PLAN AHEAD:

- **January 6:** Registration opens for all events sponsored by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs!
- **April 4-6:** National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) Annual Meeting (to be held at Washington University)
- **May 13:** 3rd Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium
- **June 30:** Last day to use Special Leave granted on July 1, 2013.

For more information, please see the NCSU PostDoc Events Google Calendar.

Submit your postdoc success stories to Dr. Nisha Cavanaugh, Director of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, at nacavana@ncsu.edu or to Dr. Emily Griffiths, Director of (PostDoctoral Association) Communications at ecgriffi@ncsu.edu.

### Six postdocs invited to present their research in the SECU Globe Theater at the Nature Research Center

As part of a new collaboration with the Nature Research Center, an integral part of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, six postdocs from NC State University were selected and invited to give research talks in celebration of National Postdoctoral Appreciation Week (see full story on page 2). The Nature Research Center is a state of the art facility dedicated to increasing the general public's perception and understanding of basic sciences from climatology to molecular biology.

Postdocs submitted a short abstract on how they would engage and excite the general public on their current research project.

The speakers were challenged to present to an audience of scientists and non-scientists in a short span of 10 minutes and engage them in the diverse and exciting research at NC State University (see presenters and titles below). Furthermore, the SECU 3-story Globe Theater has a narrow stage and forces the presenter to face the audience rather than his/her slides throughout the presentation.

*(story cont. on page 5)*

Dr. Megan Andrews (Department of Soil Science in Dr. Owen Duckworth’s group)
"Eating Rocks: Biogeochemistry in the Critical Zone"

Dr. Monica Borghi (Department of Plant Biology in Dr. Deyu Xie’s group)
"A squeeze of lemon in your jet-fuel?"

Dr. Bryn Gaertner (Department of Biological Sciences in Dr. Trudy Mackay’s group)
"What the sexy dances of fruit flies can tell us about human behavior"

Dr. Jennifer Shields (Department of Food, Bioprocessing, and Nutrition Sciences in Dr. LeeAnn Jaykus’ group)
"Using gut bacteria to track contamination on fresh produce"

Dr. Kota Takahashi (Department of Biomedical Engineering in Dr. Gregory Sawicki’s group)
"Building the next Robo-Cop"

Dr. Andrea Torres-Barragan (Department of Plant Pathology in Dr. Frank Louws’ group)
"What is a plant doctor?"

Street view of the SECU 3-story Globe Theater at the Nature Research Center, where NC State postdocs presented their research to the public. (photo courtesy of N. Cavanaugh)
Postdoc success celebrated at NC State University in its state-of-the-art research library, James B. Hunt Jr. Library

Several of the postdocs and faculty gathered to honor and celebrate the research accomplishments of the postdocs at the 1st Annual Postdoc Appreciation Celebration. (Photo courtesy of B. Overman)

Throughout the week, six postdocs were invited to give research talks at the Nature Research Center, a part of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences (see full story on page 1 and featured in the Fall issue of the NPA’s POSTDOCket).

The week was capped off with a Postdoc Celebration at the new James B. Hunt Jr. Library on the Centennial Campus. Postdocs were invited to enjoy the University’s famous ‘Howling Cow’ ice cream while listening to short presentations by the Director of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, Dr. Nisha Cavanaugh, and the President of the PostDoctoral Association, Dr. Kyle Grant. An award ceremony recognized the winners of the 2013-2014 Professional Development Awards (see full story on pages 3 and 5) and their faculty advisors, as well as the postdocs who were invited to give talks at the Nature Research Center.

Special guest, Vice Chancellor of Research, Dr. Terri Lomax, attended the first Postdoctoral Appreciation Day and thanked the postdocs, on behalf of NC State University, for their research and teaching contributions and achievements. This was a wonderful opportunity for the postdocs to voice their opinions and ways to improve the postdoc experience at NC State. A special thank you to Dr. Lomax, who cares about the success of our postdocs!

The Celebration event concluded with a trivia game featuring general knowledge about research, the history of the University, and random fun trivia facts!

The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) created the first recognized Postdoctoral Appreciation Day back in 2009. In 2013, NC State University celebrated its first Postdoctoral Appreciation Week (Sept. 16-20, 2013); the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and the NCSU PostDoctoral Association organized a week full of activities and professional development opportunities to show our appreciation for the hard work and success of our postdocs.

The week began with a potluck picnic over the weekend at the neighboring Pullen Park (see full story on page 3). A shelter was reserved and postdocs were encouraged to bring a dish and their families to enjoy a beautiful Saturday afternoon with their peers.

Vice Chancellor of Research, Terri Lomax, attended the first Postdoctoral Appreciation Day and thanked the postdocs, on behalf of NC State University, for their research and teaching contributions and achievements.

(Photo courtesy of N. Cavanaugh)
NC State postdocs represent many different places and more than half are international. The Postdoctoral Association celebrated this diversity with a potluck picnic. Each postdoc brought their favorite food to share with everyone. There were some classic American contributions like potato chips, blueberry muffins, and peach pie. International delicacies included hummus, English scones, and Greek salad.

A mix of postdocs attended, some who had only arrived at NC State in the last few weeks, others who were at least a year into their postdoc. A range of disciplines were represented from statistics to sociology, from engineering to entomology. People appreciated the chance to relax and get to know one another, and we are confident there will be demand for a bigger and better picnic in the future!

2013-2014 Professional Development Award Winners

Dr. Theodore Brzinski
(Department of Physics in Dr. Karen Daniels’ group) Dr. Brzinski will develop a lab component for an undergraduate Thermal Physics course to help students grasp the concepts of entropy and temperature.

Dr. Tiina Nypelo
(Department of Forest Biomaterials in Dr. Orlando Rojas’ group) Dr. Nypelo will attend the 247th American Chemical Society National Meeting – Cellulose and Renewable Materials Division, where she will serve as a co-organizer of a new symposium on “Functional lignocellulosics and nanotechnology.”

Dr. Kota Takahashi
(Department of Biomedical Engineering in Dr. Gregory Sawicki’s group) Dr. Takahashi will increase the exposure of his research at the national and global levels by attending two conferences, one of which is the 7th World Congress of Biomechanics.

Dr. Chenxi Zhang
(Department of Crop Science in Dr. Thomas Rufty’s group) Dr. Zhang will apply the funds toward a professional development workshop focused on leadership, communication, and managing conflict, as part of the 2013 Crop Science Society of America International Annual Meeting, where he will also be presenting his research.

Full story on page 5.
Dr. Johannes Dahl: Newest Faculty Member at Texas Tech University

Dr. Johannes Dahl was a postdoc at NC State from 2010 to 2013 and worked with Dr. Matthew Parker in the Convective Storms Group in Marine, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences. In August of this year, Dr. Dahl moved to Texas Tech University as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geosciences. He studies processes that drive severe storms, in particular the source of rotation in tornadoes. This research will improve our understanding of tornadoes, and hopefully lead to better warnings of these violent storms.

Reflecting on his postdoc, Dr. Dahl said, “What I enjoyed most was the collegiality in our group and with the graduate students in the MEAS department. I had a very supportive and knowledgeable postdoc supervisor who gave me a lot of freedom pursuing my research interests while at the same time providing guidance when needed. Attending conferences and getting to know many people in the field during my postdoc was very helpful during the application process.”

We wish him well in his new position!

Dr. Laura Ott Reflects on Attending the ISSOTL Conference

The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) convenes one of the leading conferences on higher education and scholarly teaching; in October, the conference was held in Raleigh, NC, hosted by Elon’s Center for Engaged Learning. Dr. Laura Ott received an ISSOTL grant which covered the majority of her registration fees for the conference. Reflecting on her experience, she said, “Attending this conference showed me how powerful undergraduate research is to student learning. There were a number of undergraduate research journals represented and I was blown away by not only the caliber of research published, but also how the publication and peer-review process contributed to the learning of undergraduate students.”

Dr. Ott is a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in NC State’s Biotechnology Program and her career goal is to teach at a primarily undergraduate institution and engage students in authentic research-learning opportunities. She is currently writing up papers about 1) the design and evaluation of a half-semester course on the use of flow cytometry and ELISA, and 2) an inquiry-based activity for lower level undergraduates and upper level high school students applying molecular biology techniques to solve a crime. We are proud of Dr. Ott’s achievement and her passion for finding the highest standards in higher education teaching!

Dr. Carlos Goller: Writing in the Classroom

Dr. Carlos Goller joined the Biotechnology Program at NC State as a Teaching Postdoctoral Scholar in 2012 after studying Pediatric Infectious Disease as a postdoc at Duke University. In addition to his research, Dr. Goller has a passion for teaching and outreach, including sessions about the friendly germs that grow within us. On November 18th, he led a lunchtime workshop in the DH Hill Library as part of the Campus Writing and Speaking Program. He spoke about the process of incorporating writing into his classes and labs, noting the importance of making the writing process transparent for students. Dr. Goller engaged his audience with several hands-on activities, and then shared several of his own writing assignments—one for freshman, designed to demonstrate that scientists do indeed write; one for upper classmen, designed to improve the writing quality of lab reports; and one that is currently in progress, using collaborative concept-mapping to help students construct process-driven scientific inquiry. Dr. Goller explored ideas for incorporating writing in his classes through the STEM & Writing Annual Partnership (SWAP), which matches STEM PhD students and postdocs with a member of the NCSU writing faculty. He plans to continue experimenting with writing in his classroom, and hopes to write about his findings so other classrooms can benefit from writing too.
Six postdocs invited to present … cont.

The six selected individuals attended a mandatory workshop on effective ways to communicate science, led by science communication experts, Dr. Holly Menninger (Director of Public Science, Your Wild Life Program) and Mr. Brian Malow (Science Comedian). Their wealth of knowledge and experience helped shape the talks that the postdocs delivered.

2013-2014 Professional Development Award Winners cont.

A new initiative from the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs is the creation of the 2013-2014 Professional Development Awards. The awards will financially assist full-time NC State postdoctoral scholars in their pursuit of professional development or training opportunities that will directly enhance their professional growth. The call for applications was in August 2013 and included a letter of support from the faculty advisor and a proposal of how the award would help the postdoc meet his/her professional goals. Four postdocs were selected from nearly forty applicants and received up to $1,000 each; they were honored with certificates at the Postdoctoral Appreciation Celebration at the James B. Hunt Jr. Library on September 20, 2013 (see photos on page 3). All four awardees spoke of intentions to pursue academic careers or further their careers in research. Towards that goal, each postdoc proposed a different professional development mechanism.