Announcement

Trainees in the Spotlight
Yet Another Addition to Our Portfolio

Roberto Bolli

I hope the readers have noticed the remarkable, massive transformation of Circulation Research. No other journal I know of has changed so much in the past 7 years. By now, nearly all of the new initiatives and changes announced in my editorial manifesto1 have been implemented, and then some, totaling >40 new features that span the entire spectrum of the journal, from its content to its scope, format, and editorial operations. Among these changes, arguably the most important are those in the domain of content, where the portfolio of articles and columns has been expanded dramatically with a rich panoply of new features that encompass original work, invited essays, commentaries, opinion pieces, updates, news, profiles, and so on. At the latest count, a stunning 23 new categories of articles and columns have been added to our armamentarium (Table). This number does not include the Trainees in the Spotlight and Trainee and Young Investigator Corner, which will bring the total to 25.

But the revolution is not over. Just when you thought that the transformation of Circulation Research was complete and the editors would finally take a break, we continue to push on the accelerator by launching yet another major set of initiatives that we believe are unique in scientific publishing. The focus is on trainees, and the overall goal is to support them, promote their activities, provide encouragement and visibility, motivate them to persevere in today’s difficult environment, and highlight some of the concerns that they may have.

Specifically, Circulation Research is rolling out a set of 3 new columns targeted at students, post-doctoral fellows, and junior faculty members who are just starting their careers in science:

• The first initiative is the Meet the First Author page, which was inaugurated in the February 17, 2017, issue2; since many first authors are students or post-doctoral fellows, this page will be an important forum for highlighting trainees. An announcement regarding this feature has been published.3

• The second initiative is the Trainee and Young Investigator Corner, where these junior researchers will have an opportunity to write about personal experiences and/or topics of broad interest; we expect this column to launch in the April 14, 2017, issue.

• The third initiative is the Trainees in the Spotlight column, which debuts in this issue of Circulation Research and is the focus of this announcement.

The Trainees in the Spotlight columns will be ≈1000 words long and will include a color photo. Written by a professional writer, these short 1-page profiles will be based on phone interviews conducted with students and post-doctoral fellows. They will begin with a very brief overview of the trainee’s current position, education, research focus, and any significant awards or recognitions. Rather than dwelling on the details of the research project(s), the articles will focus mainly on the trainee’s life, personal experiences, and personal views. Trainees will be asked about their background, what led them to pursue cardiovascular research and to select their current project, their main challenges and most exciting moments, their interests outside of the lab, their work schedule, qualities/traits that they consider important for success in research, concerns that they may have about their future, obstacles that they foresee in pursuing an academic career, their views regarding current training and research, and what they find attractive and not so attractive about research. In short, we wish to go beyond science; we wish to outline a person.

As you can see, the format of Trainees in the Spotlight is similar to that used in previous columns for more senior investigators. The goal is to highlight trainees who have distinguished themselves by virtue of their work performance, potential for growth, personal qualities or attributes, or other factors deemed important by their mentors. Personal stories or experiences that may inspire others are also of great interest to us. We hope that by focusing on individuals with outstanding qualities, notable achievements, or unique backgrounds and perspectives, Trainees in the Spotlight will stimulate reflection and motivate others.

These profiles, which are targeted at the most junior members of the cardiovascular research community, are designed to supplement our recently introduced Promising Young Investigators columns, which highlight junior faculty members in the next stage of academic development (usually, individuals within 5–10 years of their terminal degree).4 The main difference between the 2 columns is that Trainees in the Spotlight will feature students and post-doctoral fellows, whereas Promising Young Investigators will feature faculty members. Thus, the combination of Trainees in the Spotlight and Promising Young Investigators columns will cover the entire spectrum of early career investigators, from the undergraduate student to the faculty member that approaches the mid-career level.

As stated here and before,3,4 the motivation to launch these columns is to promote and support young investigators, in accordance with one of the major missions of the
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American Heart Association. That trainees represent the future of cardiovascular research is perhaps a cliché, but it is, nevertheless, true. The addition of Trainees in the Spotlight to our portfolio of articles is also consistent with our goal of making Circulation Research a journal with a “personality,” as opposed to an arid repository of scientific communications.¹

We hope the Trainees in the Spotlight columns will support and motivate young investigators. We hope that other trainees will relate to the sentiments and experiences described in these articles, and this, in turn, will promote productive discussions and reflections. We ask you to provide suggestions of individuals whom you believe we should consider for a Trainee in the Spotlight profile; please send your suggestions (along with a curriculum vitae/biosketch) to circulation.research@circresearch.com.

Disclosures

None.

References

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