Managing Time and Expectations: Surgeon and Scientist

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St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

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Disclosures

- I do not have any relationships with commercial interests to disclose.

- Many extremely talented and organized surgeons have given talks like this before me. I have benefited from many of their concepts and some of their slides.
Surgeons are ideally suited to Research

- Hard workers – we don’t have a 9-5 mentality
- Decisive – we get things done
- Surgeons can focus – clear and directed thinking
- Attention to detail
- Problem solvers
- Perseverance
- Great Instincts about what will and won’t work.
- Relevance – we know surgical disease

“We have the surgeon personality”
- K.Craig Kent, MD
Time Management
9/6/12

Dear Daddy,
I love you and I'm really sorry of how much you have to work.

Love,
Sofia
Work-Life Balance?
The Balance of Time Management

- Clinical Demands
- Administrative Duties
- Work-Life Balance
- Protected Time/Resources
- Lab Output/Productivity
Balance is bunk. It’s a misguided notion that assumes we must always make trade-offs among the different aspects of our lives.

Stuart D. Friedman
Work-Life Integration: Four-Way Wins

1. Be Real
2. Be Whole
3. Be Innovative

*Caveat: There are many prioritization schemata, this is just one that is currently working for me.
How do you get from A to B?
1. Be Real

Know what matters

- Start with 100 points
- Allocate points to each of the 4 circles based on how you value them
- Separately, allocate points to the 4 circles based on how you spend your time
- Are they the same?
1. Be Real

Align actions with values

- If work meetings aren’t malleable, why should family time be?
- Drive kids to school 3-5x/week
- Red-eyes whenever possible
Know where you want to go

• Where you would like to be at various points in the coming years?

• What does success mean to you?
1. Be Real

Embody values consistently

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Allocate your time to what is important
1. Be Real

Hold yourself accountable

• 3 Offices
  – Clinical
  – Lab
  – Home

• Nights away
  – 01/2016-04/2016: 15 days away
  – 01/2017-04/2017: 6 days away
  – 01/2018-04-2018: 8 days away

Dear Daddy
I love you and I'm really sorry of how much you have to work.

Love,
Sonia
2. Be Whole

Help others
2. Be Whole

Manage boundaries intelligently

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- 7 partners / SOW system
- CHARMING Patients

Sacrosanct times
Lab Meeting
Formal presentations

Clinic
Teaching residents
2. Be Whole

Weave disparate strands
3. Be Innovative

Focus on results

- Goal: Never miss lab meeting

- Goal: Decrease email without sacrificing responsiveness

Labarchives.com

Gosainlab.slack.com
3. Be Innovative

Resolve conflicts among domains

• Both spouses on call on a weekend
• Meeting during school breaks
• Grant deadlines during Spring Break
Work-Life Integration

1. Be Real
2. Be Whole
3. Be Innovative
Pearls
Resident Research Years -> Early Faculty Years
Time Lapse of Gosain Lab @ 0600-0855

Be Here Now.
Tips for Success in Research Years

1. Mentorship
2. Submit abstracts & attend conferences
3. Pick a subject matter that interests you and will help patients
4. Consider advanced degrees
5. Enjoy life

Jonathan Abelson, MD @jabelsonmd

http://www.aasurg.org/blog/entering-research-years-surgery-residency-top-5-pieces-advice/
1. Guide your path to success by optimizing your rotation schedule.
2. Operate, operate, operate.
3. Ask questions.
4. Don’t beat yourself up.
5. Take time to live life.

Laura Stafman, MD
@lstafman

https://www.aasurg.org/blog/returning-surgical-residency-research-years-top-5-pieces-advice/
Bridging Research Fellowship to Faculty Position

Christina Angeles, MD
@cvangelesMD
Junior Faculty: Developing Your Research Brand

“Get good results, publish papers, and give talks that all map to your theme.”

Faculty: The Only Problem is that We are Surgeons!

• The clinical work is easy, its getting to the lab that’s the hard part.

• The time you spend at work after training doesn’t get any shorter, but at least you make your own schedule.

Brad Warner
Surgeon in Chief
St. Louis Children’s, Wash U SOM

Tim Crombleholme
Surgeon-in-Chief
Colorado Children’s
Univ of Colorado
One Size Does Not Fit All
How Much Protected Time Do You Need?

Perceived Minimum Percent Protected Time to Succeed in Basic Science & Clinical Research

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Clinical</th>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>19.9</td>
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<td>60%</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<td>70%</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>80%</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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Data from Sundeep Keswani, MD; see Keswani, et.al. Ann Surg 2016.
Protect your time!
Minimize Context Switching

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- **Monday**
- **AM**: Lab meeting
  - Beginning of week to allow weekend to generate data & prepare presentations
  - Rest of week to carry out experiments
  - Individual meetings
- **PM**: Reading/writing
### Minimize Context Switching

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<td>Research,</td>
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<td>Meetings</td>
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- **Tuesday**
  - Odd weeks - OR block
  - Even weeks - Clinic

- Use all of this time! (EMR, Reviews, Evals, etc.)
- Late day if necessary
- Anticipate missing dinner
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- **Wednesday (the day after your clinic)**
  - **AM**: Fellowship conferences
    - Miss for OR if necessary
  - **PM**: Weekly meetings
    - Meet with admin 1x/month - what is working, what isn’t
    - Clinical research fellows
    - Time that my admin can schedule into without asking me
Minimize Context Switching

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- **Monday, Thursday, Friday**
  - Protected Research Days: Avoid non-research activities
  - Do experiments
  - Data analysis
  - Read
  - Write
  - THINK!!!!!!
Improve Efficiency - Utilize Technology

Labarchives.com

Gosainlab.slack.com
Secure Research Space

- Initial lab space in mentors lab
  - Help for training technician/staff
  - Starting new assays
  - Fully equipped
  - Away from clinical service
  - Saves time awaiting protocol approvals

- Move to your own space in 2-3 years

- Lab and Office must be in close proximity
Months 1-3

- Get Organized
- Generate Data
- Protocol Book
- Biosafety
- Animal Safety
- READ READ READ

Months 3-6

- Every day is a school day
- Own your space
  - Learn all that you can and become the expert in that area

Months 6-9

Months 9-12

Association for Academic Surgery
Months 3-6

- Grant Writing Advice & Courses
- Grant Outline
- Generate More Preliminary Data

- Aim #1: Cellular
- Aim #2: Molecular
- Aim #3: In vivo

Human Relevance
Months 6-9

- Apply for Surgical Society Grants
- Write a review article
- Submit abstracts to ASC and ACS

- External validation
  - You are making progress
  - Your time is worth protecting
- Funding track record

Months 1-3 Months 3-6 Months 6-9 Months 9-12
Months 9-12

- Identify a Scientific Advisory Panel
- Call your program official at the NIH
- K award
  - 1/3 Candidate
  - 1/3 Mentorship & Career Development Plan
  - 1/3 Science

K award is the gateway grant: 63% of K-awarded pediatric surgeons transitioned to an independent NIH award mechanism
A Roadmap for Aspiring Surgeon-Scientists in Today’s Healthcare Environment

Allan M. Goldstein, MD,* Alex B. Blair, MD;† Sunderry G. Kerswani, MD;‡ Ankush Gosain, MD, PhD;§ Michael Monowitz, MD,* John Kao, MD, PhD;¶ Matthew Levine, MD, PhD;**, Nita Ahuja, MD, || and David J. Hackam, MD, PhD|||, Basic Science Committee of the Society of University Surgeons

### TABLE 1. Timeline for the Initial Years of a Surgeon-Scientist’s Career

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<th>Early Years</th>
<th>Goals and Milestones</th>
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<td><strong>Year 1</strong></td>
<td>Identify the scientific questions to be tackled  &lt;br&gt; Obtain skills necessary to achieve scientific goals  &lt;br&gt; Master the relevant literature and knowledge gap  &lt;br&gt; Begin to obtain preliminary data  &lt;br&gt; Hire a research technician and/or trainee or fellow  &lt;br&gt; Submit applications for institutional approvals  &lt;br&gt; Identify a team of mentors  &lt;br&gt; Attend research skills and grant writing workshops  &lt;br&gt; Start submitting grant applications</td>
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<td><strong>Years 2–3</strong></td>
<td>Begin to publish initial manuscripts  &lt;br&gt; Maintain an up-to-date curriculum vitae  &lt;br&gt; Continue applying for research grants  &lt;br&gt; Participate in manuscript and grant reviews</td>
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<td><strong>Year 4 and beyond</strong></td>
<td>Become familiar with requirements for academic promotion  &lt;br&gt; Be persistent and resilient!</td>
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Use the resources around you!
Managing Time and Expectations: Surgeon and Scientist

Questions?
agosain@uthsc.edu