Planning for a Successful Career in Science

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What is your dream about your career?

1. What is your desired career path?

2. How confident are you in that career path? Why?

DISCUSS WITH PARTNER
How confident are you?

a. Very confident
b. Fairly confident
c. Still open to a range of career options
More Choices

- Schwartz - Paradox of Choice
- Good to have some choices
- Too many choices
  - Can be paralyzing
  - Lead to higher expectations
  - Leave us less satisfied
  - Result in regret
What Can You Do?

• to make your dream a reality?
• to move ahead with confidence?
• to follow a systematic approach to a successful career?
Purpose of an IDP

- Identify a long-term career goal
- Create next step goals to help you get there
- Tool for communication
Outline

• Does planning work?
• Individual development plans
• Get started on your IDP
• Discuss how to continue the IDP process
Two Types of Plans

- Research Plans
- Career Plans
Two Types of Plans

Research Plans
Career Plans

Career Interest Entering

(A) Graduate School (n=38)
- 26.3%
- 55.2%
- 10.5%
- 5.3%
- 3%

(B) Postdoctoral Training (n=28)
- 57.1%
- 17.9%
- 14.3%
- 10.7%

Legend:
- Undefined
- Faculty Position
- Either Academia or Industry
- Research, Outside of Academia
- Not Described

Gibbs and Griffin 2013
Career Planning Works

- Thinking about goals
- Developing specific goals
- Implementing career strategies ➔
  - Higher salaries
  - More frequent promotions
  - More responsibility
  - Greater satisfaction
Sigma Xi Survey

22,000 postdocs contacted
7600 postdocs surveyed

Postdocs with a structured plan:
• More satisfied
• More productive
• Fewer conflicts with PI
Individual Development Plan

1. Self-assessment
   Consider your skills, interests, and values.

2. Career exploration
   Learn about career options for PhD scientists, and compare your skills and interests to each option.

3. Set goals
   Make a concrete plan for how to improve your skills, build your network, and prepare for your desired career path.

4. Implement plan
   Recruit mentors to help with various parts of your plan.

Submit Your own IDP
Career Satisfaction

SKILLS

INTERESTS

VALUES
Core Competencies
(www.nationalpostdoc.org)

- Scientific Knowledge
- Research Skills
- Communication Skills
- Professionalism
- Leadership and Management
- Responsible Conduct of Research
A Range of Skills Are Needed to Be a Great Scientist

Example Skills:
- Methods & Technology
- Quantitative & Computational
- Acquiring Information, Experimental Design & Data Interpretation
- Management & Leadership
- Communication & Teamwork

Skills
NIGMS 2015
Skills Assessment

• Identify skills at which you are proficient and those that need work

• Complete worksheet, list 3 skills to work on

• Discuss with partner 1 skill you think needs attention in the coming year and why
Interests Inventory

• Identify what you really enjoy doing

• Complete worksheet, list top 3 and bottom 3 interests

• Discuss with partner one thing you most enjoy doing and one thing you hope to avoid in your career
Values Clarification

- Ideals or principles that guide how we act
- Help define the environment in which we are likely to thrive
- Complete worksheet, list top 3 values
- Tell partner one value and a challenge you will face due to that value.
- How can you mitigate that challenge?
Values Discussion

- No career option is perfect
- There will be values-related challenges to every career path
- Plan to deal with challenges
- Colleagues can help you find solutions to challenges
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Submit
Career Exploration

• Read about careers
  Web-based articles
  Books
  Professional organizations

• Attend events
  Seminars at GWU
  Professional meetings

• Talk to people
  Networking
  Informational interviews
Job Search Methods

- Networking: 80%
- Advertisements: 5%
- Search Firms: 5%
- Job Boards: 2%
- Direct Contact: 2%
- Career Fairs: 2%
- Gov't/Job Svc: 2%
- Other: 2%

Courtesy of John Lombardo, PhD
Strategic Networking

- Not just updating your Facebook page
- Cultivating professional relationships
- Granovetter - strength of weak ties
- Lots of loose connections more beneficial than smaller, tighter networks
Informational Interview

- Get inside information on career choices
- Make appointment in advance
- Have a list of specific questions
- Not a job interview
- Try to get additional contacts
- Thank you letter
Career Exploration Continuum

Petrie 2015
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