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Candidate Manifesto for UPPDA President

I am a second-year postdoctoral associate in the Bioengineering Department and candidate for a second year as UPPDA President. During the first year as UPPDA President, I focused on developing a foundation for community building and established new avenues for advocacy on the postdoctoral level here at Pitt. For the first time this year, UPPDA is now able to communicate with all postdocs on campus via email. UPPDA also successfully advocated to have postdocs on University-wide committees to ensure our voice is heard on any University-level matters. In addition, UPPDA hosted the first University-wide Postdoc Retreat this year which welcomed new and current postdocs to campus and connected them with various on-campus resources relevant to postdocs. While this first year of UPPDA presidency saw many new initiatives and successes, there are still many items that are unfinished, hence my desire to run for a second year.

UPPDA represents all postdoctoral associates/scholars (~800) here at Pitt. Postdoctoral associates and scholars play a major role at our university whether through research, teaching, or both. If re-elected to this position, I plan to continue the work that we initiated last year and continue to empower the postdoctoral associates/scholars here at Pitt within both the postdoctoral community and the University. To do so, I plan on taking a three-pronged approach: 1) **Community** – with the initiation of the postdoc retreat, I plan to continue to grow and develop this effort this year and continue to pursue new avenues to engage postdocs on campus. I am still interested in connecting UPPDA with postdocs across campus. Another initiative started this past year was the UPPDA Coffee Hours where we visited postdocs at various hubs (such as Rangos or Hillman Cancer Center), or most recently, on-line via Zoom during the pandemic. I plan to continue this effort to regularly engage with postdocs. I am also continuing to explore whether a council of postdoctoral representatives from various schools would be of interest to the community to represent the postdoc population at Pitt. 2) **Advocacy** – I plan to continue to facilitate postdoc representation on University-level committees which we were able to establish for the first time this past year. Furthermore, I will continue to advocate for postdoc benefits such as matched retirement savings. Many of these discussions have started already but will require continued advocacy in the coming year. 3) **Transparency** – Finally, I would like to continue sharing UPPDA activities and efforts as through regular email communication throughout the year or through the UPPDA coffee hours as done this past year. As discussed earlier, a development of a postdoctoral council or expanded postdoc townhall is another initiative that I am interested in continuing to pursue to improve transparency of UPPDA activities.

Developing a community is a long-term project which I have spent many hours building with Pitt administrators, and I hope to continue this effort with postdoctoral associates/scholars. Many new initiatives were started this year and I will continue to build on those efforts if re-elected as UPPDA President. Thank you and Hail to Pitt!