Creating your Individual Development Plan

Part 1: Finding the Right Career Path for YOU

Cynthia Fuhrmann, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean, Career & Professional Development
University of Massachusetts Medical School
cynthia.fuhrmann@umassmed.edu

Question...

1. What is your current career goal?
2. How confident are you in this choice?
   a) I am very confident.
   b) I am fairly confident.
   c) I am still considering a range of career options.
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You have many career options!

Education
- Research Univ
- 4 yr College
- 2 yr College
- High School
- Professor: Teaching and Mentoring
- Science Museums
- Science Ed Research
- Curriculum Development
- Science Education Policy
- Leadership/ Administration

You have many career options!

Biotech
- Discovery research
- Project management
- Product development
- Regulatory affairs
- R & D
- Commercial Operations
- Business development
- Corporate communications
- Management Consulting
- Venture Capital
- Operations
- Quality

Toby Friedman

Prepared by Cynthia Fuhrmann
A workshop to complement myIDP (myIDP.sciencecareers.org)
Creating Your Individual Development Plan:
Finding the Right Career Path for YOU

How can you choose the right career path… and be more confident in your choice?

Do strategic, targeted career planning! (and start early!)

Be strategic, targeted: Create your own Individual Development Plan (IDP)

1. Self-assessment
2. Career exploration
3. Set goals

myIDP.sciencecareers.org

C. Fuhrmann, J. Hobin, B. Lindstaedt, P. Clifford

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What will we do today?

How to...

• Link *your* skills, values, interests to career path options

• **Confidently** discuss your career objectives with:
  – Your network
  – Future employers
  – Your mentors (and PI!)

“The point in life is to be happy.

All other goals
(money, fame, status, responsibilities, achievement)
are merely ways of making you happy, and worthless in themselves.”

Peter Fiske, *Put Your Science to Work*
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Self-assessment – a key first step to ultimate happiness

- Skills: What are you good at?
- Values: What is important to you?
- Interests: What do you enjoy doing?
- Fit: What is most rewarding?

Job Satisfaction ↔ Skills, Interests, Values

Self-assessment – be selective

Skills ↔ Values ↔ Interests

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Self-assessment – link it to past experiences

- **Consider an experience where:**
  - You played a primary role
  - There was a *concrete, successful outcome* (problem solved, project completed, created something new)
  - You *enjoyed* doing it

- What did you enjoy about it?
- What skills, interests, and values were involved?

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1. **Self-assessment**
2. **Career exploration**
3. **Set goals**
4. **Implement plan. Engage mentors.**

Learn about many career paths... then *narrow your focus.*
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Learn about your career options

• READ about careers
  – Articles online
  – Books
  – Professional societies' webpages (perhaps join!)

• Attend events

• Talk to people!
  – Network & do informational interviews

Learn about many career paths… then narrow your focus.

Use your self-assessment to focus your career exploration

How does the career match your skills, interests, values?
What are disconnects?
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Use your self-assessment to focus your career exploration

- List potential disconnects between your skills / values / interests and your current career choice.

**Why do this?**
- You might discover misconceptions!
- Remember: no career is perfect!

Skills

? Values

Interests

Use your self-assessment to focus your career exploration

- List potential disconnects between your skills / interests / values and your current career choice.

**Circle** the one that is most critical.

- Tell the person next to you... (2 min)
  - Name the career path you are considering
  - One potential disconnect (value, skill, or interest)
  - PARTNER: Is this true, or a misconception? Examples?
- Switch!
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Use your self-assessment to **focus** your career exploration

- List how this career path matches your skills / interests / values.

Why do this?
These are topics easy to discuss with scientists in this career path.
You need to be able to articulate to mentors how a career fits you.

Skills

Values

Interests

Learn about your career options

- **READ** about careers
  - Articles online
  - Books
  - Professional societies' webpages (perhaps join!)

- **Attend events**
- **Talk to people!**
  - Build a network
  - Informational interviews

Learn about many career paths... then **narrow your focus**.
Learn about your career options

Informational interview

• What is it?
  – A discussion with someone, asking specific questions to learn about their career path

• Why do it?
  – Learn about career (and employers!)
  – Get advice on how to prepare (skills? experience?)
  – Build your network!

Learn about your career options

Informational interview

• How do you set one up?
  – Email the contact and ask to set a time to talk (30-60 min)
  – Say you’re considering “making a career path change into [their career field]”
  – Say you’re “only seeking advice and opinions” on their field/industry; “not asking for a job”
  – Let them know you’ll be “brief and structured”
Learn about your career options

Informational interview

- During the “interview”....
  - Start with *connects* to build rapport
  - Bring a list of questions
    - Use your *disconnects* as a source of questions! (VALUES)
    - samples at myIDP.sciencecareers.org

  - *At end, ask if they can suggest someone else you could meet with*

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Learn about your career options

Informational interview

- During the “interview”....
  - Start with *connects* to build rapport
  - Bring a list of questions
    - Use your *disconnects* as a source of questions! (VALUES)
    - samples at myIDP.sciencecareers.org

- *Exercise:*
  - Choose a critical disconnect you identified earlier
  - Write 1-3 questions designed to learn more about this disconnect
    - In the career path generally, and at their employer specifically.
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Learn about your career options
Informational interview

• How to find people?
  – Build and use your professional network!

Building your network:
Who?

• Who is already in your network?

• How can you expand your network?
  – “Go public” with your career interests
  – LinkedIn
  – Local scientist gatherings – AWIS, MassBio, WEST
  – Strategic networking at scientific meetings
  – Professional societies specific to the career
  – At end of informational interview
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Building your network: Who?

• Who is already in your network?

• Exercise:
  – Draw your network map:
    • Write names of people you know in the lower wedge (representing your top career choice)
    • Write the names of people in other wedges likely to know someone in the dark wedge
  – List 1-3 people you will do an informational interview with. Contact them before January 2013.

Building your network: Who?

• Who is already in your network?

• How can you expand your network?
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  – LinkedIn
  – Local scientist gatherings – AWIS, MassBio, WEST
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Building your network: Prepare your networking tools

- LinkedIn
  - Update your profile
  - Be selective in who you link to
  - Join groups
  Include a picture
  Write a “summary”
  Only accept people you know.

Building your network: Prepare your networking tools

- Business cards
  - Order through BUSM
  - Hand it over as you introduce yourself

- Ask for their business card
  - To remind yourself of the situation, write a note on the back of the card

Nov. 12, 2012 – AWIS career panel.
BUSM alum; spoke about importance of work-life balance. Met after event and agreed to an info interview.
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Building your network: 
Prepare your networking tools

• The “elevator pitch” – Practice it! Tailor it!
  – 30-second summary
  – 3-min summary
  – Consider including:
    “I am a graduate student at BUSM with a focus on <one phrase describing work>. My work has involved a great deal of writing and editing within our research team. I am interested in moving into a career in science writing.”
    (keep it positive – use your “match” list!

Building your network: 
Maintain the relationship

• After a meaningful conversation or favor
  – Email a thank-you note immediately (or hand-written)

• Periodically send an update on your progress. 
  Excuses for this might include:
  – Thank them: Met with a person they recommended
  – Help them: Send a resource/article of interest to them
  – Update of interest to them:
    • New paper came out
    • Preparing to start the job search
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Mentoring:
Critical throughout the process

- Have reasonable expectations of mentors
  - No one mentor can know all
  - Personality styles
  - Time limitations

- Have a team of mentors, utilize the strength of each.

Mentoring:
Discuss career goals with mentors

Plan a separate meeting about your long-term career goals

- Sound confident! (wishy-washy invites skepticism)
  - Indicate that you’ve done your homework
  - Focus on how you well match with your career path of choice
    “I have been learning about a number of career paths, including reading materials online, attending career panels, and talking with scientists who have followed these paths. I’ve found that _____ is a great match for me. It takes advantage of my skills in...”

- If mentor asks about a career path you don’t want to follow, be able to discuss your perceived disconnects.

- Give your mentor a clear role, such as:
  - Ask if he/she can introduce you to people in the career path.
  - Ask if he/she can provide a strong recommendation
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The point in life is to be happy.

Peter Fiske, “Put Your Science to Work”

Jobs are competitive (in academia and beyond).
Find the right career path for YOU, and be strategic in getting yourself there.

Cynthia

As you seek your next career step…

• Take a strategic, targeted approach to career planning
• Link your skills, values, interests to career path options
• Confidently discuss your career objectives with:
  – Your network
  – Future employers
  – Your mentors (and PII)

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Thank you!

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