

“A Case Study: Managing Multiple Research Topics & Multiple Grants ”

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Luck plays a role: you have to find the intersection of area of interest and strength of research as a junior faculty member. For example, I found an area of emerging importance in which there is the senior “shadow caster” is no longer active. My additional luck was inheriting the protocol for a hypothesis which I turned into an RO-1. I was also fortunate in having the tools to be “translational” in my research focus. It is important to develop assertiveness, based on confidence.

Some environments promote junior faculty development: Not too large and not too small – a moderate sized group that has scientific diversity worked well for me. This provided opportunities for regular, relaxed exchange over a lunch table that seated 8.

Furthermore there was a structured interchange through an NIMH training grant that supported 4 basic scientist and 4 clinical researchers per year (total of 3 yrs) and we presented work-in-progress to one another regularly once a week. This strengthened the logic of the trainees, and enhanced their ability to get their own grants.

Some advice from my experience

It is helpful to diversify early: more than one disorder or approach – allows for diversified grant portfolio and continuous overlapping support.

- **Mentoring** – find a senior faculty member who is nearby and is a true role model. When you are a senior faculty member you will find that the young people you mentor bring you new ways of looking at things. You build a “family tree” in which others can stand on your shoulders.
- **Hiring post-docs** – look for scientific diversity to bring new tools and ideas to the table that will help you continue to develop new alternative research paths.
- **Reinvent yourself** – be open to new initiatives with colleagues who have different tools, and whose research interests have some overlap with yours. Work with other faculty in other departments and develop initiatives that can get support from the medical school and then from the NIH as a center grant.
- **Ask the big questions** – not just a 3-year question. Also – the puzzle you are looking at should be solvable.

Thoughts as Research Dean on MSSM growth

We will work from our strengths for the next phase of faculty recruitments.

A moderate-sized institution like MSSM has the potential for a lot of cross-talk, collaboration and mutual stimulation among colleagues.

- The lab and the hospital have a close connection that allows for testing ideas in patient-relevant environment.
- We are increasing our research support at a faster pace than any comparable school in NYC.
- We can move from the “outstanding” into the “elite category” of schools in our next phase of growth.
- Our up-coming strategic funding campaign will allow for more creative approaches, e.g. a Sinai Scholars program that could support innovation the way the Hughes Foundation does.