Creating a Professional Development Plan

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“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do.”

~Mark Twain
Presentation Goals

• To discuss the benefits of professional development planning for graduate students

• To review the steps for creating a professional development plan

• To complete exercises to get you started!
What is a Professional Development Plan?

A professional development plan is a tool to assist you with…

• Identifying your professional goals and objectives

• Assessing your skills, interests and values

• Creating a strategy to achieve short-term and long-term goals
Benefits of Creating a PDP

*Professional Development Planning can help you…*

- Clarify your career goals
- Identify milestones on the way to achieving your goals
- Better identify professional development opportunities early in your career
- Improve your ability to effectively communicate your goals to others
- Increase your self-confidence
- Establish a clear sense of expectations and understand limitations
Activity #1: Self-Assessment
Step 1: Reflection & Self-Assessment

Examine your motivations, values, interests, personality and skills:

- Why are you in Graduate School?
  - What are your primary responsibilities as a graduate student?
  - What is your biggest accomplishment?
  - What has been most unsatisfying

- Take a **realistic** look at your current abilities:
  - What are your strengths?
  - What can you improve?

- Identify your career interests
  - What type of work would you like to do?
  - Where you like to be within an organization?
  - What is important to you in a future career?
Key Graduate Student Competencies

Scholarly Competencies

- Research
- Presentation Skills
- Writing and Editing
- Publishing
- Teaching
- Training

Professional Development Competencies

- Career Exploration
- Job Searching
- Leadership and Management
- Personal Development (conflict resolution, teamwork, time management, etc.)
Activity #2: Peaks & Valleys
Step 2: Goal Setting

Goal setting gives structure to your career development.

- **Short-term goals**: Tasks are needed to improve your current performance that can be accomplished in a short time frame.

- **Long-term goals**: Have a more significant impact on your future career options and life planning.
S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting

Specific
Measurable
Action-oriented
Realistic
Time-bound
Vague: I want a job after I graduate in June 2013

S: I want to begin my professional career in a position that will allow me to use the project management skills that I have developed through my graduate program.

M: I will measure my progress toward this goal by the number of networking conversations I hold and applications I submit to appropriate opportunities.

A: I will spent this summer networking with alumni to develop connections within organizations that interest me. I will also tailor the content of my resume for each employer.

R: Because this will be my first professional position, I will apply to entry-level postings. I will need additional work experience in the field to be competitive for managerial roles in the future.

T: I must be employed by August 2013 due to financial commitments. The average job search takes 6-8 months, so I will plan to start searching during fall quarter to allow myself enough time to conduct a successful search.
Action Steps

Action steps are your strategic plan to accomplishing your short-term and long-term goals.

- Identify the steps you will need to take to accomplish your short term and long term goals.
- Outline action steps and timeline that will impact your professional growth
Examples of Action Steps

- Developing a CV or Resume
- Asking for new assignments or projects
- Asking for feedback
- Seeking mentors
- Conducting informational interviews
- Volunteering for committees
- Reading scholarly papers or publications
- Pursuing an additional degree
- Enrolling for courses outside of your degree program
- Attending seminars or conferences
- Seeking out networking opportunities
Activity #3: Goal Setting
Why Do So Many Goals Fail?

- Focusing on the whole, rather than the sum of its parts
- Initial burst of energy…fizzes…
- Lack of a Plan B (and C, and D…)
- Easy to fall into familiar habits
Step 4: Collaborate with Others

What outside input do you have from others about your strengths and areas for improvement?

- **Informally**: Conversations with peers, mentors, professional society members, community members to share notes, get feedback and generate ideas.

- **Formally**: Scheduled meetings with research or academic advisors at regular intervals to determine progress, assess skill level, and assess developmental needs (e.g.: employee-supervisor conference or annual review).
Step 5: Monitor Your Progress

Professional Development Planning is a cyclical process.

• Always monitor your progress toward your goals
  – How will you know if you are on track?

• Reflect and assess at regular intervals
  – How did you grow professionally throughout the year?
  – What were your peaks? What were your valleys?
  – If you did not accomplish a goal, why not?
Final Notes…

- Focus on the positive
- Make sure your goals are relevant
- Barriers WILL happen!
- Reward milestones
- Keep a written record of your goals
- Ongoing process

YOU are responsible for your own professional development planning.
“Nothing happens until you decide. Make a decision and watch your life move forward.”
~ Oprah Winfrey
Questions?
The following resources were used to develop this workshop:

EDUCAUSE: Creating a Professional Development Plan
http://net.educause.edu/section_params/mentoring/M06_%20PDP.pdf

University of Minnesota Individual Development Plan for Graduate Students:
http://www.grad.umn.edu/career/IDPgrad.pdf

Northwestern University Individual Development Plans for Postdoctoral Fellows:
http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/documents/professional-development/idp.pdf
Upcoming UCS Events

Creating Professional Development Plan
Chicago: 6/6  12:00-1:00 PM  Lurie Gray

Drop-in Advising Hours for Graduate Students
Mondays  11:00AM-2:00PM  The Graduate School

UCS Chicago Campus Hours, by appointment
Wednesdays  5/23, 6/6  Abbott Hall
University Career Services

Main Office
620 Lincoln Street
847-491-3700

Career Lab (Walk-ins Thursdays & Fridays Only)
Core Reserve
Main Library, 2nd Floor North