One of the elements contributing to the CNIO’s international projection is the commitment of our established investigators to foster new generations of scientists. In fact, over 60% of the workforce at our institution are personnel in training, involving undergraduate students, predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows, medical residents and a broad spectrum of visiting scientists supported by competitive grants through various funding agencies. Also very successful are our diverse exchange and visitor programmes. In this context, we are also most grateful to the Fundación Jesús Serra for its continuous support to our visitor programmes. In this context, we are also most grateful to the Fundación Jesús Serra for its continuous support to our visitor programmes.

The CNIO Dean’s Office oversees the fulfilment of academic requirements to ensure timely and productive PhD dissertations. In addition, we pay attention to soft skills that may increase the chances of success of our personnel, in and beyond academia. Indeed, we are very proud of the altruistic spirit of our young trainees. This year, 50 volunteers participated in our seventh ‘Meet a Scientist, Become a Scientist’ event. This is an open doors activity we hold as part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie European Researchers’ Night, where over 250 participants of all ages learn about daily life at our Centre and have the opportunity to run an experiment alongside our researchers. Other multiple volunteers participated in the ‘Semana de la Ciencia’ and in scientific tours the CNIO offers to interested parties.

A particularly successful event this year was our Annual CNIO Lab Day. We had a total of 55 posters and 15 oral presentations, which highlighted the “best-to-come” in each of the Centre’s Strategic Programmes. We learned about start-ups and about different aspects of communication and leadership from distinguished invited speakers. Laura Soucek (Vall d’Hebron Institute of Oncology, Barcelona) told us how endurance and self-confidence allowed her to patent a product from her group (Orthomyc) and create a small biotech company (Peptomic), which will soon proceed to clinical trials in patients with aggressive cancers. Gerardo Barcia (CEO, BBVA Next Technologies) presented new concepts on flexible team building, to improve creativity and ensure personnel satisfaction, to ultimately promote healthier and more productive work environments. In turn, Diego Marqueta (Diego Marqueta Consulting) discussed new visual tools and presentation strategies for effective presentations. The audience was indeed thrilled!

A main highlight of the Lab Day was the announcement of the recipients of our ‘Director’s List Awards’. These recognise outstanding contributions made by our personnel in 3 categories: (1) predoctoral fellows with publications of the highest scientific impact; (2) excellence in research by postdoctoral and staff investigators; and (3) altruistic volunteering to further the mission of the Centre related to training, scientific divulgation and outreach.

3. Outstanding Contribution to Outreach and Awareness

The recipient was María J Alcamí, for her tireless efforts and dedication to the CNIO’s Women in Science Office (WISE). The award was presented by María Luisa Villafranca from the ‘Asociación ROSA’, a non-profit organisation in support of breast cancer patients that belongs to our growing community of ‘CNIO Friends’.

The Lab Day proceeded with 6 additional Awards from the Dean’s Office to the Best Oral Presentations and to the Best Posters. The closing included yet an additional Award for T-Shirt Design, which was particularly moving. The most voted entry was the ‘Give us a Hand’ design that illustrates the concept that to make progress, scientists need the help of multiple hands—their supervisors, academic and clinical institutions, grantees, foundations, and patients and their families. This was a beautiful allegiance of our commitment to and for the society.

In summary, we are as proud as ever of the achievements of our young investigators at the CNIO. We thank all those public and private contributors who help fuel their efforts, and we will strive in our commitment to being useful to other investigators and to society at large.