PRESS RELEASE

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The Scientist’s Life Science Salary Survey 2010 – Results Announced

(London, UK) – November 1, 2010 The Scientist, F1000’s magazine of the life sciences, announced today the results of the 2010 Salary Survey of life scientist professionals.

From March 15 to June 28 2010, 6,776 professional life scientists took part in the survey. For the first time in The Scientist’s Salary Survey 10-year history, there has been a dip in salaries over the last year as universities make cuts in light of the current financial situation.

This year’s Salary Survey saw drops in salaries across the board with almost every speciality suffering a setback, some with dips as large as $20,000 (ecology) and $28,000 (virology).

However, a few select fields, namely bioinformatics, biophysics, biotechnology, and neuroscience, bucked the trend and actually posted salary increases this year. Whilst it is not easy to determine why these specialities saw salaries rise and others saw salaries cut, Mark Musen, head of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Informatics Research at Stanford University commented: “I've noticed this year that start-up packages for new faculty members in biomedical informatics have been enormously generous because the competition is so intense.” And as Barry Connors of Brown University in Providence explains: “The field of neuroscience has enjoyed a steady increase in popularity over the past two decades, and this trend is continuing.”

Many institutions have had to bear the brunt of the current financial crisis head on. Even tenured scientists near the end of their careers, those with contracted salaries, are feeling the effects. “There’s an incentive to keep a salary coming in,” says James Bassingthwaighte, a tenured bioengineer at the University of Washington in Seattle, “especially when my retired friends express concerns that their income shrivels with the market downturns.”

Feedback shows that it is not only the cost of living in harsh economic times that has risen, but the cost of actually doing science has increased as well. As Mary Dickinson of Baylor College of Medicine commented: “Now instead of one to two grants to run a modest-size lab, people need three of four to keep pace.”

Almost all professional levels in the life sciences are feeling the strain of the current financial situation, but there is one demographic group that always feels it – postdoctoral fellows. Currently, postdocs receiving federal awards make between $37,740 to $52,068 a year, depending on a fellow’s level of experience. In some cities highlighted on this year’s cost-of-living map graphic, this may be sufficient to cope with the cost of living, but many still feel the pinch. It's no surprise then, that postdocs have developed creative coping mechanisms for scraping by on a penny.
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Full results, further statistics and interactive charts can be found at www.the-scientist.com/salarysurvey and in the November print issue. The Scientist, voted B2B “Magazine of the Year” two years in a row by the American Society of Business Publishers, is available in print and online at www.the-scientist.com.

About The Scientist

The Scientist, F1000’s magazine of the life sciences, has informed and entertained life science professionals around the world for over 24 years. We provide print and online coverage of the latest developments in the life sciences including trends in research, new technology, news, business and careers. We reach the leaders in academia and industry that are interested in maintaining a broad view of the life sciences by reading insightful articles that are current, concise, accurate and entertaining. For more information about The Scientist, visit www.the-scientist.com.

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