Tips on Managing Your Research Group

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20 April 2012
Characteristics of Successful Grad Students

- Smart
- Persistent
- Productive
- Sense of urgency
- Personally aspire to greatness

*These characteristics do not, by themselves, lead to success as a Professor*
The Key Transitions

• Executing → Planning/intellectual creativity
• Focus on PhD → Juggle many things
• Being a good follower → Becoming a good leader
• Being on Payroll → Meeting a payroll
• Finding a good advisor → Finding good students
• Aspiring to personal greatness →

Obtaining personal satisfaction from the achievements of others
Your success is 100% dependent on your ability to motivate, guide and lead students through their personal journeys towards an MS or PhD.
Key Steps

• Get experience before becoming a professor
  – Manage others as Grad student and Post-doc
  – Fail/make mistakes and realize this is HARD work (really HARD!!)
  – Read self-help and management books

– Study people you admire

Dedicate yourself to continuous self-improvement/self-evaluation
• **Personal branding:** Develop a profound understanding of who you are, what you stand for, and what you want to be known for

  – Find your research niche: Personal satisfaction, market analysis ($), potential for intellectual and social contributions
  – If you can’t become THE BEST in a particular area, and are not prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to do so, find another area
  – Develop a personal political, economic and ethical philosophy about yourself
  – Develop a mission, and become an irresistible force on behalf of what you believe in

*You can’t really help others on their journey, unless you know where you are going yourself*
For better or worse, mostly worse, this is who I am.
Having a personal philosophy means being proved wrong...a lot.
But get used to it and be humble.
Now, Find and Embrace Guiding Quotes that Speak to You

• It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed.  Napoleon Hill.

• I cannot give you a formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure - which is: try to please everybody.  Herbert Bayard Swope

• What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.  Albert Pike

• The world runs on individuals pursuing their self interests.  Milton Friedman
Apply to a Management/Team Building Philosophy

First, decide what you are not.
Now, decide on a vision for what you are.
Find Others Who Embrace Your Philosophy and Mission
Learn to Evaluate Talent

Bad match of student/advisor vs. Good match of student/advisor

Professor = WORST JOB IN THE WORLD

No amount of $$ could make this worthwhile!!

Professor = BEST JOB IN THE WORLD

Can’t believe I get paid to do this!!
Students you will encounter

The Star
E Self-generated
Don’t get burned
Very rare

Typical Graduate Student
A portion of $E_{\text{in}}$ returned
More $E_{\text{in}}$, more $E_{\text{out}}$

The Black Hole
A lot of $E_{\text{in}}$, No $E_{\text{out}}$
Destroys everything in its orbit
Avoid at all costs
Can results from bad match of personality/expectations

Famous Last Words:
I can work with anyone!!
XX needs a PhD advisor...volunteers?
XX does not require funding (or is a “free” student)
So make expectations perfectly clear

What you can expect from me

• Prompt review and input
• Encouragement when appropriate
• Criticism when appropriate
• More than your fair share of credit for what you have done
• A world-class opportunity to be successful

What I expect from you

• Understanding that you are a “work in progress”
• A sense of urgency to take advantage of the opportunity
• Enthusiasm and persistence
• Help me and others make a bigger pie
• Appreciation for the sacrifices the team is making to help you

What we expect from each other

• Trust
• Positive reinforcement
• Immediate communication of problems/concerns
• Honesty and ethical behavior
• Understanding of human shortcomings
Let people know where you will be leading them...

National Research Award
Maybe they don’t want to go.
If so, finding out sooner is better.
My Checklist

• Good personality match?
• Shared goals/vision?
• Appreciative
• Conscientious
• Hard working
• Likeable
Some Important Coaching Tips/Concepts

• Productivity = Effort × Success Rate

• A quick and dirty test run can be better than weeks of planning. Don’t obsess about mistakes.

• Break your advisee’s “A+++++++” Habit

• Student time is valuable (= $25/hour to $50/hour), make sure they realize it!
Safety and care have to be paramount. Remember that this is a fun but potentially dangerous profession. Don’t want to lose anyone.
Become financially savvy

• All research dollars are **not** created equal
  – $1 NSF = $3 from some other sources
  – Learn to work within, and when appropriate around, schools overhead system

• Find a means of generating discretionary funds
Encourage students to have some balance.
To be or not to be...

• Is it possible to have a social life in Graduate School???
• How???

STRIKE A BALANCE!
Encourage Life/Work Balance

GOAL: DON'T BURN OUT!!

WORK EFFICIENTLY: Enjoy with no guilt

ENGAGE IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES: ON and OFF CAMPUS

INVEST TIME in personal PASSIONS and HOBBIES.

ENGAGE in Community Service and Outreach

TAKE A BREAK!!!

TAKE CARE of FAMILY and keep in touch with friends

From Simoni Triantafyllidou
Have Fun Together!
My Group-90%

William
Navarre
Amanda
Dr. Simoni
ME
Sheldon
Justin
Dr. J
Brent

Randi
Min
Jessica
Kat
Brandi
Dr. Simoni