Why a big bi-annual survey?

• We want to quantitatively track VPA participation
  • Which events work, which don’t
  • What do postdocs want to see us organize

• Get input from postdocs from all departments and schools
• Tailor events to postdocs’ needs
Survey results – Respondents

• 42 respondents total

The responses are skewed towards people who probably are more active in the VPA, as they are more likely to answer the survey.
Survey results – Attendance at previous events

• ~60% of postdocs (who answered the survey) attended events last year
  • Most non-attendants are new postdocs (started in 2017)

• Social events were better attended than others
  • Instead of CBAS/VPA seminar we will have our own seminar series

Any VPA events 2016-17

Social events
- Yes: 91.7%
- No: 8.3%

CBAS/VPA seminar
- Yes: 41.7%
- No: 58.3%

No: 42.9%
Yes: 57.1%
How can we reach all postdocs across Vanderbilt?

- Our online presence needs to be improved
  - Active use of social media
How can we improve VPA events?

• Social events:
  • More diverse activities than happy hour @ Sportsman’s
  • Other activities, more family-friendly
  • Other times so people with commitments at home can attend
  • Organized social outings on weekends: movie nights, running groups, live music events

• Career-related events:
  • Standing networking/community building event: coffee hour, cookie break etc.
  • More professional events outside academic careers
  • Themed seminars
What would postdocs like in a VPA seminar?

- Themed seminars
  - Can focus around a (broad) research topic
  - Career development
  - Soft skills

- Invited postdoc speakers from outside Vanderbilt
- Soft skills and social support (i.e., inclusivity and equality at Vanderbilt, work-life...)
- Career development-related talks/discussions (i.e., grants available to postdocs, resources...)
- Research talks by postdocs
Conclusions from survey

• New postdocs don’t immediately attend VPA events
  • Could a postdoctoral representative who introduces the VPA at the start help to get postdocs involved?

• Postdocs want to see more social events at family-friendly times
  • Have social coffee mornings or lunch events?

• Postdocs want more non-academic non-research career-related events
  • Networking coffees
  • Non-research speakers