National Postdoctoral Association
14th Annual Meeting
Plenary I

Hosted by the Van Andel Research Institute
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Fostering Leadership During the Postdoc Years & Beyond

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“If I had one piece of advice it’s that although you’ve been hired for your scientific skills and research potential, your eventual success will depend heavily on your ability to guide, lead and empower others to do their best work.”

Thomas R. Cech, Ph.D.
HHMI Investigator

Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty, Burroughs Wellcome Fund and Howard Hughes Medical Institute, 2006
Why YOU need leadership training

• Postdocs want it
• Group leaders want you-- high-performing postdocs
• Postdocs need a job
• Society needs well-trained group leaders

"You need to be focused on the science, but you also have to have a career perspective in mind. You need to know where you want to go."

Do postdocs need leadership skills? Smartsiencecareer.com. 10/8/2014
What does leadership mean to you?
Leadership is getting a group of people to enact a vision of what needs to be accomplished

Leadership = Vision + Relationship + Tasks

*Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty, Burroughs Wellcome Fund and Howard Hughes Medical Institute, 2006*
A leader creates a **VISION** and sets the direction for the lab

Start with your **mission statement**

- Use broad strokes, key measures of success
- Provide reasoned & emotional justification
- Tie it to the values and culture of your dept/school
- Be clear and honest
- Create a distinct future that distinguishes your programs from others
Sample mission statements

“The goal of our laboratory is to be among the most successful and respected in the area of cancer genetics. The ultimate goal is to help develop better therapies and cures for cancer. To this end, we will collaborate with other researchers in the area and share our results and reagents. We will be recognized for being fair and collegial.”

“Our lab aims to understand the mechanisms by which cells transport proteins. In particular, we will focus on technical challenges that others have not been able to overcome. A main focus of the lab is to train the next generation of scientists. We will create an environment that is conducive to learning and testing new skills.”

Every decision you make should be made with your mission statement in mind!

*Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty, Burroughs Wellcome Fund and Howard Hughes Medical Institute, 2006*
What does a leader do?

• Effectively communicate with the people in your lab
• Motivate them
• Make fair decisions
• Resolve conflicts
• Set and enforce expectations
• Be both a leader and manager
• Build and sustain an effective and diverse team

“Everything we do as faculty requires communication skills. You can have the greatest idea but if you don’t have how to explain it, it will fall flat on its face.”

Be the kind of leader that you would follow.
Diversity = Productivity

“Identity diversity among intelligent people on a team contributes more to effective problem-solving than a team comprised of the best-performing, intelligent people without diversity.”

Scott Page, PhD

“We’d like to believe that we are open-minded, fair and without bias, but research shows otherwise. This is an important, even if uncomfortable, realization for most of us.”

Mahzarin Banaji, PhD

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

What are some traits of a great leader?
Less than great leader?
Characteristics of leaders

**Yesterday**
- Self oriented
- White male
- Individualistic
- Basic or clinical science
- Tactical
- Knowledge centered
- Tenure track
- Incremental
- Status/titles/income

**Today/Tomorrow**
- Aligned with organization
- Diverse
- Teamwork/collaboration
- Translational
- Strategic
- Competence centered
- Non-tenure track
- Breakthrough
- Ethical fulfillment

*Darrell G. Kirch, M.D., president and CEO of AAMC*
Leadership skills for science
*learn continuously, practice routinely and systematically*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining &amp; communicating your vision</td>
<td>Intercultural leadership</td>
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<td>Giving constructive feedback</td>
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<td>Conflict management</td>
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<td>Situational leadership</td>
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<td>Complex project management</td>
<td>Effectively handling administration</td>
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Come up with your leadership style!

15 essential skills to lead your research group. Smartsciencecareer.com. 6/3/2014
How to improve your leadership skills

- Read books and attend leadership development courses and workshops
- Get to know your strengths and weaknesses (SWOT)
- Find a mentor… or, more importantly, a sponsor!

*Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty, Burroughs Wellcome Fund and Howard Hughes Medical Institute, 2006*
Get a sponsor!

SPONSORS
- Stick neck out, public
- Deans, provosts, presidents
- Directs/fuels the relationship
- Open doors for next move
- Expect loyalty and stellar performance

MENTORS
- Behind the scene
- Any rank or position
- Driven by mentee
- Help envision next move
- Expect little in return

Advice
Guidance
Make introductions
Give feedback

(2) Byyny, R. L., Mentoring and Coaching in Medicine, The Pharos, Winter 2012
(3) Hewlett, SA, Forget Mentor, Find a Sponsor, 2013
Mentor? Sponsor?

“A mentor will listen to you and speak with you, but a sponsor will talk about you.”

Kathy Hopinkah Hannan
National Managing Partner
KPMG LLP US

EXAMPLE:

A mentor would advise you to become a member of the editorial board of a journal

A sponsor would personally recommend you to the editor

Fostering Sponsorship Success Among High Performers and Leaders, Catalyst, 8/2011
From protégé to sponsor...
My story: The long and winding road
Homework:

Prepare a vision and mission statement for your lab before you leave this annual meeting!