

IMAP kick-off meeting, October 31, 2012 (Minutes by Gesche Braker)

Participants: Gesche Braker, Anke Dürkop, Magdalena Gutowska, Uta Krebs-Kanzow, Daiju Narita, Barbara Neumann, Jörn Schmidt, Tobias Steinhoff, Yiming Wang; excused: Jan Dierking, Kristian Laß, Juan-Carlos Molinero, Lavinia Patara.

Venue: CAP4, Room 519

Time: 9.00-12.30

Brief introduction of the participants

Since no formal agenda was set up for this initial meeting, we agree on the following points to address:

- Motivation to meet, expectations on IMAP, role of IMAP coordinator
- IMAP Advisory Panel meeting, strategic issues
- Miniproposals, bridge money
- Gender/Family
- Webpage
- Retreat 2013
- Courses
- Miscellaneous

First, to open options for communications internal to IMAP members only, we wish setting up a listserver disclosed to IMAPs only. It will be used in particular cases only and general information will be distributed via the postdocs-futureocean listserver as usually.

1) Motivation, expectations, role of coordinator

Asked about the motivations of the participants to meet several points were mentioned:

- panel to decipher future fields of action; coordinator would act as a lobbyist pushing forward the interests/needs of postdoctoral scientists at different levels of the university administration, DFG, ministries if possible. For instance, the work of IMAP and the coordinator should push forward changes in the general perception of postdocs in Germany, e.g. to call more experienced scientists “senior scientists” instead of “postdocs”, to enhance awareness of status problems, to change the misleading perception of non-professor senior scientists as those who were not capable or did somehow not manage getting a professorship position.

In this context the lack of long term funding perspectives was also touched and how to change this. For instance, interesting employment models seem to be practiced at GEOMAR where experienced scientists at the postdoctoral level are employed permanently (50%) based on Helmholtz-funding while concurrently 50% of their position relies on third party funding. It was also

mentioned that the acknowledgment of their scientific performance, teaching efforts, fund-raising activities could occur in form of apl. Professorships awarded by the university as a future option to help the advancement of careers aiming at a senior scientist but not per se at a professorship position.

- forum for networking among cluster postdocs
- raising of new issues or to pursue 'old' ones, e.g. gender/family problematics
- get mandates to address issues at higher levels, e.g. the IMAP Advisory Panel, the cluster executive committee etc.

2) Panel

The IMAP Advisory Panel will meet on Nov. 8, 2012. Gesche pointed out that IMAP speakers and coordinator currently participate in this process only as guests but that the Panel is the board developing future strategies for IMAP. Gesche sees the work of IMAP based on the four columns: networking, development (courses, mentoring, coaching), funding, strategic work. The organizational and structure-providing work of IMAP should be self governed while input from the panel would be needed for the future strategic development of IMAP and the development of novel funding schemes.

The link of the SFB754 postdocs to IMAP should be discussed and whether we should extend the network beyond and maybe even advertise. The general opinion is that we should clearly link to the SFB postdocs but arrive at a written agreement to define sharing of costs, duties etc. An extension beyond the currently existing 30 IMAP members would be highly desirable to generate a larger critical mass.

Postdocs are willing to do teaching, but they are involved differently in teaching activities of their PIs and for the majority their teaching activities are not officially recorded and hence they do not at all profit from this investment. It was discussed on how to change this and it was reported that it is possible to receive a 'Lehrauftrag' which may be unpaid but would be certified and hence acknowledged.

3) Miniproposals, bridge money

With regard to the call for internal projects (Miniproposals) to fund short-term postdoc projects, equipment or consumables but no Ph.D. positions Magda wanted to know whether proposals can be submitted by postdocs directly. With respect of the idea of Martin Visbeck to contribute developing an evaluation scheme for miniproposals we decline this invitation since postdocs as associates are not eligible to apply.

Jörn explained the idea of bridge money. Its payment is intended to bridge gaps in funding, either before funding of an approved project will start or after submission of a proposal of uncertain outcome. Gesche added that paying bridge money is feasible in the first case for which the duration can be foreseen. However, in the second case the funding period is rather unpredictable and whether a postdoc is eligible or not is defined by the rules of the Teilzeit- und Befristungsgesetz.

Bridge money may be of particular importance due to potential visa restrictions foreign scientists will run into in the gap between two projects or due to the

unemployment office forcing scientists into classes. However, as Gesche pointed out, bridge money strongly depends on the IMAP budget which will be discussed on one of the next executive committee meetings. Criteria to provide bridge money to individuals also need to be discussed and suggested a panel and case-by-case decisions rather than a written catalogue of hard criteria.

4) Gender/Family

The question came up of how to deal with interruptions in the workflow due to times of maternity and parental leave. One option might be finding a partner scientist to share a full position who would continue the work and keep the project running. Eventually there are examples at GEOMAR. This was discussed and we agreed that in particular cases such models might work but likely not for highly specialized scientists. Specific and individual solutions may be found with the help of the coaching offered by the cluster.

Yiming reported about an NSF-funded workshop on networking and the ESWN (Earth scientist women's network). She strongly encourages joining the network and promotes the extension of the network particularly in Europe/Germany where issues may differ from those of the US women scientists, see postdoctoral status etc. She also explained the duty of board members to bring in some funding to keep ESWN operational. It was suggested approaching the executive committee of FO to financially support ESWN and become a board member.

5) IMAPs & Webpage

Gesche emphasized that the visibility of IMAPs on the cluster webpage needs to be improved. She suggested easing up the modes of listing IMAPs versus other postdoctoral scientists. Moreover, each of the IMAPs should be visible showing a portrait, a link to a personal homepage and a short description of his/her project(s). It was suggested installing a 'life ticker' displaying the supportive information on funding options, positions etc. Gesche is distributing to avoid redundancies.

6) Retreat 2013

We agreed on having a retreat in early summer 2013 after all the new postdocs started working on their projects. Venue should be the guest house Samain and the retreat will last 1.5 days. Topics to be discussed there will be funding options and networking. Funding options: 'funding for networking', e.g. for workshops and travel. We agreed that it would be possible to collect ideas from personal experience but that it will be difficult to recruit a speaker. Gesche suggested inviting a speaker to report on funding options for positions.

Networking: Yiming offered a lecture on networking – importance, techniques and ESWN, an offer that was highly acknowledged and immediately accepted.

7) Courses 2013

The future IMAP budget is supposed to allow support of 4-5 courses per annum, we will, however, offer the next courses only after the new cohort of postdocs arrived in spring 2013.

Again, a leadership course at two levels should be offered desired teacher Saso Kocevar, in addition a previous poll had indicated that interview training, higher education teaching, grant writing and English speaking & presentation skills were listed as useful. German for foreigners might be useful as well and particularly a German conversation course might be helpful.

8) Miscellaneous

Help for future postdocs coming from foreign countries, could/should that be posted on the website? Should we initiate a buddy system to help them to integrate? Refer to the International Center? Gesche promised approaching Nancy on this issue.

IMAP Alumni: Difficult to follow who is an IMAP member, who turns into alumni but alumni are generally an unresolved issue within the cluster office as Gesche says.

Next IMAP events:

Stammtisch together with postdocs from Inflammation, SFB754, Nov. 21, 2012, 8 pm
Gutenberg

Postdocs meet Muthesius, are there joint projects possible/desirable? Gesche will contact Muthesius Cluster members Tom Duscher, Manfred Sachs, Stefan Schulz whether they would be available on Nov. 21, 2012, 9 am.

Postdocs meet Dirk Fleischer (GEOMAR): Cloud computing. Date to be defined.

IMAP meeting: Dec.12, 2012, 9 am, CAP4, Room 519.