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Page 5: Welcome to new co-chair **Letizia Amadori**, by Agata Kurowski. New PEC photo!

Mount Sinai Innovation Partners: Facilitating Technology Transfer and Innovation in Academic Research

By Delaine Ceholski

This year, I was lucky to intern at Mount Sinai Innovation Partners (MSIP), the technology transfer office at Mount Sinai. The experience was so rewarding and enlightening, particularly for my future career endeavors, that I wanted the postdoc community at Mount Sinai to get to know more about what this office does and what it can do for you. To this end, I sat down with Erik Lium, PhD (Senior Vice President of MSIP) and Cynthia Cleto (the Assistant Director of Marketing and Outreach at MSIP) to talk about how technology transfer is becoming increasingly relevant in today's research landscape.

Tell us about *Mount Sinai Innovation Partners* (MSIP)-the role of the office and its goals.

Erik Lium: MSIP exists to ensure that Mount Sinai discoveries and innovations are translated into healthcare products and services that benefit patients and society on a global scale. We help bring your inventions to life and positively affect health outcomes. So, make sure you connect with us and share your healthcare ideas. We are here to make your ideas into a reality, and the hope is that these inventions will revolutionize healthcare.

If a researcher has a novel technology, when should they contact MSIP? Once MSIP is contacted, what typically happens?

Erik Lium: As early as possible. MSIP has the expertise and connections to advance ideas and discoveries through the life cycle of commercialization. We evaluate the invention in the context of the healthcare market; for example, is there a critical unmet need, does the invention solve it, and are there competing technologies out there? We always have



Erik Lium, Ph.D.



Cynthia Cleto

an eye towards finding the best home for the healthcare asset, whether that's an existing company, or maybe even a startup. Yes, we think of our discoveries as assets. We are even launching the *Mount Sinai i3 (Innovation. Inflection. Impact) Asset Accelerator* on April 12, 2018 so that we can progress promising inventions even faster through this cycle.

In addition to publications and grants, technology commercialization and patents are becoming increasingly important to the careers (and finances) of academic research labs. What advice can you give to young or aspiring principal investigators when designing their research programs?

Erik Lium: Impact is key in this day and age. Ask yourself a few questions – how can your discoveries potentially improve the lives of patients worldwide, is there a critical unmet need that your invention addresses? Come and share your idea with us as early as possible since we would want to evaluate and enter this into the commercialization cycle if relevant. MSIP will advise you through iterations of your invention (to make this technology more attractive to a partner), connect you to the right stakeholders, and ultimately find the best home for the Mount Sinai asset to be developed into a product or service.

What advice can you give to postdocs looking to transition to a career in technology transfer and commercialization?

Cynthia Cleto: If the cycle of commercialization intrigues you, start reading up about what it takes to get inventions through this cycle. MSIP has a plethora of resources that can help you which include our Innovation Guide and Newsletter, events such as the Innovation Shark Tanks and Innovators Group Meetings, courses that we've integrated with the graduate school as well as the yearly Internship that I've been managing. Exposure to commercialization is also a gateway to alternative careers on top of the usual corporate science gigs.

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Tell us more about the MSIP internship- how it started, how it's evolved, and what the future looks like for the next cohorts of interns.

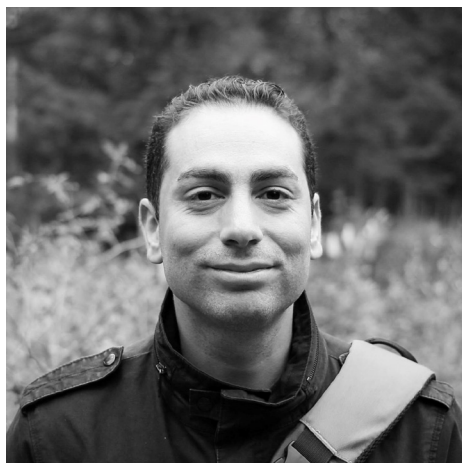
Cynthia Cleto: The Internship started a few years back with several interns. In its most recent iteration, we accepted 30 students (postdocs, graduate students, and other professionals) from across NYC for a didactic, classroom portion on technology development and commercialization. The students learned what it takes to get a promising discovery through the life cycle of commercialization from case studies of Mount Sinai technologies. From this pool, a handful of interns were selected for an experiential internship where they are partnered with business development,

alliance management, and intellectual property mentors within MSIP, and get to work on current technologies. Our interns from the last few years have moved on to careers in technology development and commercialization, consulting, equity research, management of incubators and innovation hubs, intellectual property, and a few are on their way to creating their own startups. If you have an urge to meet like-minded entrepreneurial scientists and want to explore an alternative career at the intersection of business/science/law, please apply for the next internship cohort (call for applications will be Summer 2018).

Check out MSIP's website at www.ip.mountsinai.org and make sure to connect with them on LinkedIn ([Mount Sinai Innovation Partners](#)).

Careers in the Sciences: an interview with Jamel Meslamani, Ph.D.

By Agata Kurowski



Dr. Jamel Meslamani is a former Mount Sinai postdoc and Postdoc Executive Committee (PEC) member. He received his Ph.D. degree in Cheminformatics from the University of Strasbourg in France. After completing his PhD, Dr. Meslamani joined Pr. Ming-Ming Zhou's lab as a postdoctoral fellow for four years and as a senior scientist for three months before he became a computational and modelling scientist at GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) in Upper Providence, PA. GSK has about 10,000 employees and is a science-led global healthcare company. I spoke with Dr. Meslamani to discuss his current position and the journey he took to get there.

Can you give us a brief description of your current position?

I work closely with multidisciplinary drug discovery teams on applying computational approaches to facilitate the identification, prioritization and progression of bioactive agents. My duties are to apply data-driven guidance of high throughput screening, hit-to-lead and lead optimization experiments by implementing and deploying innovative cheminformatics, chemogenomics and machine learning solutions.

What did you learn during your PhD/postdoc that is most helpful to you in your current position?

Managing projects from hypothesis to a measurable outcome: from experiment design, data analysis to formulating conclusions.

What was the most important event or factor that contributed to your transition into an alternative career outside academia?

I have participated in a few conferences where I interacted with scientists from the pharmaceutical industry as it was the path that I chose for my career. Asking and listening to their experience was very helpful. I had the chance to receive advice from a director of a pharmaceutical company that I got to know at a conference. We met a couple of times and he gave me feedback and answers to questions that I had about the hiring process in pharmaceutical companies. This provided me with insights on how to engage with hiring managers and how to deliver concise communication of my past experiences and skills. Communication is an aspect that is highly valued in a company setting. As scientists we need to be able to communicate, and most importantly, influence the direction of any given project by leveraging our domain expertise. This is something that I had to learn as our classical academic training doesn't have an emphasis on this aspect.

What, if anything, do you miss about being a postdoc?

The freedom of exploring new ideas with no constraint on time and delivery is what I miss the most.

On a scale of 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), how much autonomy do you have in your current position? What are the restrictions, if any?

I would say 9. At my current company, our managers trust our expertise, our ideas and work are not micro-managed. This provides scientists with freedom to be creative and challenge the status-quo. (... continued on Page 3)

