



International Society for Neuroethology

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THIS ISSUE FEATURES

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- 2022 ISN Election Results
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The Prez Sez
Karen Mesce
President of the ISN



Warmest Greetings to My Fellow Neuroethologists,

I am honored, indeed, to have this wonderful opportunity to write my first column for the 'Prez Sez'. Being elected to serve you, the members of the ISN, is a great privilege. I will heartily make every effort to ensure that our Society continues to be the vibrant,

relevant, and welcoming scientific home we all want it to be and more, and that it serves our members well, especially across generations.

Speaking of scientific homes, I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to be a part of the ISN community for many years, and attend all but one of the Society's Congresses. I recall vividly attending my first International Congress for Neuroethology (ICN), which happened to be the very first meeting the ISN sponsored. It was held in Tokyo in 1986 and the ISN President then was Mark Konishi who was one of Neuroethology's founders. I recall an energetic Mark wearing his 'ICN Tokyo' T-shirt with pride, and personally shepherding us into the auditorium each day to ensure that we all kept on schedule. I also recall the excitement of meeting scientists whose inspiring work I had only read about, and nervously making my way through a city where English was not then commonly spoken. Through it all, I knew that this was the best meeting I had ever attended; I was hooked and realized that the ISN would be my scientific home above all others. I have heard from many individuals that after attending their first ICN, they immediately understood that they had finally found a collection of like-minded scientists who could embrace the value, excitement, and global importance of their work.



This year's XIV ICN in Portugal did not disappoint! It was a long-awaited Congress due to the pandemic, but that wait made it all the sweeter, as did each morning's delicious pastry tarts (Portugal's pastéis de nata!). The venue at the Gulbenkian in Lisbon

was delightful, the presentations were superb, and seeing our dear friends and colleagues in person was priceless. The neighboring Gulbenkian Museum held many artistic treasures, including this *Art Nouveau* piece of jewelry created by René Lalique for the Paris Exposition in 1900. As an admirer of insect-inspired jewelry, my jaw dropped at its sight. Having lunch in the beautiful Gulbenkian gardens (with two sandwiches to a bag!) was a treat for sure.

Certainly, a lot has changed between my first ICN in Tokyo and the 14th one in Lisbon. In particular, I recall being among only a small handful of women who were in attendance at the Tokyo meeting, and I'm fairly certain

that at most 1 or 2 women were invited speakers. In contrast, this year's ICN was met with far more equity, diversity and inclusivity, and I will work hard to ensure that we will continue to strengthen our efforts to broaden participation in our Society and biennial Congresses. I look forward to working with the newer Inclusion and Diversity Committee (IDC) chaired by **Ana Silva** (Universidad de la República de Uruguay).

I think that time teaches us that our friendships are irreplaceable and are essential for brightening one's own life. Through the Society's sponsored meetings, various governing committees and outreach projects, new friendships are often fostered. I have been fortunate to be surrounded by smart, engaging, and kind-hearted people with whom I have served on the Society's Executive Board over the years; they are my friends. Our Society is truly shaped by the hard work of our members who deeply care about our community. Thus, I wish to thank our outgoing President, **Eric Warrant** (Lund University, Sweden), who has tirelessly devoted his time and efforts to piloting our course through the pandemic and beyond. Eric is an amazing and generous person who will now take the role of Past-President. As he will remain on the Board, it is reassuring to know that we will still benefit from his sage advice and insights. Our Past-President, **Cathy Rankin** (University of British Columbia, Canada) will now leave the Executive Board, and I wish to thank her for all her creative ideas, expert leadership and efforts to strengthen our Society. She will be truly missed!

On another note, I am pleased to announce that our President-elect is **Cindy Moss** (Johns Hopkins University, USA). Cindy has served previously in a variety of ISN-related roles and is an ISN fellow—we are very much looking forward to having Cindy on the Board. Most recently, Cindy and **Uwe Homberg** (Universität Marburg, Germany) served as Co-Chairs of the Program Committee for the XIV ICN in Lisbon. Their many efforts, and the work and generosity of the local ICN organizers, chaired by **Rui Oliveira** (Gulbenkian Institute of Science and ISPA – Instituto Universitário), with the help of **Susana Lima** (Champalimaud Research), **Marta Moita** (Champalimaud Research) and **Ana Félix** (NOVA Medical School), secured the success of the Lisbon ICN. Thank you!

Of course, I need to mention that our new Treasurer will be **Susan Fahrback** (Wake Forest University, USA). The Treasurer is an appointed position. The ISN is a legal entity incorporated in the state of California, USA. To comply with the laws that govern the ISN, the individual appointed must be a citizen of the USA. We feel confident that Susan will skillfully provide advice to the Board to ensure the ISN's financial stability and future growth. Our

current Treasurer, **Mark Bee** (University of Minnesota, USA), will thus be leaving the Board. Mark worked diligently on day-to-day financial activities to keep the ISN on a solid footing while archiving all financial transactions. Thank you Mark for your attention to detail and the hard work you contributed to making the ISN financially sound!

Remaining on the Executive Board is **Gabby Wolff** (Case Western Reserve University, USA). Gabby is the ISN's



Secretary and plays an essential (and amazing) role for all things having to do with ISN-related communications, including this newsletter that you are now reading. Gabby also works

closely with **Chris Lapine** who is a member of the managing staff at Allen Press. Allen Press (ISN@ALLENPRESS.COM) is the company that takes care of the business aspects of the ISN (e.g., collecting membership dues, keeping membership records, distributing the newsletter, etc.). Finally, I want to welcome the newly elected members for ISN Council; congratulations to all! **Anna Stöckl** (Germany); **Eva Fischer** (USA); **Basil el Jundi** (Norway); **Michiyo Kinoshita** (Japan); **Jessica Fox** (USA); **Sanjay Sane** (India); **Vielka Salazar** (Canada).

On a more personal note, I wanted to share some of the highlights of my post-meeting adventure. My advice to



anyone attending an ICN is to make the most of your travels to the

country you are visiting. Having visited the west coast of Portugal as part of a prior trip, my husband and I decided to rent a car and drive about 2.5 hours south of Lisbon to the Algarve coast,

the southern-most area of Portugal. Here the coast line is peppered with rocky cliffs and grottos, and aqua-colored

waters make their way inland to reveal hidden beaches tucked under natural skylights. Yes, the beaches were a bit busy because of the numerous summer vacationers, but the natural beauty, delicious food, friendly locals, and fine wines and ports of the area were well worth what turned out to be a most memorable trip.

So, the 2024 ICN in Berlin is less than 2 years away and plans are fully underway for another fantastic meeting. The Co-Chairs of the Program Committee were recently selected. We are happy to announce that they are **Elke Buschbeck** (University of Cincinnati, USA) and **Coen Elemans** (University of Southern Denmark). They will soon be forming the rest of the Program Committee, and then working with the Local Organizing Committee Chaired by **Mathias Wernet** (Freie Universität Berlin). If you like to plan far in advance, then you will be happy to know that the 2026 ICN will be held in Vancouver, BC, Canada and chaired by **Doug Altshuler** (University of British Columbia).

As the Holidays and New Year approach, may you, your family and friends enjoy good health and cheer! My warmest regards,

Karen Mesce
ISN President



2022 ISN ELECTION RESULTS

You voted and here are the results! The 2022 election included a vote for a new President-Elect who will become president in 2024, and 7 new Council members.

President-Elect



Cynthia Moss
Johns Hopkins University, USA

Research: How does the brain represent dynamic sensory information from the natural environment? How are sensory and motor activity patterns coordinated to direct actions in 3D space? My research group investigates these questions by leveraging behavioral specializations of echolocating bats, animals that produce high frequency sounds and extract information about their surroundings from echo returns. Our current experiments explore several intersecting research topics: auditory scene analysis, spatial representation, sensorimotor integration,

predictive tracking, tactile sensing, and flight control. I enjoy collaborations with colleagues around the world and participate in several international research projects. For a bit more information on my scientific background and interests, please see a recent interview: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0960982221012732?via%3Dihub>

Service: I have been a member of the International Society for Neuroethology since it was first established and have served the society in many capacities, as a member of the ISN Council, ICN College Park local organizing committee, Capranica and Konishi award committees, ICN Brisbane scientific program committee, and most recently the scientific program co-chair for this year's ICN in Lisbon. Over the course of my career, I have had the privilege of serving my colleagues at three universities. At Harvard (1989-1995), I was a member of the faculty council, undergraduate education committee, and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. At the University of Maryland (1995-2014), I co-directed an NIH institutional training grant in Neuroethology, co-founded an undergraduate minor in Neuroscience, was an active member of the Comparative & Evolutionary Biology of Hearing group, and directed the interdisciplinary graduate program in Neuroscience and Cognitive Science. At Johns Hopkins (2014-present), I served as Chair of the Behavioral Biology undergraduate program and the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. I have also served as an associate editor and advisory board member of several journals, including *Journal of Comparative Physiology A*, *Experimental Biology*, *Acoustical Society of America*, and *Behavioral Neuroscience*. I enjoy taking an active role in building programs and working with colleagues on joint initiatives.

Vision: The International Society for Neuroethology is my intellectual home, where I find inspiration for scientific inquiry and new collaborations. In recent years, a growing appreciation for natural behaviors and species diversity is emerging in the wider neuroscience community, which ISN can leverage to raise its visibility and launch new initiatives. The ISN has grown in many exciting ways since its early years and most recently has made important strides in raising its profile and advancing equity and diversity. I would like to build on these recent advances by directing efforts to raise funds to support more travel awards for graduate students, postdocs, and early career scientists, international workshops/courses, lab exchanges and collaborative research projects that involve neuroethologists around the globe. I believe that focus on these initiatives will strengthen and expand the impact of ISN and our intersecting scientific communities.

New ISN Council Members



Anna Stöckl
*University of Konstanz,
Germany*

Anna Stöckl is a junior group leader in the department of Biology at the University of Konstanz. She is also a fellow of the universities' Zukunftskolleg, an institute focussed on interdisciplinary exchange. She earned her PhD from Lund University in Sweden in 2016, working with Eric Warrant on neural adaptations for dim light vision in hawkmoths. Currently, her laboratory works on dynamic visual processing, visual guidance of insect locomotion and the neural basis of insect pattern vision. Combining neuronal recordings, behavioural experiments and environmental imaging, her research is aimed at understanding what and how insects see, how their movements influence their visual perception, and how their visual abilities are adapted to their unique visual ecologies.



Sanjay P. Sane
*National Centre for
Biological Sciences, India*

Sanjay P. Sane is a professor at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, in Bangalore, India. He completed his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley in 2001, from the laboratory of Prof. Michael H Dickinson, working on the physics and aerodynamics of flapping flight in insects. Thereafter, he switched to working on sensory neurobiology of flying insects in the laboratory of Prof. Thomas Daniel at the University of Washington, Seattle. Currently, his laboratory works on two major questions. First, during flight, how do insects acquire and integrate the sensory information from multiple modalities to generate rapid and precisely patterned motor responses? Moreover, how are multiple flight-related reflexes coordinated either by the nervous system, or via mechanical interactions. In this area, his main study system is the Oleander hawkmoth, *Daphnis nerii*. He also studies diverse aspects of the mechanics of flight behavior in other insects including different flies, moths, honeybees, and miniature wasps. Second, how do insects collectively and cooperatively build complex nests. Here, working primarily on mound-building termites, his laboratory has been investigating the sensory cues that insects use to maintain and repair their nests. In pursuing these questions, his laboratory takes an integrated

approach combining laboratory-based behavioural assays with field-based experimental and observational studies. He is also very interested in long-term monitoring of insects, particularly moths, in the biodiverse regions of India to understand the impact of climate change on insects.



Michiyo Kinoshita
SOKENDAI, Japan

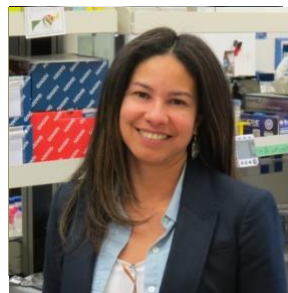
I received my PhD in 1999 from Yokohama City University (Yokohama) for the behavioral study of color vision in flower foraging swallowtail butterfly. In addition to research experience at University of Marburg as a Canon fellow and participating a summer course (Neural System and Behavior) in Woods Hole, I continued scientific career as a postdoc fellow in Yokohama University. I then got an assistant professor position at SODKEANI in 2006 and I am currently running the Laboratory of Neuroethology as an associate professor. My research mainly focuses on the visual system in multimodal sensation of flower foraging butterflies, by using electrophysiology, neuroanatomy and behavioral analysis. In addition, my interest recently expands toward comparative aspect of butterfly species and behavioral ecology of flower foraging butterflies.



Eva K Fischer
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Illinois, USA

Eva Fischer is an assistant professor in the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior in the School of Integrative Biology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Across campus, she is also an affiliate of the Institute for Genomic Biology, the Neuroscience Program, and the Program in Evolution, Ecology, and Conservation. The goal of Eva's research is to understand how nervous systems can be both strikingly flexible and remarkably robust, and how these phenomena simultaneously give rise to widespread similarities, incredible diversity, and individual variation in behavior. Eva received her BA from Cornell University and her PhD from Colorado State University. Under the supervision of Dr. Kim Hoke, Eva's dissertation characterized the interplay of developmental plasticity and evolutionary divergence in behavior and underlying mechanisms using Trinidadian guppies (*Poecilia reticulata*). Eva's postdoctoral work with Dr. Lauren

O'Connell explored mechanisms promoting the maintenance and evolution of parental care using Dendrobatid poison frogs. At the University of Illinois since 2020, Eva's research group continues to leverage morphological, physiological, and behavioral diversity across anuran amphibians to understand how behavior is generated, maintained, and modified by evolution. Current projects are focused on (1) individual variation and behavioral flexibility in parental care across sexes; (2) neural and molecular mechanisms at the intersection of feeding and social behavior; and (3) the causes and consequences of juvenile aggression. Beyond the lab, frogs are charismatic creatures that facilitate discussions of the convergent evolution of shared traits, and the lab capitalized on these strengths to integrate research with training, education, and community engagement.



Vielka Salazar
Cape Breton University,
Canada

Vielka 'Vicky' Salazar (she/her) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at Cape Breton University, Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada. She earned her PhD in 2009 from Florida International University working with Philip Stoddard on the effect of male-male competition and its underlying regulatory mechanisms on the electric signal of weakly electric fish. The *long-term objective* of her research program is to characterize the neuroendocrine pathways that regulate social behaviors, by specifically looking at electrocommunication signals. Projects in her lab investigate how circadian rhythms, metabolic costs, social environments, neuromodulators, and sex & stress hormones influence the electric communication signals of gymnotiform fish. To get a full understanding of the neuroendocrine mechanisms that regulate social behaviors, her research program applies an integrative approach that combines techniques in molecular biology, endocrine profiling, pharmacology, histology, microscopy, behavioral analysis, and signal recording and processing.



Basil el Jundi
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology,
Norway

Basil el Jundi is an associate professor at the Department of Biology at the NTNU, Norway. He received his PhD in 2011 from the Department of Neuroethology of the

University of Marburg, Germany. His research focuses on understanding the behavioral and neural mechanisms of spatial orientation and navigation in insects. In the past, he has worked on a variety of insects, including beetles, flies, locusts, and moths. Currently, he investigates the migratory compass of monarch butterflies, using a combination of behavioral experiments in the field and in the lab with neuroanatomical and electrophysiological approaches.



Jessica Fox
Case Western Reserve
University, USA

Jessica Fox is a professor in the Department of Biology at Case Western Reserve University. She holds a bachelor's degree in entomology from Cornell University (2005) and a PhD in neurobiology from the University of Washington (2010). Her lab focuses on mechanosensation and multi-modal sensory integration for fly flight, including both genetic manipulations in *Drosophila* and comparative approaches across diverse flies.



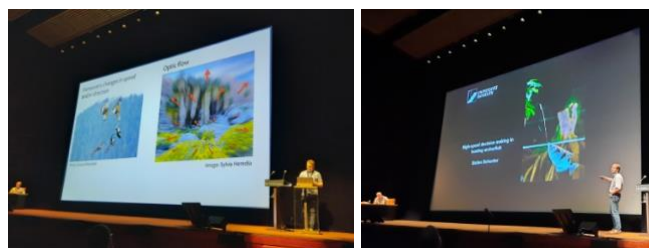
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2022 ICN IN LISBON, PORTUGAL

The 2022 ICN in Lisbon, Portugal is now behind us and it was a huge success! We enjoyed the local culture, learned about cutting edge research from 291 posters and 147 talks, and most importantly met face to face for the networking and socializing we sorely missed these past couple years.

Here are just a few highlights from the meeting. Photo credits: **Jerome Beetz, Manal Shakeel, Manon Jeschke, Pauline Fleischmann, and Gabriella Wolff.**



Eric Warrant kicked off the Opening Ceremony, followed by presentations and performances merging art and science by **Leonel Moura, Alex Jordan** and **Lars Chittka**.



Doug Altschuler and **Stefan Schuster** were among six Presidential Symposium speakers who got the scientific program off to a great start with talks of hummingbird, fish, bee, mouse, butterfly, and shrimp neuroethology.



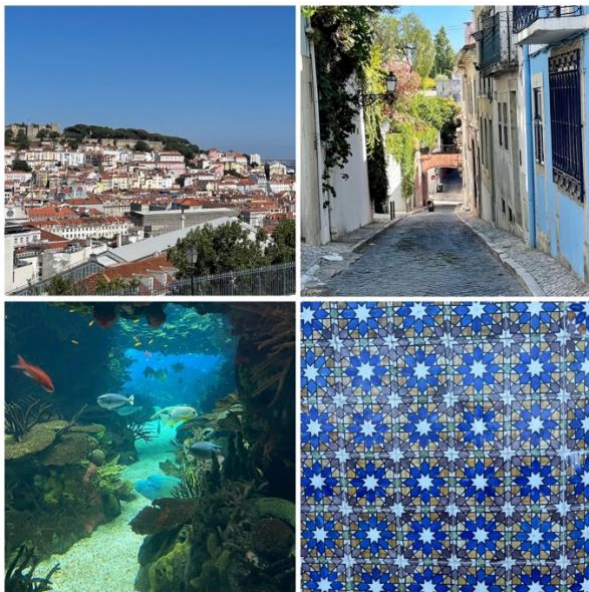
The Young Investigator Award Symposium speakers **Grace Capshaw, Jay Stafstrom, Alex Yarger,** and **Mercedes Bengochea** showed us that the future of neuroethology is bright.



Our Early Career Event included a panel discussion on career development that you can read all about in the next article.



The Education Meetup attendees organized plans for sharing neuroethology teaching materials such as syllabi, lab activities, and key discussion articles.



Lisbon welcomed us with beautiful, sunny weather and attendees ogled marine wildlife at the Oceanário de Lisboa.



Jose Luis Pena was honored with the first ever Mosaic Prize and the Inclusion and Diversity Meeting.



Among the nine fascinating plenary speakers were **Eugenia Chiappe**, **Michiyo Kinoshita**, **Jenny Read**, and **Ana Amador**.



At the Business Meeting, **Karen Mesce** took over the reins as President of the ISN.



After the banquet dinner at Casa do Alentejo, neuroethologists partied the night away with live music.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT ADVICE

At ICN 2022 in Lisbon, we organized an academic panel in which early career members of our community had the opportunity to hear and ask questions from six established scientists. This quarter, we reached out to ask them tips and advice on academic career progression, skills that we should develop during our training and one big, important issue that we care deeply about: mental health in early career researchers.



Jenny Read is a Professor of Vision Science at the Biosciences Institute at Newcastle University. Her particular interest is “3D” or stereo depth perception, also known as stereopsis. She is also passionate about teaching and outreach.



José Luis Peña is a Professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and first winner of the Mosaic prize. He investigates how the brain selects relevant features of the environment to encode information efficiently. José Luis has worked actively since the 80s in different groups which foster inclusion, diversity and equity of

underrepresented minorities, particularly LGBTQ+, in STEM.



Daniel Tomsic is from Argentina and a professor at the University of Buenos Aires. He studies the neural control of visually guided behaviors using crabs as experimental animals. One of his favorite hobbies is fly fishing in Patagonia.



Eva K. Fischer is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her lab uses charismatic frogs to explore mechanisms of behavioral evolution. Beyond research, her lab is passionate about teaching, mentoring, and community

engagement.



Julio Hechavarria is a group leader of the auditory computations group at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main (Germany). The main goal of his lab is to understand the neural networks that participate in vocal communication. Before establishing his lab he studied Biology and Cognitive Neuroscience in Cuba and

Germany.



Michiyo Kinoshita is an associate professor at the Graduate University for Advanced Studies in Japan. She has been consistently studying visual perception and the neural system in swallowtail butterflies since she was a Ph.D. student. During two postdoctoral positions in Japan, she had opportunities doing research abroad twice, which she describes

as very important experiences for her career.

The research of an early career trainee (PhD/postdoc) is often linked to their advisor's research. How should ECRs get started to create their own long-term research program?

Jenny Read (JR): Of course everyone will be different, but for me it makes sense for your own research program

to be based on the work you did with your supervisor, but ideally developing your own distinctive take on it. Maybe you can learn one approach in your PhD and another in your postdoc(s), and then combine the two to make something distinctive. For example, I learnt mathematical modeling during my astrophysics doctorate and then visual neuroscience during my postdocs, and that helped me forge a path in computational modeling of vision.

José Luis Peña (JLP): Research advisors should induce enthusiasm and a resilient attitude of their early career trainees, to promote their interest in the research program. However, early stages of a research career may not always result in a long-term research program because detection of personal interests, inspirational and creative state of mind often requires sequential research experiences. Early research experience inducing the feeling of being interested, creative and proactive towards the specific research topics can lead to personal decisions of long-term programs.

Daniel Tomsic (DT): The situation is very different when you want to start a research program in a developing country. This is mainly due to a limitation in resources. Many developing countries do not have a system of startup funds, making it challenging to start your research. In this case, it is important to maintain a good relationship with your previous advisor(s) so that you can work closely with them while distinguishing yourselves from them by addressing a different question or by using a different methodology to make their own unique contribution in the field. Another good way of distinguishing yourself from your previous advisors and others in the field is to select a non-traditional model system that is found in the fauna of your country and is well-suited for answering a particular question.

According to you, what is the most important/useful skill to develop during a PhD or postdoc and why?

(JR): Gosh so many I could pick! Leaving aside specific skills, like say computer programming or statistical techniques, something that will be useful to everyone who wants to be a PI is the ability to present their ideas well, whether in writing or in a talk. That requires the ability to put yourselves in the shoes of the audience, to figure out what they will be interested in, what they will need explaining and what you can skip over, etc. It also requires good storytelling skill, figuring out a good way to present the work for the particular medium (10-talk/50-min talk/poster/paper etc). One rule I try to remember (but am not very good at keeping to...) is that “less is more” – if you try to cover too much at once, you will lose people.

Eva Fisher (EV): How can I choose just one?! I think the best answer depends on every person’s strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Two general skills that I think are key and that we can all continue to work on throughout are careers: (1) Communication. I intentionally mean this broadly. Improving writing is key for grants and papers. Oral communication is important for presentations to scientific audiences, teaching, and community engagement. Being able to communicate clearly and directly with colleagues, mentors, and mentees is essential to keep things running day to day and in the long-term. For written and oral communication there are clear ways to practice and get training (e.g. through workshops). For the interpersonal side, there are also structured training opportunities, but the most important part is being thoughtful about how to structure communication effectively and putting that into practice every day. (2) Building resilience. Our jobs include lots of failure, rejection, and critical feedback. Not to mention the challenges associated with transitions between career stages. The earlier you can figure out strategies to deal with these challenges the better. What strategies work will be really different for everyone, so talk to peers and mentors and try out different approaches. Figuring out how **YOU** work best is an experiment everyone should do early in graduate school.

Julio Hechavarria (JH): I think there are two things actually that in my opinion, one should develop and that for me were quite important. One of them is scientifically. One should train themselves in the ability to search for the important things needed, the important tools, and the important mentors. Obviously, it helps if you have a good mentor that could guide you through the process. But in most cases, it's something that you have to self train and see what works and what does not. The other thing is a more social skill that one has to develop and this is something that ECR are often not helped to develop, at least I wasn't. One has to learn how to connect with the community and search for the proper venue. I was made to believe that if you do hard work and you do great stuff, that's enough. But that's not enough. Surely you need it, but you also need to get out there whenever you can. Go to conferences, present your work, talk about your work with enthusiasm and passion and without the fear of rejection.

What is one piece of practical advice you would want to give to someone who is going on the job market for a faculty position?

(JLP): For obtaining faculty positions, substantial publication track record during undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral stages is a relevant achievement. In addition, having conducted successful fellowship or

funding applications is also a useful merit and evidence of personal ability to obtain research funding, relevant for faculty positions across the world. Another important factor is conducting preparation and practice of presentations at conferences and job-talks that convey clear information about significance of personal research projects within the past, immediate future and over several years after starting the position, which is an important evaluation factor of faculty search committees.

Michiyo Kinoshita (MK): When you apply for a position, please imagine which aspects you can contribute in administration of the institute including education and describe them concretely. Many applicants nicely demonstrate their research. On the other hand, their policy of education and contribution as a faculty member are less described. Of course, the selection committee checks the quality of your science. At the same time, they also evaluate whether they want to work in administration of the same institute and educate students with you or not.

(JH): For me, it depends a lot on where you are in the job market. If you are in the European job market, as I have been for a while, the first bit of practical advice that I would say is that you have to be, again, very well connected and you have to be aware of the specific regulations in the country in which you are applying. Also you have to research the place that you're going to apply for. Is the place that you are applying for a good place also in terms of diversity and equity? In terms of teaching opportunities? How can you contribute and how can that place contribute to the things that you want to do in the future? So, a general advice is just to do your homework in terms of researching the people that are there. Another advice that I always give to the colleagues working with me very early when they start a PhD, is that there are specific deadlines that you have to know about. Because there are specific deadlines for becoming a research group leader or things that you have to do within your PhD or right after the PhD to be able to apply for those options. Ask your supervisor, what options do I have in the future? Is there a specific thing that you would advise me to do? There's a lot of clocks that are ticking constantly that you should be very aware of.

What are some of the biggest challenges while setting up a new lab and an independent research program?

(EF): Becoming a PI and setting up a lab is exciting but also overwhelming! I think the most challenging thing is that it is a major transition in what the job of being an academic looks like. I want to note there is lots of variation in the job of being a PI depending on institution and job description, and there is lots of variation in the experiences and training people have when they start.

That said, in general being a PI is really different from training as a graduate student and postdoc. Of course, the training is critical for directing the research but you're also suddenly doing many things we don't typically get training for (being in a position of leadership, budgeting for salaries and research, teaching independently, writing animal care and use protocols, dealing with administration, making decisions about renovations, etc.). In some of these areas we as a community could find ways to improve training. In other aspects every institution is different and you're stuck 'learning on the job'. For me personally, the number of (new) things to do is the other challenge. I am really happy with my job but some days it is incredibly overwhelming and maintaining work-life balance in the face of a seemingly infinite to-do is hard. Like most things, it gets easier with practice but the transition period is a challenge!

(MK): My answer may not be the right one to the question. But for me as a principal investigator, the biggest challenge is to establish a good atmosphere to do science among the lab members. This is just because "humans" do science. When you are a postdoc or student, what you have to do is to do just your project. But once you have an own team with several people with different backgrounds, your team members support your science in part. Therefore, the members are happy to share mutual interests in science and enjoy doing science with high motivation, which is very important and actually not so easy sometimes. So you have to always care how they feel to do science under your supervision. Of course, other pieces such as to get research money, set the lab space and so on are also important but those can be rather managed by your own effort. When your team is happy to do science with you, you just believe the importance of your interest in science and do it. Then you will make good progress, I think.

(DT): Every country, and probably every university, has its own challenges when it comes to setting up a new lab. It can be hard to get students while you are setting up your lab, but it is hardest when you do not have access to many resources. In the latter case, it is best to have collaborators whom you can closely work with while you slowly set up your own lab. However, a big challenge for someone who is interested in setting collaborations while establishing their lab in a country that is geographically far from North America and Europe is that it is hard to get yourself known in the field since attending international conferences is not always feasible.

Mental health in academia is a big issue, especially in ECRs and underrepresented groups. As a community, what can we do to improve this crisis and what steps

should ECRs, who often are at the lowest rank in academic hierarchy, take for their mental well-being?

(JR): I think it's important to make clear that the burden of improving this should not be on ECRs. I believe it reflects structural problems with science, notably the reliance on short-term contracts and thus the extreme lack of job security plus the need to relocate frequently, often to a different country or even continent, with no guarantee of eventually finding a position. This lack of security isn't just early in one's career but often extends into one's thirties or forties. One's ultimate success is highly dependent on factors beyond one's control, even for people who have performed at the highest level throughout. I believe this is an extremely inefficient way of funding science and that it militates against diversity, as well as imposing a significant toll on the dedicated young scientists who persist in trying to forge a career in science despite these drawbacks. Given that, my recommendation to ECRs would be to keep in mind that they are working in a flawed system and are not themselves at fault. I'd advise them to try and make sure they have a rich life outside science – family, children, sport, voluntary work or whatever – so that they are very clear there's life beyond a scientific career. Enjoy the science – I believe you have to be passionate about science to have a successful career in it – but try to be pragmatic about your career and don't invest your whole self-image in it.

(JLP): An important issue affecting mental health of early career researchers is the 'Imposter Syndrome' which determines anxiety and depression by feeling inadequate, and it has been detected as an issue affecting underrepresented groups. Towards preventing this feeling by ECRs from underrepresented groups, supportive attitudes of academic environments, not strongly requesting brilliance and success and supporting diversity and inclusion across ECRs is an important issue.

(EF): I want to start by acknowledging that I have been incredibly fortunate and privileged in my life and on my academic path. I am not in a position to speak to the challenges faced by people with identities I don't share, including URMs. At an institutional/community level, having conversations about mental health, DEI, and systemic/structural problems is the first step toward change. From my perspective, a big challenge right now is that we need to stop asking the people who are most affected by these issues to also do the work. It's those of us who have most benefited from the system and navigated it most easily who should be pushing for change. There is lots of work to do and unfortunately progress is often slow. At a personal level, this recognition is related to my advice for everyone to build

a network of support. The word network is key here: you need a diversity of people who know you in different capacities and can support you in a variety of ways. For me personally, having peers at the same career stage and with shared identities is essential. As a student, a postdoc, and now as an assistant professor, when I'm struggling and worrying it's because of my own shortcomings (imposter syndrome!), talking to peers always shows me that many challenges are a product of the system. I hope that having open and honest conversations about where we are succeeding and where we are falling short – at the individual and the community level – will help people in the short-term and lead to structural change in the long-term.

(MK): This is a really tough question. In my case, I knew established researchers outside of the lab and chatting with them was very helpful to keep my self-confidence and encouraged me a lot. So it would be nice that the ECRs have opportunities to offer personal encounters with people. These opportunities normally happen at more local and small groups or meetings of more specific fields. I really hope that ECRs can find good friends in science outside of their laboratory in the beginning of their career.

(JH): Yeah, that's super tough. Because everybody has a different threshold of what you can withstand or not. Unfortunately, in academia, rejection is the dominant, you get rejected for applications, you get rejected for papers, you get rejected for many things but that doesn't mean anything, really. One has to build this armor and be very sturdy against and very resilient about these things. Always remember that this is a job. It's our passion, but it's also a job. And if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. You should be passionate about your job, but the moment it starts to hurt your mental health is the moment that you have to say, okay, this is not healthy for me anymore, maybe I need a break. Try also to have a life outside of the lab. Because if you don't have it, that actually impacts in a negative manner your performance in the job. We are not machines and we have to be aware of that.

(DT): It is important to remember that in academia, we are all privileged. However, mental health issues are subjective and for ECRs who are facing these challenges, I would like them to hang in there as science is a marathon. There will be moments in your career when you feel that nothing is working out, but if you don't give up at that time and are persistent and passionate, it will pass and there will be good times.



EARLY CAREER GOALS FOR 2023

Early Career Representatives, **Saumya Gupta** and **Claire Rusch** look ahead to the coming year.

In this last newsletter of the year, we wanted to give you a quick update on our goals for next year.

One of our important goals for next year came from the survey we sent to our members while organizing the Early Career panel at the Lisbon conference. We received a lot of questions regarding career change outside academia so we decided to organize a panel with people that have successfully transitioned from academia to adjacent or completely different careers. We plan on organizing at least one but maybe two such events and they will happen online and will be recorded. More details to come soon so stay tuned for this!

Just after the ICN, we launched a slack channel that was joined by 19 members. But unfortunately, the channel has been pretty quiet so far. We still believe that it is a great way of sharing resources and building community and we hope to rejuvenate this channel after the holidays. We will begin this by starting conversations about the non-academic panel planned for next year. If you are interested in exploring career paths outside academia, please join our small community on slack (https://join.slack.com/t/neuroethology-3i95349/shared_invite/zt-110vzlykg-3Vm_WwIbqDSUVD6Sri2dyQ) and tell us which career paths you want to hear about. Contact us: Claire Rusch (claire.rusch@gmail.com) or Saumya Gupta (saumyag@uw.edu) if you are not able to join the group or have other ideas on how to make our slack channel more beneficial for early career researchers.

Finally, we will continue to grow our mentoring program and pair mentees with mentors. If you think you will benefit from advice from mentors outside of your workplace, consider signing up for the program.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

The Executive Committee and Council meet at every ICN to discuss important topics related to running the Society. Here are key highlights from the 2022 meeting.

- Society management at Allen Press is transitioning from **Terry Leatherman** who

served us for the past five years to **Chris Lapine** who expressed his enthusiasm for working with us in the coming years.

- Membership
 - 448 total members as of 7/15/22
 - Largest membership since 2016
 - 150 regular members
 - 81 student members
 - 82 postdoc members
 - Lifetime membership has been a growing membership category
- Demographics
 - 45% from USA
 - Germany 13%
 - Australia and UK at 7%
 - 28 different countries
- The Mentorship Program now has 142 members
 - 1/3 are underrepresented minorities
- The Social Media Team has been averaging ~80 tweets per month and our Twitter account has seen a 250% increase in followers since they took over.
- Treasurer Report by **Mark Bee**
 - Total assets as of July 18 2022 = \$537,111
 - Assets aren't shrinking, but they aren't growing either.
 - One of the things that helps us buffer the bad years is the size of our overall assets.
 - Significant contributions by ISN:
 - Awards and grants
 - Congress support
 - Supporting smaller meetings
 - Where do membership dues go?
 - General operating costs
 - Membership dues almost exactly cover those costs
 - Awards and grants made:
 - \$2k for 2019 GRC and \$10k for Andean Summer School
 - Awards made far exceed donations received
 - Bottom lines for ISN:
 - We've had losses in 2018 and 2020
 - We only lost \$4586 for the canceled congress, which is very fortunate
- Report on the 2022 meeting by **Rui Oliveira**
 - Participants
 - 563 total registrants as of July 26th

- Vitality ratio 274/256 (students / regular members and nonmembers)
 - 33.8% regular and postdoc members
 - Participants by country reflects membership demographics
 - Contributions
 - 80% attendees are presenting
 - 438 contributions
 - 291 posters
 - 147 talks
 - Financials
 - Revenue 206,522 euros
 - 159,728 euros in costs
 - Sponsorship of Gulbenkian Congress venue was free but valued at ~65K euros
- Preparation for the 2024 ICN (**Mathias Wernet**)
 - We're going to meet in Berlin in 2024
 - Local organizing committee is 11 members strong
 - Venue is the Henry-Ford Building at Freie Universität in Berlin
 - Dates: July 28th to August 3rd 2024
 - Venue is booked
 - Rooms available
 - Large auditorium: 1202 seats
 - Medium sized auditoriums
 - Event organizing company
 - KVM Universität Hamburg Marketing GmbH
- Proposals for the 2026 meeting (**Karen Mesce and Catharine Rankin**)
 - Vancouver has put in a bid for the 2026 meeting
 - We've met in Canada before and it was a huge success
 - Headed by Doug Altschuler
 - Accommodations and venue are superb
 - Housing will be on campus at the University of British Columbia
- Officer transitions (**Karen Mesce**)
 - Thank you to the councilors for all you've done!
 - Gabby Wolff is staying on as Secretary
 - Mark Bee will step down as Treasurer
 - Susan Fahrback will be joining as Treasurer

