WORKING WITH RESEARCH ASSISTANTS AND POSTDOCS

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• 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
• 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/](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://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
• 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)
• Advertising and screening postdoctoral candidates
• Seeking specific skills and synergies
• Time and effort seeking funding to support positions such as postdocs
• 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.unlv.edu/hr/staff-development/contract-training#pos1