Transitioning Successfully From Postdoc To Faculty

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Lots To Keep Track Of

- Setting research goals
- Setting clinical goals
- Setting teaching goals
- Setting up your lab/office
- Finding staff
- Getting funded
- Publishing your work
- University service
- Broader scientific service
- Campus relationships
- Science relationships
- Personal relationships

To Hit the Ground Running:

- Take care of your personal life
- Establish first-year goals as soon as possible
- Set up & stock your lab
- Set up your office and computer
- Make a plan for hiring staff and/or recruiting students
- Integrate you & your group into department/university life
- Plan lectures & classes
- Plan & begin writing grants
- Plan for clinic or service responsibilities
Your Lab Space

- Expect 600 - 1000 square ft; may or may not be renovated
- Choice may include “open lab” or more traditional space
- You typically need to find space for each lab member, their desk, common equipment & storage
- Configurations include individual-based, assay-based, or a hybrid approach
- Put your lab bench/work space in a central spot
- If possible, keep your office close-by

Considerations When Purchasing Major Equipment

- Do you really need one of your own?
- Will the equipment be a lab mainstay?
- How long will you use it?
- Is the technology changing?
- Do you need all the bells & whistles?
- Is local service available?
- Can you afford it?
- Do you have room for it?

Considerations When Stocking A Wet Lab

- Survey your current work environment
- Consider your immediate research plans
- Learn about local purchasing rules & regulations
- Make sure you have appropriate storage in place
  - Find vendors with new-lab “specials”
Some Things That Are Often Over-looked:

- IACUC and IRB approvals
- Required training courses & paperwork
- Advanced planning for housing animals
- Organizational systems for your research group
- Establishing relationships with core facility managers

Things You Need to Be Successful

- Feedback relevant to your research projects
- Feedback relevant to your teaching and/or clinical responsibilities
- Access to professional development opportunities
- Sense of community and personal support
- Access to appropriate networks, on- and off-campus

Teaching

- Learn about on-campus resources
- Talk with other faculty about the types of students you will be teaching
- Attend classes given by known "master" teachers
- Find master teachers to observe you and provide feedback
- Collect syllabi and materials from previous lecturers
- Begin compiling your teaching portfolio from the outset
Tenure

- Be sure you have a clear understanding of what is expected and what goes into a tenure package
  - Ask to see examples
  - Carefully read all university guidelines
  - Understand your rights regarding slowing the tenure clock
- Talk with your chair within the first 3 months to begin an ongoing dialogue
- When talking with mentors and considering options “talk to tenure”

Relationship Management

- Identify key players, potential mentors, and advocates
  - Your department or center chair/chairs
  - Senior leadership in the department, Dean’s office, university, etc
  - Junior faculty who remember what you are going through
  - Graduate and training grant program leadership
  - Faculty in your field – on and off campus
  - Faculty in courses you will teach in or want to teach in
- Establish regular meetings with key players and supporters
  - Regular will vary depending on the individual and the nature of the relationship
- Attend seminars and social functions
- Realize you will get overwhelmed with information early-on so plan accordingly

Time Management

- Find resources now if this tends to be a sticking point
- Be pragmatic and plan wisely – it is easy to get overwhelmed with requests
- Engage your chair and mentors in helping you choose when to say “yes” and when to say “no”
- Understand “The only” factor
- Balance pragmatic decision-making with attention to your passions
- Ask yourself – can this wait a year?, two years? Until I have tenure? Until…..?
Some Common Themes

- Learn the “rules” - spoken and unspoken
- Talk to experts
- You need mentors and advocates; find them on- and off-campus
- Collect necessary information before deciding
- Deadlines matter
- There is no such thing as a free lunch
- Learning to say “NO” is a critical skill to develop early
- We all make mistakes – turn them into learning opportunities

Leadership

“Although you’ve been hired for your scientific skills and research potential, your eventual success will depend heavily on your ability to guide, lead, & empower others to do their best work.”

Dr. Tom Cech, HHMI
Leaders Who Succeed:

- Create high morale, pride and spirit within their team
- Ensure that resources are available & remove barriers that hinder the team’s effectiveness
- Adapt & develop during transitions - help employees do the same

Leadership Involves:

- Understanding yourself
- Understanding your employees and trainees
- Developing outstanding communication skills
- Developing and using your emotional intelligence

Important Questions

- What is it we are trying to accomplish?
- What is our shared vision for how we should work together?
- How will we work together to build and maintain team morale?
- How will we work cooperatively to resolve conflicts and deal with issues that come up?
Why We Run Into Problems

- Expectation mismatch
- Differences in personalities, work styles & temperaments
- Discomfort relating to personal differences
- Competition for resources - including time

Supervisors & Mentors

- Supervisor
  - someone who directs the work of another
  - a supervisor is responsible for ensuring that someone does their job
- Mentor
  - someone who passes on skills, knowledge, and wisdom to another person
  - a mentor works to help develop someone’s career

Supervision vs. mentoring

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Supervising</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus of learning</td>
<td>Needs of the organization/group</td>
<td>Needs of the mentee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style of help</td>
<td>&quot;I tell - you do&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;We talk - you do&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance of power</td>
<td>In the control of the supervisor</td>
<td>More equal and fluid</td>
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Masterful Mentoring, 2005
Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Theory

- Suggests that successful leaders adjust their styles depending on the situation
  - No one style is inherently better; they all have their time and place and should be used as appropriate
- Characterizes leadership style in terms of the amount of direction and support that the leader provides to their followers
  - Four styles based on the relative emphasis on directive vs. supportive behaviors
  - The key issue in adjusting your leadership style is follower maturity

Two Types of Behaviors

- Directive behaviors (task focused)
  - Involves clearly telling people what to do, how to do it, when to do it and then closely monitoring behavior
- Supportive behaviors (relationship focused)
  - Involves listening to people, providing support for their efforts, and then facilitating their involvement in problem-solving and decision making

Hersey-Blanchard Leadership Model

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<th>Supportive behaviors (focus on relationship)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Delegating</td>
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Impact of Ability and Confidence

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Can A Supervisor Also Be A Mentor?
- Yes
- No
- Yes, but……
  - There can be a substantial amount of tension between these two roles

Causes of Role Tension
- Student may not feel safe disclosing to “their boss”
- Your needs are not the same as your students’ needs
- Time constraints may limit quality of mentoring interactions
- Lack (or perceived lack) of expertise and experience in specific areas relevant to the student
Some General Strategies (I)
- Think about your own experiences
  - Identify best practices
  - Avoid mimicry of worst practices
- Find a “mentoring mentor” and other ways to keep growing
  - Workshops, courses, and on-line information
  - Leadership journal
- Develop a framework for dissecting specific situations
  - List: my needs - his/her needs
  - Consider: long- and short-term impacts of your decisions
  - List: deadlines and factors impacting my decision that need to be communicated to the fellow
  - Meet and talk about it

Some General Strategies (II)
- Encourage members of your research group to find additional mentors; facilitate this process if necessary
- Know about training resources on your campus; anticipate needs and direct fellows to these resources early
- Discuss goals and progress - early and often
  - Science, career, [and personal]
  - Formally - using an IDP
  - Informally - suited to your style and your fellow’s style

Communication Within Your Team
- Informal interactions fostered by time in the lab/group office, walk-bys, an open-door policy, & social interactions
- Weekly group meeting
- One-on-one meetings with team members
- Small group meetings/project meetings
- Strategy sessions
- Performance reviews & progress reports
Morale, Pride & Team spirit

High

- High productivity
- Cooperation & teamwork
- Fun environment

Low

- Low productivity & lethargy
- No cooperation or teamwork
- Negativism & friction

Ways to Build & Maintain Morale

- Show genuine concern & interest in people; interact with them in a variety of ways
- Develop group traditions
- Be a “real person”
- Develop your sense of humor
- Be open, honest, & self-disclosing
- Be passionate about your work
- Be visible & available for the team - lead by example
- Try not to be aloof, arrogant, impatient, overly critical
- Share credit, both privately & in public ways
- Take responsibility for getting the team back on track when necessary

Giving Feedback

- Allows you to deal with issues and shore up weaknesses
- Helps students and staff build on their strengths
- Accelerates learning in all environments
- Can also be in the form of a tangible reward
- May start out informally, but eventually needs to become more formal if there are substantial issues
- Must be within institutional and program norms
Feedback Should Be:

- Often
- Timely
- Focused on skills relevant to your mission
- NOT just a “pat on the back”

SBI Feedback:

- Describe the SITUATION in which you observed the employee
- Describe the BEHAVIOR you observed
- Describe the IMPACT of that behavior on you and others present in that situation

* From the Center for Creative Leadership

REMEMBER: It is not only what you say, but how you say it

Things to Avoid:

- Public Spaces
- Phrases like “always” & “never”
- Vague phrases that don’t focus on a specific behavior
- Exaggerated statements about the behavior’s impact
- Interpreting the behavior
- Exploring reasons for the behavior
- Speaking for others
- Good-bad-good sandwiches
- Going on for too long
- Implied threats
- Using sarcastic humor in place of feedback
- Phrasing feedback as a question, not a statement
Final reflections

- Even with the best intentions, we cannot be the “best” leader all of the time for all of our team.
- Apologies & effort go a long way, but only if we are honestly making the effort.
- We all have our weak spots; figure out what “gets your goat” & work on dealing with these issues more calmly.
- View each “failure” as an opportunity to learn for the next time; find a “mentoring mentor” & talk it out.

Resources

- [www.hhmi.org/labmanagement](http://www.hhmi.org/labmanagement) for Making the Right Moves
- BWF book, Staffing the Lab
- Books available in the OITE Career Library including Entering Mentoring, At the Helm, Motherhood: The Elephant in the Laboratory, Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment, Academic Scientists at Work, etc.
- A variety of websites including the OITE, your IC Training Office, the NPA, Science Careers, Naturejobs Careers, The Chronicle of Higher Education, newfacultysuccess.com
- Email me (milgrams@od.nih.gov) if you wish to take part in a new faculty brown-bag

Staffing Your Research Group

Consider:

- What you can afford
- Stability of your funding
- Progress of your research
- How much time you have to train & mentor new employees
- Quality and quantity of graduate students
- Presence of strong undergraduate research programs
Checking A Reference

- Best done by phone
- First describe the job & work environment
- Ask short, open-ended questions
  - Why is she leaving your lab?
  - Is he reliable? Why do you say that?
  - Will she go the extra mile at crunch time?
  - Would you rehire?
  - Can you describe strengths & weaknesses?
- Probe for further information by asking for examples

Issues To Address During the Interview

- Experience & skills
- Commitment and initiative
- Working & learning styles
- Time management skills
- Decision making & problem solving skills
- Interpersonal skills