Adventures in Academia: Things you should know but have probably never been told

Jeremy L. Conkle
jconkle@lsu.edu
GSS 2014
LUMCON

My Winding Path

- Field Chemist (2003-2006)
- Masters in Env. Studies (2006)
- PhD in Oceanography & Coastal Sciences (2010)
- Post-doc @ U California Riverside (2010-2013)
  - Post-doc Union Representative
- Lecturer @ LSU
- ......?????
How to Get Somewhere

- Planning
  - Think about your future
  - Talk to your professor/PI/mentors
  - Create an Individual Development Plan (IDP)
  - Revisit your planning/IDP regularly

Where do you want to be?

- Research?
- Teaching?
- Non-profit?
- Government?
- Industry?
- Consulting?
How to Get Somewhere

- Networking
  - Students at GSS will be your peers and potential collaborators in the future
  - Conferences
    - Go to socials
    - DO NOT burn bridges
- Join Societies
  - Be active in society
  - Fill out profile and keep it updated
- Networking
  - Jobs and research

How to Get Somewhere

- Get noticed
  - Conferences
  - Make conference presentations appealing
  - Create a website (Weebly, Wix, etc)
    - Keep updated information
    - CV
  - Email signature line
  - Business cards (<$20) – Ask your advisor
    - Make your own w/online templates
    - Collect others and put information into address book
Read Blogs and Websites

Where to look for a job

- Your academic/society and social networks
- Society websites
  - Ecological Society of America (ESA)
  - Association for the Sciences of Limnology & Oceanography (ASLO)
  - Etc., etc., etc.
- USA Jobs
- Company websites
How to Get a Job

- Follow application instructions
- Write, re-write and repeat and repeat
  - The more you write, the better they should get
  - Have someone else edit... Fiancés work best
- Figure out how to sell yourself
- Enthusiasm goes a long way
- Cast a wide, wide net
- Search for online advice
  - You get what you pay for...
  - Chronicle.com
CV and Resume

- Living document
- Constantly update
  - Any professional activity
  - Any volunteer activity

Researching CVs

- Look for examples online
  - The Chronicle of Higher Education (chronicle.com)
  - University websites
  - People in positions you want
  - Professors in your department
- Get help from professors/advisors
  - Ask them for examples/templates
  - You will get conflicting advice
Creating a CV

- Put everything in it... at first
- Don't worry if not great... at first
- Pay close attention to how examples are organized
- I still have a rough draft after ~8 years

Applying to positions

- ALWAYS adapt CV/Resume to the position
  - Teaching vs Research
  - Job posting information ("research interests")
  - Know the audience
Resumes

- A condensed, highly focused CV highlighting the particular skills and experience that make you the ideal candidate for the position as advertised
- Easy to create if you already have a CV
- Do some research
- Highlight skills and experience
- NGOs, Non-profits, consulting & Government
  - Basically anything NON-academic

Other Application Materials

- Research Statement
- Research Goals/Plans
- Teaching Statement
- Teaching Goals
- Teaching Philosophy
- Personal Statement
- ....
When You Get a Job

- Be thankful!
- Negotiate salary...
  - Figure out your cost of living
  - Must be realistic and fact-based
- Start planning again for your next step
  - Re-visit the IDP
- Most important.... HIT THE GROUND RUNNING
  - Don’t wait to be told
  - Show initiative

General Advice
General Advice

- Ok to feel dumb or out of place

---

The importance of stupidity in scientific research

Martin A. Schwartz
Department of Microbiology, UVA Health System, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22908, USA
E-mail: schwartz@virginia.edu

Accepted 9 April 2008
Journal of Cell Science 121, 1771 Published by The Company of Biologists 2008
doi: 10.1242/jcs.022000

---

General Advice

- It's ok to make mistakes
  - Just try to minimize the damage
  - Search vs Research
- It's ok to change your mind
General Advice

- Seek position in highly productive labs
- Cutting edge research
- Better research exposure
- More and BETTER publications
- Surround yourself with people that you admire and want to be like

General Advice

- BE UNCOMFORTABLE
Where the magic happens

Your Comfort Zone