

Stanford Report, June 9, 2010

Faculty honored for showing postdoctoral scholars the ropes

Anne Brunet, an assistant professor of genetics, and Krishna V. Shenoy, an associate professor of electrical engineering, were recently chosen to receive mentoring awards.

A scientist who is studying the aging of the nervous system and the director of the Neural Prosthetic Systems Laboratory have each been chosen to receive a 2010 Mentoring Award from the [Stanford University Postdoctoral Association](#).

Anne Brunet, an assistant professor of [genetics](#) in the School of Medicine, will receive the award in a private ceremony this week at the Medical School.

Krishna V. Shenoy, an associate professor of [electrical engineering](#), will receive the award during the graduation ceremonies of the Department of Electrical Engineering on Sunday.

This is the third year the association has presented the awards. Each winner will receive a plaque inscribed with the words "in recognition of excellence in supporting the development of postdoctoral fellows into creative and independent professionals" and a cash prize of \$2,500.

Postdoctoral scholars are individuals with PhD degrees who are engaged in advanced training – under faculty mentors – to enhance the academic and professional skills they need to pursue their chosen career paths. Currently, there are more than 1,800 postdocs at Stanford – a [record number](#) for the university.

"Being a good mentor is a challenging task," the association said in a press release announcing the 2010 awards. "It involves interchangeably taking on the roles of teacher, motivator, sponsor and advocate. At its best, a mentoring relationship catalyzes the transition of a postdoc from trainee to colleague and in the process can have a profoundly positive impact on both the mentor and mentee."

Anne Brunet, who joined the Stanford faculty in 2004 as an assistant professor of genetics, runs the [Brunet Lab](#), which studies the molecular mechanisms of aging and longevity. Brunet, who grew up in a small town in eastern France, earned a doctorate at the University of Nice, France, and received her postdoctoral training at Harvard Medical School.

Individuals who nominated Brunet said she is generous with her time.

"Anne ... met me on a weekend afternoon in lab to check how I was doing and then spent the afternoon with me arriving at a strategy," wrote a postdoc from another laboratory in a letter nominating Brunet for the award.

Others cited Brunet's quarterly annual meetings, and her willingness to identify senior faculty whom postdocs could consult for further advice.

"Anne introduced me to several principal investigators [lead scientists on research projects], arranged for speaking opportunities for me within Stanford, and helped me secure my own funding," one postdoctoral scholar wrote.

L.A. Cicero



Postdoctoral student Mark Churchland, left, wrote one of the letters nominating Associate Professor Krishna Shenoy for the mentoring award.

One of the postdocs who nominated Shenoy wrote: "He makes sure we all pursue passions, in the lab and out." Another wrote: "Whenever I find myself in a difficult situation I ask myself: What would Krishna do?"

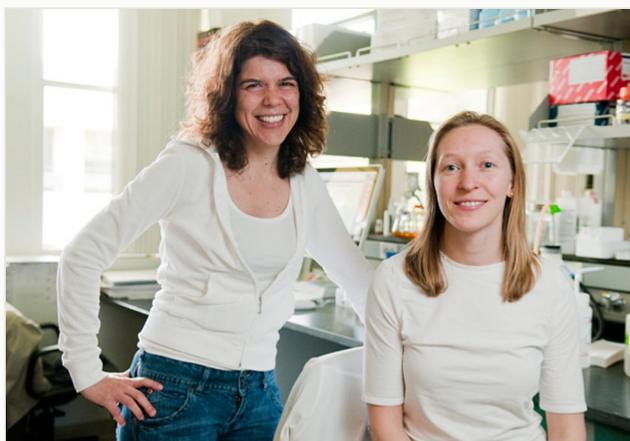
When the editor of the monthly journal *Nature Neuroscience* visited Shenoy at Stanford, he introduced the editor to his postdoctoral scholars and their research.

"This visit was a real career opportunity for *him* and he steered it in our direction," one postdoctoral scholar wrote in a letter nominating Shenoy.

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Postdoctoral student Ashley Webb, right, was one of the students who nominated Assistant Professor Anne Brunet for the mentoring award.

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Krishna V. Shenoy, who has been an associate professor of electrical engineering since 2008, joined Stanford's faculty as an assistant professor in 2001. He earned a PhD in electrical engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and received his postdoctoral training in neurobiology at California Institute of Technology.

Shenoy runs the [Neural Prosthetic Systems Laboratory](#), which conducts research to better understand how the brain controls movement. The group also designs, builds and tests medical systems that convert electrical signals from the brain into control signals for prosthetic arms and computer cursors.

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