



WORKING WITH RESEARCH ASSISTANTS AND POSTDOCS

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WORKING WITH RESEARCH ASSISTANTS AND POSTDOCS

- What did I gain as an undergraduate research assistant (RA) and postdoc?
- RA: powerful, meaningful role modeling; experience; recommendations
- Postdoc: research experience; interdisciplinary training; exposure to clinical research; role modeling and mentoring; funding; publications



RA STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

- **Imagine a student's experience: as a regular RA, in a large lecture course, in an online class**
- **Experience**
 - Practical (e.g., literature review, lab skills)
 - Philosophical (inspiration)
 - Professional (do I want to go to grad school in this field?)
- **Networking**
- **Recommendations**

RA FACULTY PERSPECTIVES

- <http://www.beloit.edu/mindset/slideshow/>:
know your students better
- Part of job description
- Benefits of ‘inexpensive’ labor traded off against time investment in student training
- Benefits of student expertise (e.g., technology)
- Intrinsically rewarding

FACULTY/RA CONSIDERATIONS

- Screening potential RAs (ads, criteria, meetings)?
- How to decide on a project (existing/new)?
- Time commitment and scheduling parameters?
- Expectations of student and faculty?
- Required training (e.g., IRB, lab skills, library resources, safety)?
- Course credits?
- Regular meetings (e.g., lab group)?
- Stipends or other support (e.g., <http://www.unr.edu/inbre/>)?
- End points (presentations, publications)?
- Higher stakes and expectations for graduate (vs. UG) RAs.

SOME RELEVANT WEBSITES

- <http://cre.fsu.edu/Faculty-Research-Mentors/Mentoring-Resources>
- <http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/pdf/IJTLHE280.pdf>
- <http://undergraduateresearch.buffalostate.edu/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLz1j9v-Cuf59TnK1VYPzb0-6xW7sWYSV7>

POSTDOC PERSPECTIVES

- Fields with the most postdocs: Biological sciences, Engineering, Physics, Chemistry, Psychology
- Life as a postdoc?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1YIYx8VBkI>
- What makes for a good postdoc?: <http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/34849/title/Best-Places-to-Work-Postdocs-2013/>
- Professional aims (e.g., specific mentor, research)
- Financial support (e.g., grant-supported) and benefits (e.g., health insurance, travel funds)
- Duration and stability
- Infrastructure (e.g., animal care facility, IRB, processing stipends)
- Professional development (career means vs. ends)

FACULTY MENTOR PERSPECTIVES

- Advertising and screening postdoctoral candidates
- Seeking specific skills and synergies
- Time and effort seeking funding to support positions such as postdocs

FACULTY/POSTDOC CONSIDERATIONS

- **Clear and effective communication**
 - Meetings
 - Formalized expectations (e.g., NSF mentoring plan)
- **Research logistics**
 - “ownership” of ideas and products of research (e.g., authorship on publications)
 - Negotiating mentor’s vs. postdoc’s research agenda
 - Maintaining lab “culture”
- **International students**

SOME RELEVANT WEBSITES

- <http://nationalpostdoc.org/competencies>
- <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/postdocs>
- <http://www.phds.org/postdoc>
- <http://postdocs.usc.edu/mentoring/>
- <http://postdocs.nd.edu/faculty/mentoring/>
- <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=postdoctoral>
- <http://www.unlv.edu/hr/staff-development/contract-training#pos1>