Tools for Better Mentoring: A Career Advancement Plan

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December 10, 2019
Opening Question

When is the last time you packed for a trip without knowing the destination?

How many of you have or use an individual development plan?
Objectives for Today

• Discuss the purpose and structure of an IDP/Career Advancement Plan (CAP)
• Discuss goal-setting strategies and formulation of SMART goals
• Using a CAP to guide a mentoring relationship
Mentoring and Relationships

• How many of you are currently mentors?
• How many of you are someone’s mentee?

• Goal setting, mentoring and career planning
  – Having clear goals makes it easier to get feedback from mentors about your career direction
Invaluable tool: The Career Advancement Plan

- Tool designed to aid in building a career and professional development roadmap
- Tailored to an individual’s skills, interests, and values.
- Resource for initiating and sustaining discussions between mentees and mentors.
- When shared with a mentor and used as a tool for career progress, it is intended to develop mutual expectations of both mentees and mentors.
- Provides structure for regularly occurring (every 6-12 months) career and professional discussions with mentors.
- IT IS NOT meant to be rigid
# IDPs and Career Planning Work for Mentees and Mentors

## Sigma Xi Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>22,000 postdocs contacted</th>
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<tr>
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<td>7600 postdocs responded</td>
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## Postdocs with a written, structured plan:

- More productive than those without a plan
- Submitted papers at a 23% higher rate
- Published at a 30% higher rate
- Submitted grants at a 25% higher rate
- Fewer conflicts with PI
- More satisfied

[Visit Sigma Xi website for more information](http://www.sigmaxi.org/docs/default-source/Programs-Documents/Critical-Issues-in-Science/postdoc-survey/highlights)
How can faculty use an IDP/Career Advancement Plan?

• Having “a plan” is equally valuable for faculty across all ranks

• Provides an opportunity to reflect on the steps required to achieve professional goals

• Used as a tool to guide discussion and get feedback from mentors, peers and even faculty/staff more junior than you
Example Goal on my Career Advancement Plan

• Long Term Goal:
  – Become an “expert” in recruiting for population studies
  1. Produce a toolkit for researchers to use to develop recruitment strategies for enrolling traditionally underrepresented populations in research studies.
  – Feedback from stakeholders of all ranks and titles is valuable
    • How does this position me at this institution?
    • Do my peers find this toolkit useful? What suggestions can they make to enhance the probability of success?
    • Do my staff think a toolkit would help us execute our studies? How do they suggest I make it useful?
Contemporary Goal Setting Theory

Feedback is key to effective goal completion

- Goal setting is the most popular behavior change strategy

- The strength of goal setting is that it demands a focus on a clearly defined target, and demands movement towards that target within a specified time frame

- Feedback is the most important component
  - Feedback mechanisms are ideally both positive and negative, and continuous and intermittent.
  - Track progress

SMART Goals

S • Specific
  • The 5 W’s

M • Measurable
  • Can I track progress

A • Attainable/Achievable
  • Is this a reasonable goal?

R • Relevant
  • Is the goal worthwhile?

T • Timebound/Timely
  • What is the time limit for this objective?
My SMART Goal

• Long Term Goal:
  – Produce a toolkit for researchers to use to develop recruitment strategies for enrolling traditionally underrepresented populations in research studies.

• SMART Goal:
  – Within the next 12 months, I would like to conduct a survey in young adults to identify barriers to participation in research studies and publish 1 paper in a peer reviewed journal (preferably a methodology journal) and present my findings at the Society for Epidemiologic Research meeting.
Specific

The 5 “Why” questions

• What do I want to accomplish?
• Why is this goal important?
• Who is involved?
• Where is it located?
• Which resources or limits are involved?

Tell me a specific goal
Measureable

Having measureable goals can help you stay motivated

• How much?
• How many?
• How will I know when it is accomplished?

Tell me a measurable goal
Achievable

• How can I accomplish this goal?
• How realistic is the goal, based on other constraints, responsibilities and roles?
• Ensure that achieving the goal is within your control and not someone else’s
Relevant and Realistic

• Does this seem worthwhile?
• Is this the right time?
• Do I have the skills needed to reach this goal?
Time-Bound

• When?
• What can I do in the short-, medium- or long-term?
• What do I need to do today to achieve my goal?
Career Development Goal 1: What is Good? What is Missing?

• Career Development Goal
  – To give 2 invited presentations in the next year

• Strengths
  – Time-bound
  – Realistic
  – (semi) specific

• Areas for improvement
  – Lack of specificity on what presentations will be about and to whom?
  – Goal may not be achievable for reasons that are outside of my control
Career Development Goal 2: What is Good? What is Missing?

• Goal

  – To earn an R01 on an intervention to reduce obesity in women postpartum

  – (My background: no prior NIH funding, but solid publication record, new to the institution)

• Strengths

  – Specific description of the topic

• Areas for improvement

  – Not sure it’s achievable given my background

  – Not clear who my collaborators are to make it happen

  – No timeframe
Using the SMART goals to guide career development discussions

• With SMART goals on a CAP, meetings with mentors can focus on making goals as SMART as possible
• Together, mentors-mentees can identify resources to overcome barriers
• Regular review over time can ensure progress towards goals
Using a CAP as a mentor...

- Keep discussions timely and relevant:
  - Start early, re-visit at regular intervals
  - Coincide with pre-existing big-picture milestones & discussions
- Maintain flexibility as needed (format/process) while providing accountability for working towards goals
- Encourage mentees to share their IDP with others (co-mentors, peers, mentors outside the institution)
- Connect trainees and junior faculty to resources throughout the process
Conclusion

• A faculty professional development plan with review is going to be required of all regular track faculty this year
  – Faculty are required to state their goals and progress towards those goals on an annual basis
  – Chairs and chiefs will have to review these plans with all faculty
• Opportunity to jump start the habit of setting goals and reviewing them regularly
• NUCATS Center for Education and Career Development offers annual 3-hour mentor training workshops

• [https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/about/centers-and-programs/center-for-education-and-career-development.html](https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/about/centers-and-programs/center-for-education-and-career-development.html)
Fall 2019 Mentor Development Workshop Wednesday December 10, 2019

• Prentice Conference Room L
• 8am-11:30am
• Topics covered
  – Effective communications
  – Aligning Expectations
  – Professional Development

Acknowledgements to co-facilitators: Kenzie Cameron, Kelly Michelson, Leah Neubauer