Establishing Your Basic Research Program and Building Your Team

Introduction + Moderator

Benjamin F. Voight, PhD - Associate Professor, Systems Pharmacology and Translational Therapeutics

Panelists

Elizabeth Grice, PhD - Associate Professor, Dermatology
Eric Joyce, PhD - Assistant Professor, Genetics
Elizabeth Heller, PhD - Assistant Professor, Systems Pharmacology and Translational Therapeutics

Opening Thoughts

Points from Panelists

Audience Discussion

Today’s focus: *Building Your Team*

- You’ve landed a job, signed and are starting.

- You will have to manage a variety of tasks (e.g., grants, papers, service, etc.)

- Today’s Focus: *Building your team*.

a. Practical reasons: Success depends on this team
b. Intrinsic reasons: This is your job now
c. Communal reasons: Provide for the group

Key Point:
Your research program requires a team

- Delegate: You have a lot to juggle, and can’t do everything.

- Eventually, you *need* to do get work done *through people*.

- To accomplish this:

a. Create an attractive environment conducive to research + trainee support
b. Develop and hone your aptitude for mentorship and training
c. Adapt: balance available talent against current needs; anticipate future directions

Key Point:
Think about your projects and plan them

- Identify the projects that you want to set up: What does the paper look like?

- Assess: difficulty, required skills, risk; timing and expected time to complete

- Learn about your environment as you start planning each project:

    Who do you *actually* have available?

    What are you going to need to recruit (post-docs)?

Additional Points:
Hiring for Projects and Mechanics

- New view for projects: Not what to do, but *who can do it* (necessary skills)

- Establish a system / approach for each type of recruit (student, tech, etc.)

- *What should you look for?*

a. Can you work with them / willingness for guidance
b. Previous track record; enthusiasm / dedication
c. Independence
d. Diversity

Key Point:
Practice and hone your mentorship skills

- Different approaches to mentorship for different people

- Co-adapt people with projects; balance of flexibility and rigidity

- Evaluate skills of mentee and start to anticipate their needs

- Be constructive with criticism, when and where, and how tough

- Set up a team environment where you are not the only one training/mentoring

Key Point:
Establish your ‘lab culture’

- Define the core principles of your lab

- Set expectations: team knows what you need, but will help self-select a team that thrives in the environment you establish

- The dynamics will change: research directions, skills, people; this will influence lab culture

- How you respond (or not) to challenges or issues that arise also sets tone

- Most people can handle adversity and setbacks if: (i) supported, (ii) equity and fairness are upheld, (iii) communication is open, (iv) expectations are clear.

Final Thoughts

- Special care for the first set of people. Your lab will discuss (advocate, or dissuade)

- To streamline admin paperwork: sort it out the first time, know what needs doing, then just do it. Connect with your HR rep.

For more thoughts, check out:

Voight *Genome Biology* (2019) 20:6
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Genome Biology

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Keen on the tenure track job, are you? Know these things, you should

Benjamin F. Voight

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