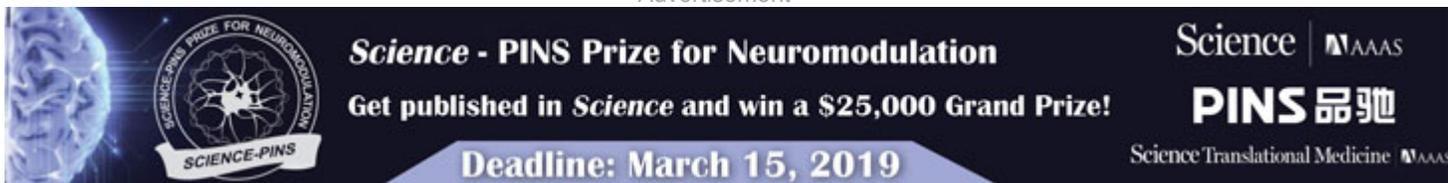




Advertisement



Science - PINS Prize for Neuromodulation  
Get published in *Science* and win a \$25,000 Grand Prize!  
Deadline: March 15, 2019

Science | AAAS  
PINS 品驰  
Science Translational Medicine | AAAS

[Log in](#) | [My account](#) | [Contact us](#)[Become a member](#) | [Renew my subscription](#) | [Sign up for newsletters](#)

ISTOCK.COM/EERIK

## Introducing 'Letters to Young Scientists,' a new column from *Science Careers*

By [June Gruber](#), [Jay J. Van Bavel](#), [Leah H. Somerville](#), [Neil A. Lewis, Jr.](#), [William A. Cunningham](#) | Aug. 27, 2018, 12:00 PM

Pursuing a scientific career can be a daunting journey. Yet many of us are not taught how to navigate the tasks and challenges—giving a high-quality presentation, surviving the academic job market, and becoming a mentor, to name just a few—as part of our standard scientific training. And even the best mentor can't provide advice to *everyone* or cover *everything* when it comes to succeeding in science and academia. So where can young scientists go for practical, reliable advice?

In 1936, Nobel laureate **Ivan Pavlov** offered kernels of wisdom in a **letter** in *Science*. More than 80 years later, the letter from the famed physiologist remains as fresh and relevant as his research on conditioning. Countless other scientists have written similar dispatches. The list includes biologist E.O. Wilson's 2013 book *Letters to a Young Scientist* and psychologist John Cacioppo's "**A Letter to Young Scientists.**" Building on this rich history, we wanted to start our own ongoing conversation with young scientists with a new column: Letters to Young Scientists.

We are five social science professors with diverse backgrounds and experiences, both scientific and personal, which will help us deliver useful, candid advice to scientists at all career stages, from research assistants dipping their toes into the lab for the very first time to senior scientists looking to stay abreast of trends in mentoring, and point to debates where they exist. Some of us have won awards and conducted workshops on these topics or have written about mentoring issues in the popular press. Others have faced our own mentoring challenges and want to share what we have learned.

As a group, we can offer a breadth of expertise to handle just about any topic or question that comes our way. Just as it's advisable to seek out mentors in addition to your principal investigator (PI), we aim to offer a variety of perspectives and make sure that each topic is covered by the individual or group best suited to discuss it. While we are all academics—and thus most familiar with the pressing issues inside the walls of academia—we aim to offer support and resources for those interested in nonacademic career paths as well.

In alphabetical order, here is a bit about each of us:

**William Cunningham** is a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto in Canada, where he directs a **lab** investigating emotion and self-perception. He loves outliers and proving hypotheses wrong. As a result, he has had to change research directions and theoretical positions more than once.

**June Gruber** is an assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where she directs a **lab** that studies happiness, emotions, and mental illness. As an academic mother of two young boys, she frequently thinks about strategies to achieve work-life balance and support career advancement for women in the sciences.

**Neil Lewis, Jr.** is an assistant professor of communication and social behavior at Cornell University, where he **directs a lab** that studies motivation and goal pursuit. He is a first-generation college graduate who went directly from being a graduate student at the University of Michigan to a PI, and he frequently thinks about strategies to broaden access to those who are traditionally underrepresented in the sciences.

582            Leah H. Somerville is an associate professor of psychology at Harvard University, where she heads a **research lab** filled with scientists ranging from high school students to postdoctoral fellows. She has a special interest in mentoring and helping individuals who have not taken the “straight and narrow path” overcome the resulting barriers to career advancement they may face.

**Jay Van Bavel** is an associate professor of psychology and neural sciences at New York University in New York City, where his **lab** examines how group identities shape the mind and brain. He was a first-generation college graduate who did not realize that universities conducted research until a few months before his graduation.

We have seen young scientists' thirst for advice firsthand. When Jay recently shared some informal advice about giving a research talk written by June, it garnered more than 40,000 views on Twitter within a week. When Jay shared some **slides** to demystify the academic job market from a **workshop** that he and Neil conducted, it was also quickly consumed by more than 5000 people.

We will work to address this need by offering concrete and tangible take-home lessons and accompanying resources. To kick things off, later this week we will share three key reminders to help grad students not merely survive—but thrive. Next month, we will cover 10 tips for applying to grad school. Beyond that, the column will target a range of issues that span the academic career trajectory from undergraduate to starting one's own lab.

We will also have a Twitter feed—**@SciCareersLTYS**—to follow the latest news on mentoring advice and an email account—**letterstoyoungscientists@aaas.org**—so that you can send us your questions and ideas for future columns. This will allow for open discourse as well as disagreement. If you have specific topics you'd like us to discuss, please let us know, as we hope for a dynamic exchange with our readers. Welcome!

Posted in: **Letters to Young Scientists, Column, Non-disciplinary**

doi:10.1126/science.caredit.aav2304

---

## June Gruber

June Gruber is an assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

 [Twitter](#)



## Jay J. Van Bavel

Jay J. Van Bavel is an associate professor of psychology and neural sciences at New York University in New York City.

 [Twitter](#)

---

## Leah H. Somerville

Leah H. Somerville is an associate professor of psychology at Harvard University.

 [Twitter](#)

582   

### Neil A. Lewis, Jr.

Neil A. Lewis, Jr. is an assistant professor of communication and social behavior at Cornell University.

 [Twitter](#)

### William A. Cunningham

William A. Cunningham is a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto in Canada.

 [Twitter](#)

## More from Careers

Three research-based lessons to improve your mentoring



In a first, U.S. private sector employs nearly as many Ph.D.s as schools do



How I learned to cope with seasonal affective disorder in grad school



### FOLLOW SCIENCE CAREERS

### Search Jobs

Enter keywords, locations or job types to start searching for your new science career.

[Register](#)  
[Advanced Search](#)

Advertisement

582



**2018 TOP EMPLOYER PROFILES**

- Eli Lilly
- Incyte
- Moderna
- Roche

> LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TOP EMPLOYERS

**Science Careers**

### Top articles in Careers

#### Reimbursement policies make academia less inclusive

By Jessica Sagers | Feb. 14, 2019



#### When your thesis adviser advises you to quit

By Adam Ruben | Feb. 20, 2019



#### Leaving a Ph.D. takes courage—and it doesn't mean the path to academic success is over

By Hendrik Huthoff | Feb. 21, 2019



#### After a baby, 28% of new parents leave full-time STEM work

By Rachel Bernstein | Feb. 18, 2019



Advertisement

582




**eppendorf & Science**  
**PRIZE FOR NEURO BIOLOGY**

2018 Winner Dr. Johannes Kohl

**Now It's Your Turn!**  
**Application Deadline**  
**June 15, 2019**

## Science

8 March 2019

Vol 363, Issue 6431



### EPIDEMIOLOGY

**Dubious diagnosis**

---

### ECOLOGY

**Grazing animals shown to inhabit a 'landscape of fear'**

---

### EPIDEMIOLOGY

**Vaccination opponents target CDC panel**

---

### CELL BIOLOGY

**China tightens rules on gene editing**

---

### SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

**University of California takes a stand on open access**

---

### EPIDEMIOLOGY

**Did Black Death strike sub-Saharan Africa?**

[Table of Contents](#)

---

## Subscribe Today

Receive a year subscription to *Science* plus access to exclusive AAAS member resources, opportunities, and benefits.

[Subscribe Today](#)

---

## Get Our Newsletters

Receive emails from *Science*. [See full list](#)

- Science* Table of Contents
- Science* Daily News
- Science* News This Week
- Science* Editor's Choice
- First Release Notification
- Science* Careers Job Seeker

Country \* 

Email address \*

I agree to receive emails from AAAS/*Science* and *Science* advertisers, including information on products, services, and special offers which may include but are not limited to news, career information, & upcoming events.

[Click to view the Privacy Policy.](#)

**Sign up today**

Required fields are indicated by an asterisk (\*)

## About us

**Journals**

**Leadership**

**Team members**

**Work at AAAS**

## Advertise

**Advertising kits**

**Awards and Prizes**

**Custom publishing**

**Webinars**

## For subscribers

**Site license info**

**For members**

## International

**Chinese**

**Japanese**

## Help

**Access & subscriptions**

**Reprints & permissions**

**Contact us**

**Accessibility**

## Stay Connected



© 2019 American Association for the Advancement of Science. All rights Reserved. AAAS is a partner of HINARI, AGORA, OARE, CHORUS, CLOCKSS, CrossRef and COUNTER.

**[Terms of Service](#)**

**[Privacy Policy](#)**

**[Contact Us](#)**