

Molecular and Cell Biology (MCB) Department at the University of California Berkeley

MCB Grad Network (MGN)

4th year event summary

In the Spring, 4th year students will be invited to an event where they will have two 30-minute group discussions led by MGN members and former members covering a variety of topics related to getting through your last year (or more) successfully. Following the discussions, students are encouraged to stick around for snacks and drinks during a mixer with older students.

General topics covered during 4th year small group discussions:

- Finishing up grad school: how to develop/maintain a good relationship with your PI, or what to do if you haven't
- How to navigate the tougher conversations with your PI and negotiate your exit
- Publication process (if you published) and what expectations post-docs and/or jobs have related to number and quality
- What were things you would have thought or known about as a 4th year?
- Self-care during later years: how did you manage stress?
- In times of lower motivation, how did you keep it going?
- What were your greatest forms of support?
- Did you ever think of leaving? How did you make your decision to stay?
- When did you start thinking about what comes next? When do you wish you had started?
- How did you learn about career options? Was your thesis committee helpful?
- What preparation did you need? How did you get it? What was the best way to network and find out key information to make yourself competitive?
- What are postdoc interviews like? How do you decide?
- What other options are there besides an academic postdoc? Can you transition after your postdoc or do you have to decide now?
- What did you look for in your next job/postdoc? How quickly do you have to make a decision?
- How long does your thesis take to write? How do you manage your time?
- How do you organize when you leave the lab and when you start your postdoc?
- What happens when you and your PI disagree on a final departure date?
- What do you do for health insurance if there's a gap between when you leave grad school and you start your next job/postdoc?