CIHMID Postdoctoral Training Program

The Cornell Institute of Host-Microbe Interactions and Disease (CIHMID; http://cihmid.cornell.edu) offers financial support and professional development opportunities for postdoctoral scholars studying host-microbe interactions. CIHMID postdocs are supported to develop independent and interdisciplinary research programs in collaboration with two or more labs at Cornell. Supported postdocs are expected to have intellectual ownership of their projects and may use their support to build bridges across different disciplines of study. Studied host-microbe interactions may be pathogenic or beneficial; microbial partners may be bacterial, viral or fungal; eukaryotic hosts may be animal or plant. Supporting a diverse portfolio of research systems and questions is an explicit goal of the training program.

Appointments to the training program are made through competitive application and may begin around January or August. Applications are due November 1. The program is supported by a training grant from the US National Institutes of Health (T32 AI145821), by the Cornell Office of the Provost, and by Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. For more information, please visit
http://cihmid.cornell.edu/cihmid-opportunities/cihmid-postdoctoral-fellows-program

Trainee Support

- Trainees will be supported for up to 3 years of appointment (if currently external to Cornell) or 1 year of appointment (if already established at Cornell), conditional on continued satisfactory progress and meeting of program expectations.
- Trainee salary is paid on the NIH scale with health benefits provided.
- Trainees will be provided with up to $10,000 per year in discretionary spending. If the trainee obtains an external fellowship that covers the cost of their appointment, the discretionary allowance will be increased to $15,000 per year for the portion of the CIHMID training program appointment that is supported externally.

Mentoring Structure

- Prior to applying to the program, trainees will identify two or more labs with which to collaborate, selected at the discretion of the trainee. Rationale for choosing labs may include opportunity for complementary training experience, cross-disciplinary skills development, access to distinct technologies, or other attributes. The Principal Investigator of the primary lab must be a CIHMID faculty member, listed at http://cihmid.cornell.edu/faculty. Minor labs can be drawn from the entire Cornell community. The proposed research statement should address the logic for choosing the collaborating labs, making clear that the trainees has intellectual independence and ownership of their projects. Project effort associated with the minor lab(s) can vary from 10% to 50%, and may vary over the duration of the project. If the PI of the primary lab is an Assistant Professor, then the PI of a minor lab must have tenure and a mentoring commitment of at least 30%.

- Within two months of initiating the appointment, trainees will identify a 3-member faculty mentoring committee, at least one of whom is not a formal advisor. The mentoring committee will develop an Individual Professional Development Plan with the trainee and will meet with the trainee at least twice per year to discuss professional progress and goals.

Program Features and Expectations

- All program participants are required to complete approved training in ethics and responsible conduct of research.
- Trainees are encouraged to join the CIHMID Postdoctoral Association. The Postdoctoral Association is a social and professional community organized by postdocs in CIHMID labs.
- CIHMID postdocs are encouraged to participate in, and take leadership roles in, journal clubs and supergroups such as Virology Journal Club, Microbiology Journal Club, Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Disease (EEID) Journal Club, Microbiome Supergroup, and Symbiosis & Cooperation Supergroup.
- Trainees are offered the opportunity to mentor undergraduate students in research, in collaboration with the CIHMID Undergraduate Research Experience program.
- All trainees are required to give at least one oral presentation per year, either on the Cornell campus or at a national or international conference. Program leadership will help trainees identify and access appropriate venues.
- Logistical and financial support is provided for trainees to invite external speakers to visit Cornell. Trainees serve as the hosts for these visits and members of the postdoctoral and graduate communities have priority access to meeting with speakers. *Due to covid-19 restrictions, seminars in 2020 are virtual.*
- Trainees may be offered voluntary opportunity to teach small undergraduate courses and/or lead topical workshops according to their interest and career goals.
- The training program enables additional career and professional development opportunities, including:
  - Guidance in applying and interviewing for academic and nonacademic jobs to follow the postdoctoral appointment, including multiple rounds of feedback on application materials, opportunity to give practice job talks and chalk talks, and practice interviews with Cornell faculty.
  - Workshops on writing grants and fellowship applications, as well as on the grant review process at federal funding agencies.
  - Workshops on practical elements of running a research lab, with topics including mentoring strategies and styles, financial aspects of running a lab, and strategies for establishing priorities and objectives and maintaining focus on them.
  - Diversity, equity and inclusion in the STEM fields and beyond.
  - Leadership training.

Application and Eligibility

- Because this program is almost entirely funded by the US National Institutes of Health, strong preference for financial support is given to US citizens and permanent residents. Postdoctoral scholars in the CIHMID community who are not US citizens or permanent residents are still encouraged to join the CIHMID Postdoctoral Association, may choose to participate in the mentoring structure, and are invited to engage in professional development activities.

- We encourage applications from scholars who affiliate with underrepresented groups, come from backgrounds of disadvantage, or are differently abled. Cornell is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer.

- Applicants should have been awarded a Ph.D within the past 3 years at time of application, or should be graduating imminently. Applicants must receive their Ph.D. before the postdoctoral appointment can begin.

- The application will consist of a cover letter, CV, plan of proposed research (3 pages maximum, excluding references), statements of support from the Principal Investigators of all major and minor labs, 2 letters of recommendation that do not come from the Major or Minor labs (to be submitted directly by the recommenders), and a brief statement describing how the applicant will contribute to Cornell's campus culture of diversity and inclusion. Applicants are not required to identify as members of underrepresented groups in order to be eligible for support. However, Cornell as an institution has an expectation that all members of our campus community support diversity and inclusion, and applicant statements should describe their philosophies and activities or proposed activities in that regard.

- All materials except the statements of support from the Major and Minor labs must be submitted via the Academic Jobs Online portal, which is linked at the top of [this page](). The statements of support from the major and minor labs should be directly to the Program Director, Brian Lazzaro at bplazzaro@cornell.edu.

- *It is imperative that project proposals be developed in collaboration with the prospective Major and Minor host labs.* Potential applicants should contact Major Advisors (listed [here]()) to discuss potential research ideas. Preliminary conceptions of some potential projects are provided [here](), but proposals need not be limited to the projects listed. Applicants are encouraged to contact any CIHMID member whose research they may find of interest. Applicants who are already established at Cornell may propose their current project for one year of funding, but will be considered for 3-year appointments only if they are changing labs or substantially changing projects.

- Candidates will be selected based on track record and career promise, merit of the proposed project, and alignment with CIHMID priorities.