

Gladstone ranks No. 1

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Gladstone is North America's best institutional work environment for life sciences postdoctoral fellows, according to The Scientist's annual "Best Places to Work for Postdocs" survey, published in the March 1 issue. Gladstone placed first among the 114 institutions represented from North America.

"This honor is a testament to the dedication of our postdoctoral scholars, who have played such an active and admirable role over the last few years in keeping our postdoctoral program at the highest international standards through their feedback and their participation in program development," says Gladstone President Robert Mahley.

"Several years ago, we began an intensive upgrade of our postdoctoral program," adds Gladstone postdoctoral advisor

and human resources manager John LeViathan, a member of the executive board of the National Postdoctoral Association. "The result has been an institutional culture of open exchange of ideas built on trust and real listening, reflecting our core values of excellence, integrity, and teamwork."

More than 2,900 postdoctoral fellows from 150 institutions in the U.S., Canada, and western Europe responded to this year's survey, according to The Scientist. The survey covered 48 categories in which respondents judged their respective institutions. Topics included the quality of research equipment, the availability of mentoring, and the level of collaboration. The most important factor cited was the quality of training and career preparation offered by an institution.

"Fellows have always had rigorous, individualized training at Gladstone, but, for the past several years, we've been enhancing our postdoctoral program," explains Dr. Mahley. Many of the improvements-significant upgrades in compensation, length of training, mentoring, and career development-resulted from a top-to-bottom review of the program in 1998.

In 2003, a program was implemented to help postdoctoral fellows develop the unique mentoring, management, and leadership skills needed within the scientific environment. Training workshops led by an organizational psychologist focused on scientific management issues through case studies, best-practices information, and strong participant interaction.

More recently, the Postdoctoral Fellow Leadership and Laboratory Management Workshop Series was established. Courses in this program are designed to help fellows acquire the leadership and management skills they will need for a successful scientific career-skills that are not formally taught during graduate school or postdoctoral study. In late 2004, the training environment at Gladstone Institutes was greatly enhanced by the move to new laboratories adjacent to UCSF's Mission Bay campus, which allows for increased collaboration and networking with leading scientists.

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