

SANDIA SYNERGY

*A Newsletter Empowering Postdoctoral Associates
to Advance Science & Technology at Sandia National Labs*

Connecting Science to Society

Welcome to this issue of our *Sandia Synergy* newsletter, where we highlight the vital theme of "Connecting Science to Society." As researchers, we have a responsibility not only to advance knowledge but also to share our discoveries and insights with the broader community. Effective communication bridges the gap between complex scientific concepts and public understanding, fostering a culture of curiosity and informed dialogue.

In this issue, we **celebrate the achievements of colleagues who participated in the National Laboratories Research SLAM**, a collaboration between National Labs with the goal to enhance science communication amongst the laboratories' early-career scientists. To further support our postdoctoral community, we offer a series of **Science Communication workshops and seminars**, designed to empower scientists in their communication efforts. We hope you find this newsletter informative and inspiring as we collectively strive to foster a deeper understanding of science in our communities. Happy Reading!

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Sandia participates in the Rio Grande and Bay Area Laboratories Research SLAM



Representing Sandia at the Rio Grande SLAM were three talented postdoctoral researchers: **Alex Boehm**, **Daniel Vigil**, and **Michelle Bester**.

The National Laboratories Research SLAM hosted several regional competitions across the 17 DOE national laboratories last year.

In October Sandia National Labs participated in two regional SLAMs:

- ❖ **Rio Grande SLAM** (Air Force Research Lab, Los Alamos National Lab, National Renewable Energy Lab, and Sandia)
- ❖ **Bay Area SLAM** (Berkeley Lab, Livermore Lab, SLAC Lab, and Sandia)

Each postdoctoral appointee brought their unique expertise and research to the stage, contributing to a vibrant exchange of ideas and showcasing their innovative work at national laboratories. The competition was fierce, with outstanding presentations from all. Pictured left are the Albuquerque Sandia postdocs and judges at the Rio Grande SLAM, as well as the Livermore postdoc at the Bay Area SLAM.



Judges: Jim Redmond, SNL; Richard Joseph, AFRL; Juan Torres, NREL; Duncan McBranch, LANL; Gabriel Nemiroff, National Museum of Nuclear Science & History



Michael Leveille represented Sandia at the Bay Area SLAM

- ❖ At the Rio Grande SLAM, **Michelle Bester** secured 3rd place with her presentation entitled "**Decoding the Canopy**,"
- ❖ At the Bay Area SLAM, **Michael Leveille** took first place with his SLAM on "**Blend Green and Flow Clean**"



Sandia Postdoc Wins the National Laboratories Research SLAM at Capitol Hill, Washington D.C.

Congratulations!



Seventeen talented finalists, selected from the DOE National Labs across the US, convened on Capitol Hill, Washington D.C. on March 2nd – 5th, 2025. SLAM participants met with congressional representatives and competed at the National SLAM event held in the Congressional Auditorium. Some engagements included Chairman Chuck Fleischmann (TN-03), of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development; Congressman Bill Foster (IL-11), Co-Chair of the House National Labs Caucus; and hearing from New Mexico Senator Ben Ray Lujan.



Congrats to Sandia's Dr. Michael Leveille, Postdoctoral Associate at the Livermore campus who won the category "**Emerging scientific and technological solutions that promote environmental management and stewardship.**"



The Sandia delegation at the National SLAM included Sarah Allendorf and Christian Mailhiot from CA and Tracie Durbin, Jim Redmond, and Natalie Pitcher from Academic Programs, NM.



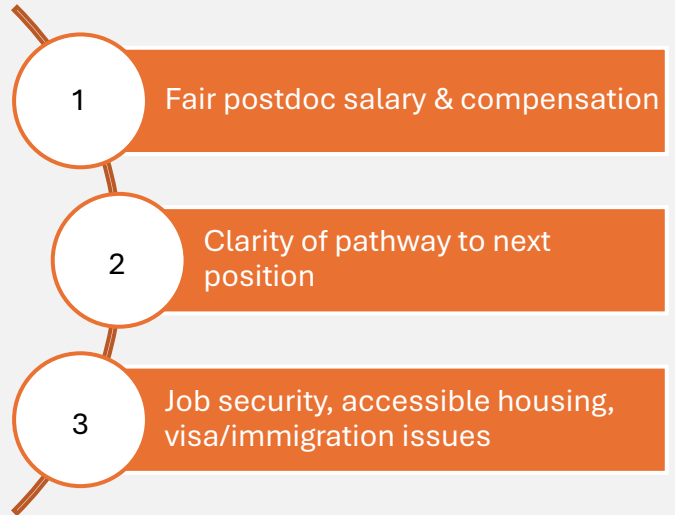
Universities Research Association (URA), co-sponsored the National SLAM. Invested in both Sandia and Fermilab, the URA team was proud to celebrate winners from both labs: **Dr. Karolina Wresilo of Fermilab** won the category for fundamental science breakthroughs!

National & Sandia Post Doctoral Researcher Trends

National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) reports in January 2025:

1) The [Strategic Plan 2025-2027](#) highlighting the organization's mission and its strategic pillars.

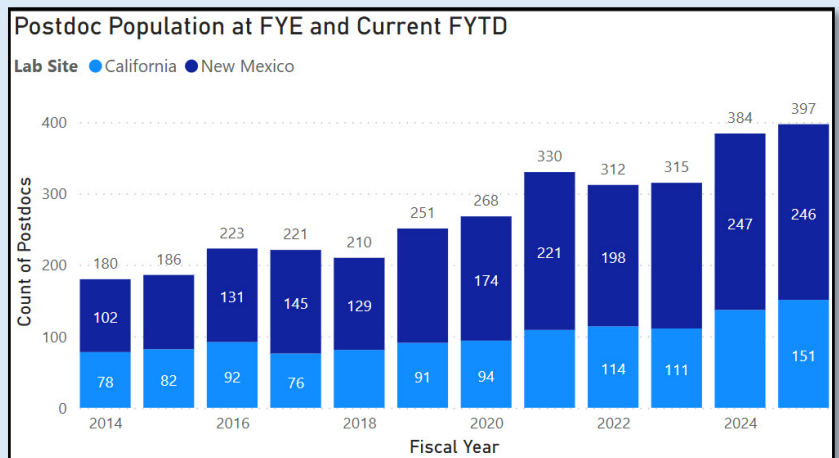
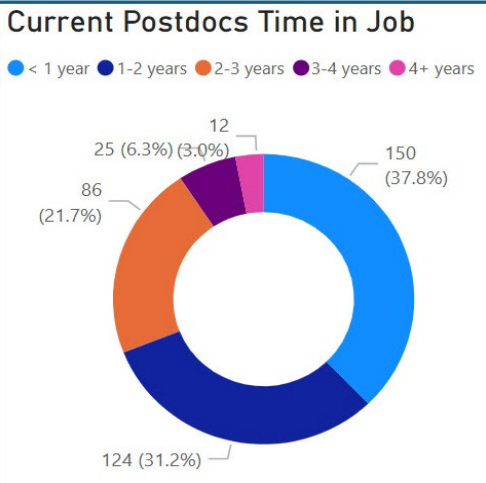
2) The [2025 NPA Postdoctoral Needs Assessment Report](#) includes survey responses from 607 postdocs in Fall 2024 on 19 different areas. The top concerns are listed below to the right.



Sandia Postdoc Trends

Median time spent in the Postdoctoral Associate position is 2 years

Postdoctoral Associate appointments increased by 27% over the past 4 years



Professional Development Workshop:

Authorship Disputes: Let's Discuss How to Avoid Them

Andy emphasized the importance of clear communication and established practices to prevent such misunderstandings within the Sandia research community.

- In November, Sandia National Laboratories hosted an insightful Postdoc Professional Development workshop entitled “*Authorship Disputes: Let’s Discuss How to Avoid Them*,” presented by **Andy Nelson** from the 1912 group.
- This engaging session addressed a common issue in the research community: authorship disputes.
- Participants learned about real-life examples of authorship disputes, including instances where individuals contributed to a publication but were not listed as authors, despite their expectations.
- Attendees were invited to contribute to the development of forthcoming authorship best practices and **authorship agreement templates from Sandia’s Office of Research and Development Excellence (ORDE)**.
- The workshop encouraged open dialogue, and participants were reminded to come prepared with a working microphone to facilitate discussion.
- This workshop provided valuable insights into fostering a collaborative and transparent research environment, ensuring that all contributors receive appropriate recognition for their work.

Professional Development Workshop:

Growing Your Influence with Communication

Abi highlighted incorporating credibility, logic, and empathy into presentations and using analogies to simplify complex ideas.

- In December, Sandia National Laboratories hosted a postdoc professional development workshop entitled “*Growing Your Influence with Communication*,” led by **Abi Lewis**, an Organizational Development Professional with over 15 years of experience. The workshop focused on enhancing communication skills and boosting professional influence.
- Abi guided participants in discovering their unique communication styles, effectively transmitting and receiving information, and understanding audience dynamics.
- Key topics included:
 - **the importance of tailoring messages**
 - **the two components of communication**
 - **the power of storytelling**
- Attendees engaged in discussions about their communication challenges and learned to own their styles while recognizing their worth.
- Key takeaways included using framing techniques to avoid miscommunication, cultivating curiosity, and adapting communication styles based on audience research.

2025 Sandia Postdoc Science Communication Seminar Series

March

Technical Writing

Carson Bennett: Technical Writer/Editor, Sandia National Laboratories

An introduction to strategy, format, and tools/resources to improve your writing. This workshop will review the steps in the writing process, explore common elements of strong scientific and technical communication, introduce the SAND Report template, and provide information about where to go for writing help.

April

Conversations in Science

Dr. Tori Espenson: AAAS SciLine, Media Training Manager

Sharing science works best when it's conversational, and conversation with someone who's stiff or rote can be uncomfortable. Walk the line between preparing to answer questions and memorizing potential answers and select which work best in response to a specific question or audience.

May

Social Media Strategies

Kevan MacKay: Youtuber and Documentarian

Grounded in a background in Electrical and Computer Science Engineering, and with millions of followers on Youtube, Kevan will share his insight and tips on producing science documentaries and video commentaries.

June

Preparing a Press Release on Published Works

Dr. Andrea Stathopoulos: Senior Communications Advisor · Spire Communications

In this workshop, participants will learn strategies for sharing the significance of their published research in press releases prepared for the news media or trade magazines.

July

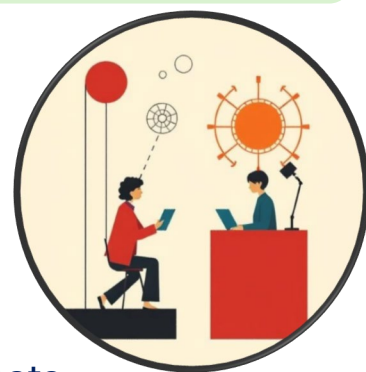
Teaching to Learn

Dr. Anirban Mazumdar: Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology

Interested in a career in academia? Learn tips from a former SNL postdoc and recipient of teaching award when preparing teaching talks, an important aspect of interviewing for academic positions.

What to Expect

- Engage in 60-minute interactive workshops
- Develop skills in written and verbal science communication for different audiences
- Gain insight into career paths that apply science communication skills
- Draft products across a variety of media and formats



OPPORTUNITIES

Searching for full-time permanent positions at Sandia National Laboratories?



Search by the term “**Early Career**” to find postings that might be more relevant.

<https://sandia.jobs/jobs/>

Published a paper recently, received a funding award, or have celebratory career news to share?

Send us the details so that we can highlight your success!