

The NICHD Connection

January 2016

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Get Your Time Management On for 2016

By Brenda Hanning, Deputy Director, Liaison & Training, Office of the Scientific Director

With the start of a new year comes what we call “resolutions,” when we all make plans and set goals for the next 12 months. Most often, it’s a pledge to exercise more, especially after eating sweets over the holiday season. Or, it could be *this is the year I look for a permanent job*. Or write up my research results. Whatever January inspires in us, thinking seriously about our approaches to time in the lab or in the workplace can help to make the most of those evaporating minutes. I’ve heard people say, “Where did the last year go?” Here are a few thoughts to consider for 2016.

A good place to begin is with an assessment of when you are most productive. Ideally for a trainee that time will align with your mentor’s schedule. If you achieve the most after 10 p.m., chances are you aren’t in the laboratory and there is no one to consult when a question arises. For writing, or the occasional lengthy experiment, those nocturnal hours might be good, but not for day-to-day learning and contributing to the research of your group. Work to align your schedule with the key members of your lab. And use your least productive time of day to do your laundry or catch up with friends.

Next, I suggest identifying the biggest time wasters in your life. Are you addicted to YouTube? Do you keep your phone by your side at all times, in case a friend texts you? Maybe it’s best to set aside the distractions until a different point in the day—when you are home, when you are ready to relax.



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Letter from the Editor

“People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Likely, you've heard about the twin paradox, a thought experiment on time dilation. Two identical twins stand on Earth. One twin enters a spacecraft and travels near the speed of light for one year. When that twin returns to Earth, the other twin is now decades older. The same amount of “time” has passed, but one twin experiences a lifetime, while the other experiences a single year. As crazy as the idea sounds, real life experiments prove the prediction in Einstein's special theory of relativity that time is not a fixed constant; time is relative.

Even the brightest theoretical physicist can struggle to define the concept of time. In mathematics, time depends on your speed in relation to another object, or your distance from a gravitational source. I challenge you to define time for yourself—not by how much of it you have, but by what you do with it. Your time may be relative, now make it relevant.

What better month than January to reflect on topics like:

- » [Time management](#)
- » [Individualized development plans](#)
- » [Responsible conduct in research](#)
- » [Compliant grant applications](#)

You'll find these topics and more inside this issue, including numerous [January announcements](#) and [events](#). Still need more time-saving advice? If all else fails, you could do your work on a mountain, as far away from Earth's gravitational pull as possible. Yes, that might buy you a few nanoseconds of time.

Happy New Year!

Your Editor in Chief,
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

Please send your questions, comments, and ideas to Shana.Spindler@gmail.com.

Get Your Time Management On for 2016 (continued from page 1)

Cumulatively, the minutes that divert your attention from your work can really add up.

Now some people mention email as one of the big drains on our time. Our In Boxes at NIH are always full, it's true. The more mail you keep, the harder it can be to sort and to find the items that genuinely are important to you. Go ahead and delete! Many of us are careful to put important information in the Subject line.

Planning is a perfect antidote to vanishing time. We don't all have to be compulsive list makers, but having a system is critical. What tools do you use? It could be a planner, a task manager in Outlook mail, or "To Do" in Google. Talk with your PI when you are developing experiments to test your research hypothesis; the time you spend brain-storming, up front, or surveying the literature, could save you many long hours at the bench that might lead to a dead end.

The Office of Education will list NICHD training and career activities with dates in the Subject line of an email, so you know what professional development workshops are coming up. Take advantage of these sessions to grow! Finding a time every day to see what lectures and talks are happening, what needs to be done at the bench, can help you to plan. But be sure to look for messages from your supervisor or mentor first, you want to be a responsive trainee or employee.

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Get Your Time Management On for 2016 (continued from page 3)

Ultimately, communication is the key tool at our disposal. Ask yourself: What is due today? Can I postpone something until tomorrow or next week? Are my plans for the day realistic? Whose help do I need? And then reach out to that person, so you can work together.

A final word. When December 2016 comes around, wouldn't it be great to say you accomplished many of your goals? That you have many check marks in the "done" column on your list or on your Individual Development Plan for the future? So, before January becomes February, pause. Think about yourself and where you want to be 11 months from now. Shed the distractions and embrace all that is possible as a new year begins.



day off n. (in Academia)

A day spent doing something related to your project that can still be considered productive but which requires no mental effort.

e.g. "I took the day off and sorted my references."



JORGE CHAM © 2015

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

<http://www.phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1842>

Responsible Conduct of Research Training NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR NICHD FELLOWS

BACKGROUND

The Advisory Committee to the Deputy Director for Intramural Research noted that requirements for Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training in the intramural program differ from the NIH requirements for extramural trainees, which stipulate eight hours of RCR training over a period of up to four years. Further, we have been informed that since 2010, 65% of research misconduct cases for the intramural program have involved trainees.

REQUIREMENTS

The Scientific Directors have approved an expansion of RCR training for intramural fellows, recommending eight hours over their initial two years in the IC (*six hours of training during the first year at NIH and two hours in the second year*). For NICHD, the Office of Education has the responsibility for tracking and enforcing the RCR mandate.

For all new fellows, the mandatory research ethics training plan consists of the following: Each component will be either **completed by the fellow** or **facilitated by the investigator** or the **Office of Education**.

CURRENT “INTRODUCTION TO RCR” COURSE (1 HR. FOR YEAR 1)

- » Online training module that focuses on the topics of scientific integrity, publication and authorship, peer review, mentor-trainee relationship, and data acquisition and management (must be completed within 3 weeks of arrival)

ETHICAL RESEARCH IN MY LAB (1 HR. PER YEAR, FOR YEARS 1 AND 2)

- » Investigators will cover specific lab policies including notebooks, data management, lab communication, data presentation, integrity, reproducibility and authorship (introduction year 1 and review year 2). List of resources below:
 - Guidelines for Scientific Record Keeping
 - Lab Notebooks - Daily Record Keeping
 - Guidelines for Scientific Authorship
 - Process for Authorship Dispute Resolution
 - Case Studies on Scientific Authorship
 - Case Studies on Research Misconduct
 - Case Studies Data Acquisition & Management

CURRENT ANNUAL DISCUSSION OF ETHICS CASES (1 HR. EACH YEAR), COORDINATED BY DR. GISELA STORZ

- » At the affinity group level, a designated investigator will annually facilitate small group discussions of case studies to address rotating topics of responsible conduct in research

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Responsible Conduct of Research Training (continued from page 5)

REPRODUCIBILITY OF DATA (1 HR. FOR YEAR 1)

» At the individual group level, discussion of Reproducibility of Data Training Modules developed by NIH. These are four video training modules including video clips and discussion materials for: Lack of Transparency, Blinding and Randomization, Biological and Technical Replicates, and Sample Size Outliers Exclusion Criteria. Two resources below:

- [Reproducibility of Data - Training Modules](#)
- [Case Studies in Enhancing Reproducibility](#)

DISCUSSION OF ETHICAL RESEARCH PRACTICES (2 HRS. FOR YEAR 1)

» An interactive session that promotes both self- and team based- learning required for all new postdoctoral fellows, and offered three times each year (February, May, and November) through the Office of Education. This session will include case studies and reading assignments related to research integrity, and discussions on ways to reduce risk factors.

**Please note postbacs and graduate students will be required to attend a centralized training session organized by OITE.

The format of the Discussion of Ethical Research Practices will be:

- » Reading materials and case studies provided in advance, achieving a self-learning approach (30 minutes). Three samples below:
 - What's in a picture? The temptation of image manipulation, *JCB*, 2004, Rossner and Yamada
 - Navigating through the gray (and CMYK) areas of figure manipulation: rules at the *J. Clin. Investi.* 2007, L.A Turke, Editor
 - Stop misbehaving! *J. Clin. Investi.* 2007, Neill, U.S.
- » Brief discussion on the reading materials at the start of class (15 minutes)
- » Team Based Learning: Application Exercises (60 minutes)
 - Involving three complex cases that promote discussions of either fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, mentoring expectations, and/or trainee responsibilities (15 minutes each)
 - Five people in randomized groups, discussing the same case and must commit to the same answer
 - Simultaneous reporting and an inter-team discussion
- » Discussion on ways to reduce your risk factors for research misconduct (15 minutes)
 - Good practices of data management and presentation (lab notebooks, both physical and electronic)

Be SMART About Your Career Training

By Courtney Kurtyka, PhD

What to do after your postdoctoral fellowship ends is a difficult decision. The job market is competitive, and you may feel as though career options are limited. To help ease this transition, numerous tools are available. On November 16, 2015, Dr. Yvette Pittman, associate director of the NICHD Office of Education, led a workshop covering one of these tools: the Individual Development Plan (IDP).

An IDP helps identify your best career matches and offers guidance and structure in how to pursue these paths. The Science Careers myIDP website is a convenient way to develop your own IDP. After creating a free and confidential account, you can complete several skills, interests, and value assessments that will point you to fitting career choices. As long as you answer these questions honestly, the site can present helpful job suggestions—including some that you might not have considered, or even heard about before.

Once you have your ranked list of career options, you can find links to articles,

books, and professional societies related to each position in the “Career Exploration” section. There are twenty careers described on this website (including science policy, science writing, research administration, and intellectual property), so it is an excellent resource for finding information about a variety of positions.

Once you know which careers you want to pursue, Dr. Pittman recommends looking at your resume or curriculum vitae (CV) every four to six months to spot any “holes” needing attention. To help you obtain missing skills or experience, you can use the SMART goals section of the myIDP website.

SMART stands for:

- S**pecific
- M**easurable
- A**ction-oriented
- R**ealistic
- T**ime-bound

(and additionally should include holding yourself accountable)

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Be SMART About Your Career Training *(continued from page 7)*

Setting SMART goals through the website can help you accomplish tasks necessary for your career development. For an added benefit, going through the IDP process will help you communicate your career goals to your PI. You can sign up for optional reminders on myIDP to ensure that you are sticking to your timeline.

Overall, it is never too early to start thinking about the next step for your career, and IDPs can help you

stay on track. The sooner you can identify your career goals, the easier it will be to finish any activities and training that will make you a better job candidate. Since myIDP is flexible, you can always go back into your account to adjust your answers to the assessments and create new goals that suit your future career aspirations. Also, if you ever want further career advice, Dr. Pittman (yvette.pittman@nih.gov) is happy to help.

Sherri Cummins on Eyeballs Versus Systems

By Shana R. Spindler, PhD

“When submitting your application, don’t just think about getting through [electronic] systems. Stop to think how your application will hold up to the scrutiny of someone with eyeballs,” wrote Sherri Cummins, NIH communications and outreach specialist, in a recent NIH eSubmission Items of Interest newsletter. Under the catchy subheading “Eyeballs catch stuff systems don’t,” Ms. Cummins presented a list of manual checks for NIH grant application compliance. But her list of “stuff staff look for” is applicable to most grant applications, even those funded by non-NIH organizations.

Do your grant applications meet the following requirements? (adapted from NIH eSubmission Items of Interest – November 16, 2015 eNewsletter)

- » Does the topic of the application fit the granting institute’s mission?
- » Is the applicant eligible to apply? (...do the applicant organization and PI meet the eligibility requirements specific to that program?)
- » Does the application include all critical sections? (...systems can tell if you attached a pdf document in a certain spot in the application, but can’t assess the content of that attachment...)
- » Does the application include information in inappropriate places to get around page limits?
- » Was the application submitted on time?
- » Do you already have an application with essentially the same content under review?
- » If reference letters apply, was the correct number of reference letters received by the due date?
- » Did you follow font and margin guidelines documented in the application guide when preparing all your attachments?
- » If requesting over \$500K in direct costs in any budget period, did you have institute permission to submit?
- » If human embryonic stem cells are indicated, were all restrictions for their use met?

Keep an eye out for these simple mistakes—because now you know someone else will if you don’t.

BIOSKETCHES

Biosketches are an important component of NIH grant applications, and they must be compliant. To stay up-to-date on biosketch rules, try using [SciENCv](#), an online tool that helps manage your information for a compliant biosketch.

GRANT WRITING SEMINARS

NIH’s Office of Extramural Research sponsors grant writing seminars on a regular basis. The seminar presentations are archived [here](#)—great for an investigators/trainees movie night (go ahead, chuckle, you know you want to).

The date is also set for the annual NICHD grantsmanship workshop: July 14, 2016. Let Yvette Pittman (yvette.pittman@nih.gov) know if you are interested in one of our 25 training slots.



Life Outside Lab

“Colorful reflections on water”
By Sudhir Rai, visiting postdoctoral
fellow in the Levin lab

*The Baltimore Inner Harbor at night,
photographed with a Sony DSLR camera.*

January Announcements

REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2016 TMT COMPETITION

This year's Three-minute-Talk (TmT) competition is almost underway! This unique science communication training and awards program affords you an opportunity to learn how to explain your research, in three minutes or less, in a way that's meaningful to a broad scientific audience. Check out the important January dates below:

JANUARY 15, 2016

DEADLINE TO ENTER

To enter, email your completed submission form to yvette.pittman@nih.gov, which includes the title of your talk and a brief description of your research (2–3 sentences max).

Up to 15 DIR fellows (predoctoral, postdoctoral, visiting, and clinical) will be invited to join the TmT Competition program. All 2015 finalists are also welcome to participate.

Submission form can be found at [Three-Minute Talks Webpage](#)

JANUARY 20

WORKSHOP #1 – SPEAKING ABOUT SCIENCE

Led by public speaking coach Scott Morgan. This workshop will offer tips on storytelling and delivery, speaking in plain language, and creating an effective visual aid.

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January Announcements

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HAPPY RETIREMENT TO OMBUDSMAN DIRECTOR HOWARD GADLIN!

Dr. Howard Gadlin has retired after nearly 20 Years with the NIH Office of the Ombudsman, a program he built from the ground up beginning in the late 1990s. The Office of the Ombudsman is a first stop for conflict management in the lab; it's handled thousands of cases since its inception (check out our article about the Office [here](#)). Certainly, the NIH is a better place due to Dr. Gadlin's devoted efforts as an Ombudsman and his role as a foundational member of the Office.

Dr. Kathleen Moore will serve as Acting Director for the Office beginning January 1, 2016.



*Drs. Kathleen Moore
and Howard Gadlin*

IT'S IMAGE COMPETITION TIME! DEADLINE JANUARY 15TH

All submissions (at the highest possible resolution) should be sent to Nicki Swan (jonasnic@mail.nih.gov) by Friday, January 15th, with a brief caption for the image.

The 12th Annual NICHD Fellows Meeting will be held on **April 22, 2016**, and we are looking for an image to feature. The winning image, representing some of the great work being done in our institute, will be showcased on the retreat website and posters, and used as the front cover of our program. Also, to highlight everyone's work, all submissions we receive will be used to produce an image collage posted on the 2016 retreat website. You can always take a look at the image submissions from previous years at <http://retreat.nichd.nih.gov>.

In addition to image resolution and quality, selection criteria include the relevance to our institute's mission and artistic view of the image.

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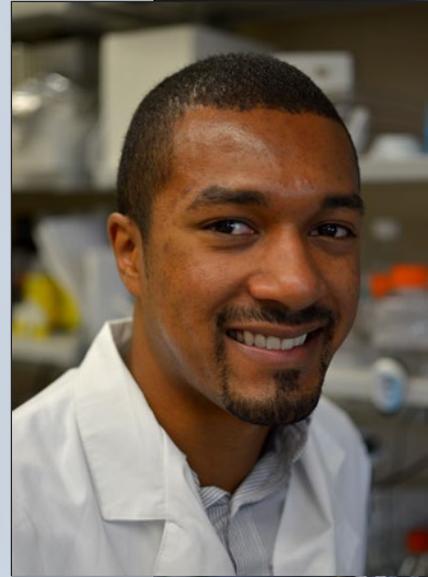
January Announcements

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DEZMOND C. TAYLOR-DOUGLAS TO GIVE TALK AT GRAD STUDENT SYMPOSIUM



Dezmond C. Taylor-Douglas (Yanovski lab), graduate student of Howard University College of Medicine, will present his research at the 12th annual NIH Graduate Student Research Symposium on January 12, 2016. Drop by for Dezmond's talk and to celebrate this great achievement—only four abstracts were selected for oral presentations! The student presentations begin at 10:15a.m. in the Natcher Conference Center.



The talk line up includes:

- » Shahriar Sheikbahaei, University College London, NINDS
“Control of Respiratory Circuits by Brainstem Astrocytes”
- » Helen T. Michael, University of Maryland, College Park, NCI
“Shining a Light on the Role of UV in the Initiation and Progression of Melanocytic Lesions”
- » Dezmond C. Taylor-Douglas, Howard University, NICHD
“Human MC3R C17A+G241A Knock-In Mice Have a Unique Inflammatory Profile”
- » Jessica B. Hostetler, University of Cambridge, NIAID
“Strand-specific RNA Sequencing of Plasmodium vivax Clinical Isolate”

And don't miss the highly anticipated keynote address at 2:00p.m. by Dr. Pauline Rose Clance, board-certified clinical psychologist and author of *The Impostor Phenomenon: Overcoming the Fear that Haunts Your Success*.

For a full Symposium agenda, please visit: <https://www.training.nih.gov/gsc/symposium/12th/agenda>.

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January Announcements

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DR. GANDJBAKHCHE ELECTED AS A FELLOW MEMBER OF THE OPTICAL SOCIETY

The Optical Society, a professional association in optics and photonics, founded in 1916, elected Dr. Amir Gandjbakhche (pictured left) as a fellow member “for leadership and research in areas of non-invasive optical imaging of biological targets, devising quantitative theories, development of methodologies, and designing instrumentation to study biological phenomena.” Please join *The NICHD Connection* in congratulating Dr. Gandjbakhche, head of the Section on Analytical and Functional Biophotonics of NICHD, on this exciting achievement.



January Events

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 10 AM – 4 PM

Open House: Foundation for Advanced Education in Sciences (FAES), Spring 2016
Bldg. 10, FAES Academic Center

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 4 – 6:30 PM

Twelfth Annual NIH Graduate Student Research Symposium
Natcher Conference Center
More information [here](#)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 10 AM – 12 NOON

TmT Wokshop #1 – Speaking about Science

Led by public speaking coach Scott Morgan. This workshop will offer tips on storytelling and delivery, speaking in plain language, and creating an effective visual aid.

For more information, please send an email to yvette.pittman@nih.gov.