pieces of interview preparation.

Michael Kelley, PhD, RD, Senior Principal Scientist at Wm Wrigley Jr. Co, spoke to the importance of networking in attempting to obtain an industry position, stating that often times the best way to get an industry job is to leverage your contacts list. You may not know someone at the company, but you may know someone that knows someone!

Jon Story, PhD, Associate Dean at Purdue University, told the audience that it is important to “tell the story of your research” rather than listing every experiment you have ever done when applying for an academic position. Sometimes less is more!

Elizabeth Parks, PhD, Associate Professor at UT Southwestern Medical Center, provided insights on her experience being a basic researcher at a research intensive hospital, musing about the differences between MD’s and PhD’s. The primary difference between them, she stated, was due to

the MD's "need for action", while PhD's are taught "not to rush to judgment". While this can create some challenges in collaborating, it can also provide an opportunity to develop powerful research very quickly.

Representing "alternative careers" – a name that the panelists agreed is becoming outdated as the number of young PhD's entering the "traditional" career path of academia is decreasing – were **Cathy Kapica, PhD, RD**, and **Katya Tsaoun, PhD**, founders of their own respective businesses. Dr. Kapica is the CEO of the Awegrin Institute, a non-profit public health think tank, emphasized the need to blend creative pursuits with your career, stating the importance of maintaining a work-life balance. Dr. Tsaoun is the founder of a biotech firm that specialized in contract ADME-Tox testing and now works consulting entrepreneurs looking to start biotech companies. She shared her experiences starting a company from the ground up, stressing the importance of being a champion for your startup and the need to be the biggest cheerleader for your cause.

The YPIG executive council would like to thank our session chairs – **Holiday Durham, PhD, RD**, and **Ann Yelmokas McDermott PhD, RD, LDN** – for leading an informative and engaging session!

***Missed the session? The slides from our speaker presentations will be posted on the YPIG website soon (<http://www.nutrition.org/our-members/young-professionals/>), so be sure to check out this information. Furthermore, our session chairs are currently writing a symposium manuscript that will be published in *Advances in Nutrition Research* later this year.*

Early-Career & Student Speed Mentoring Event

For the 3rd consecutive year, in a "speed-dating" style event, graduate students were given career guidance by professionals in various areas of nutrition. We had over 30 mentors this year, and both the mentors and mentees had a great time and met lots of new faces. We plan on holding this event again at the 2014 Experimental Biology meeting, so keep an eye out for information as next year's meeting draws closer.

Postdoctoral fellows and other young professionals – please keep this event in mind for next year, we are always looking for mentors to participate, so please consider volunteering. Special thanks to YPIG delegate **Jennifer Lambert, PhD** for putting this great event together!



Lorien Urban, PhD, Postdoctoral Scholar at Tufts University (right) imparts her wisdom on **Melissa Zerofsky, PhD** student at UC Davis (left).



Alice Dillard Hirschel, PhD, Product Development Scientist at GNC (left), dispenses career advice to a young ASN member

YPIG Networking Event

In its 4th consecutive year, this mix-and-mingle event was very well attended. **Andrew Prentice, PhD**, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, offered a quick address to the group, sharing some brief anecdotes about the current funding situation and the importance of staying active in nutrition, especially with ASN. Attendees had a great time, and the YPIG executive council was very happy to get a chance to meet some of our members. Special thanks to YPIG delegate **Joel Anderson, PhD, HTP** for organizing this event!

Welcome New YPIG Members!

Thank you to our new members! With over 400 members, YPIG is focused on representing the interests of postdoctoral fellows, medical residents, junior faculty, and other early-career professionals to ASN and the nutrition community at-large. Please join us in welcoming our newest members!

Sally Abbott
Derek W. Brake
Nicole Coglianese
Russell J. de Souza
Ashley Jarvis
Il-Young Kim
Catherine Macharia-Mutie
Alyssa Moran

Rinat Ran-Ressler
Robinson Romirez Velez
David A. Sela
Margaret Slavin
Courtney L. Strauss
Sasmita Tripathy
Jinkai Zheng

Meet a YPIG Member



This member spotlight is on **Carla Prado, PhD**; Assistant Professor of Nutrition, Food, and Exercise Sciences at Florida State University. Dr. Prado's current research is focused on examining the relationship between body composition and numerous health outcomes, ranging from sarcopenia to cancer. Dr. Prado completed her PhD in Nutrition and Metabolism at the University of Alberta, as well as postdoctoral fellowships at the Cross Cancer Institute in Alberta, Canada as well as at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. Furthermore, Dr. Prado received her BS in Nutrition from the Federal University of Goias in Brazil, and is also a Registered Dietitian in her home country of Brazil.

Throughout her career, Dr. Prado has been the recipient of several prestigious awards for excellence in research, teaching, and service. Most recently, she was awarded with a Canadian Institutes of Health Research Fellowship where she ranked in the top 2% of applicants. Since beginning her postdoctoral training she has had a strong track record of securing funding, successfully obtaining over \$608,000 in grant funding since 2008, including a recently awarded multidisciplinary R01 grant. She has also been an active member of the nutrition community, serving as an Editorial Board member reviewer for journals such as *Obesity*, *Journal of Cachexia, Sarcopenia and Muscle*, and the *Journal of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition*. She has also been a guest speaker at several national and international conferences, including the American Institute for Cancer

Research Annual Meeting and the Canadian Nutrition Society Annual Meeting. Dr. Prado has 13 first author peer-reviewed publications, with several more in preparation.

YPIG: *Give us some insight as to your professional experience so far (i.e., what got you interested in nutrition? What were some really positive professional experiences that you've had to date? Any good stories about how you got to where you are?).*

Carla Prado: I have always been interested in the relationship between nutrition and health. Nutrition is truly the key to prevent most diseases so choosing nutrition was easy. In order to pursue an academic career, the next step of becoming a graduate student was obvious. I was first introduced to the opportunities available at the University of Alberta at an English as a Second Language (ESL) fair in Brazil, and I always had a childhood dream of studying abroad. The problem was finding a supervisor with a project and funding available. I really wanted to work with Dr. Linda McCargar but when I contacted her, she had no available opportunities. I also contacted a few more professors including Dr. Vickie Baracos. I was unsuccessful in all my attempts, mostly because these professors get emails and applications from students all over the world so choosing from the pile without further information can be challenging (I can testify to that now that I am a professor myself!).

When confronted with so many rejections, my husband and I made a bold decision and sold everything we had and moved to Canada. It was not recklessness but rather a combination of motivation, determination and perseverance. As I had not been accepted into a program, we had everything to lose with no guarantees of being successful. After arriving in Canada, I "knocked on Dr. Linda McCargar's door" and told her I had sold everything I had and moved from Brazil to Canada to work with her. She was stunned, but my determination convinced her to accept me if funding became available. Soon after that, she received a multidisciplinary grant with Dr. Vickie Baracos, who also became my mentor. Those were amazing years with truly a happy ending.

At my PhD defense, I remember adding the rejection emails I originally received from both of them (while I was still in Brazil) at the end of my power point presentation. It was such an emotional moment!

So to answer your question, when I think of positive professional experiences, my first thought is remembering the amazing mentors I have had whom I will forever honor. Their investment and trust in me were crucial for my career.

YPIG: *Can you tell us a little about your current research? What is the ultimate goal of your research program?*

Carla Prado: I work in the area of nutritional assessment. Similar to any medical field, the science of nutritional assessment has evolved with the advent of new technology. We are now in an era where more sophisticated tools are needed for reliable measurement of physiological reserves, and where any superficial and subjective assessments may neglect risk and status. It is clear from emerging studies that body composition will be vital for treatment decisions, survival outcomes and quality of life of different groups. My ultimate goal is to establish a highly translational research agenda in the area of body composition use in clinical settings.

YPIG: *What made you choose academia over other career paths?*

Carla Prado: I decided to become a professor when I was a sophomore in college. Teaching runs in my family so I always enjoyed it. At that time, I began volunteering in a research laboratory and had a

great experience. I went on to win an undergraduate research scholarship for the remainder of my program. One of undergraduate mentors in Brazil, Dr. Alfaro Serafini (another positive mentor in my career) really inspired me to pursue academia and certainly opened the way for such. I tried building my CV by gaining research, teaching and service experience throughout my academic degrees since my heart has been in academia for the past 10 years.

***YPIG:** What would be one thing you wish you knew when you first started off as a junior faculty member?*

Carla Prado: Definitely that it is ok to turn down opportunities - learn how to say no. In the midst of “additional” projects and responsibilities such as invited guest lectures, supervisory or University committee participations, helping colleagues and reviewing manuscripts, junior faculty members tend to be eager to jump into any opportunity (especially if they are passionate about it). The to-do-list can get overwhelmingly long so prioritize and stay focused, especially during the first few years when you are still learning how to manage your time and energy.

***YPIG:** Can you share some challenges you’ve encountered as a young professional transitioning into an academic faculty position?*

Carla Prado: In addition to adjusting to the new environment and finding time to accomplish all we are required to do, I am constantly evaluating my budgetary decisions (especially those related to personnel) and my mentoring skills. The financial decisions are critical, especially for junior faculty members, so they need to be carefully and constantly evaluated. In regards to mentoring skills, not only I have been a student/trainee for many years but as I mentioned before, I have had amazing mentors throughout my academic career so I truly care about my students and I want to make a difference in their lives as my mentors made a difference in mine. I only recently grasped the complexity of student advising skills; being a mentor is truly an art - I actually recently called my mentors telling them how much more appreciate I am of them now that I am on the other side!

***YPIG:** Tell us something about what do you enjoy outside of work?*

Carla Prado: I love to serve others and to be around people so if I am not working, I am likely volunteering somewhere or at a social event (or planning one!). I am also an avid reader of theological books.

Recognition and Awards

Have you recently won an award for your work or been given a grant to pursue your research dreams? Or maybe you’ve transitioned into that new job you’ve always wanted? Have a great career story? Share your achievements with your colleagues in the YPIG newsletter so that we can celebrate with you! Send an email to Eric Ciappio (eric.ciappio@dsm.com) if you’d like to have your recent accomplishments highlighted in a future issue of the YPIG newsletter.

Get the Word Out

Spread the word and the contents of this newsletter to your colleagues with an invitation to join YPIG. Membership is our future and provides the resources to maintain the group’s activities and technical programming. Please visit our website: <http://www.nutrition.org/join>

Near the end of your postdoc and looking for a new job? Make sure to check out the ASN job board (jobs.nutrition.org/jobs).

Feel free to email Eric Ciappio (eric.ciappio@dsm.com) if you have input regarding this newsletter. We are always glad to hear from our members and welcome your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions.