Advancing Your Career: Discern, Determine, and Demonstrate

William Cooper, MD, MPH
Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Pediatrics & Health Policy
Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs, Department of Pediatrics
Objectives

• **Discern** passion
• **Determine** path
• **Define (Demonstrate)** contributions
Discern Your Passion
Passion

• Often arises from
  – Important clinical experience
  – Professional activities
  – Role models
  – Personal experience

• Central defining point of your career
• Should guide your activities
Skills Building #1: Discern Passion

• Identify an experience that has affected your career
• Passion: reflect on experience(s)
  – How you can make a difference
  – Something that is exciting
  – Come to work every day and pursue
Skills Building: Your Career Vision

• Worksheet #1
• List the following:
  – Important professional experience
  – Activity #1
  – Activity #2
  – Activity #3
  – Activity #4
Skills Building #2: Vet Your Passion

• Share your passion and vision statement
  – Does this capture what you see in me?
  – What suggestions do you have?
Homework: Vet Your Passion

- Engage your mentor, colleagues, family
- Share your passion and vision statement
  - Does this capture what you see in me?
  - What suggestions do you have?
  - What did you learn from your experiences when you were at my stage in your career?
Determine Your Path
Determine Your Path

• Align your passions with opportunities
  – Mentors
  – Collaborators
  – Opportunities that arise

• What direction do you want to take to make a difference in your area of passion?
Clinical Practice

• Clinical excellence – recognized by others
• Professional contributions (1+ of these)
  – Leadership: significant contributions, measurable
  – Patient Outcomes/QI: recognized by others
  – Patient education/service: extraordinary
  – Service to the field: sustained or leadership role
  – Academic contributions: excellence, critical role
• Supported by regional/national reputation
Clinician Educator

• Service
  – Exemplary care: national reputation
  – Development of programs: recognized by others
  – Contributions to the field: leadership, sustained
  – Special contributions: extraordinary work

• Teaching
  – Direct teaching: multiple awards, recognition
  – Curriculum development: recognized by others
  – Leadership/mentoring: measurable impact, sustained
Tenure Track

• Scholarship
  – Sustained publication: series of high impact
  – Peer recognition: multiple invites (international)
  – Sustained grant support: trajectory critical here
  – Mentoring: mentees have gone on to success
• Teaching – mentoring critical metric here
• Service-national/international recognition
• Regional/National reputation
Vulnerable Children Research, Clinical Care, Advocacy

Clinical Care, Advocacy

Professional Service (NIH, FDA, Advisory Roles)

Office for Faculty Development

MPH Program

T32 Program
Skills Building #3: Determine Your Path

• What path do you think you are taking?
• What path are you actually taking (review promotion criteria)
  – Do you know the end game for this path?
  – What activities will lead you there?
Skills Building #3: Path (continued)

• How does this path relate to your passion?
• Identify three things to move you forward:
  – 1st within one month
  – 2nd within six months
  – 3rd within 12 months
• Yikes! moment
  – Path-passion-disalignment-osis
  – Implications & adjustments
Homework

• Mentor/Division Chief/Chair
  – Describe your path
  • “To support my passion for ___, I see myself ______.”
  • “Here are three things I’m doing in the next year….”
  – Am I doing what I need to do on this path?
  – What skills should I pursue to help me?
Define Your Contributions
Define Your Contributions

• Align with passion and path
• Strategic
  – Draw on best opportunity
  – Create a niche (passion-related)
  – Allow yourself to differentiate
• Assess regularly
  – Mentors
  – Discussions with chief/supervisor
Clinical Practice

• Clinical excellence – recognized by others
• Professional contributions (1+ of these)
  – Leadership: significant contributions, measurable
  – Patient Outcomes/QI: recognized by others
  – Patient education/service: extraordinary
  – Service to the field: sustained or leadership role
  – Academic contributions: excellence, critical role
• Supported by regional/national reputation
Skills Building #4: Define Your Contributions

- Review your passion and path
- Align with promotion criteria for your path
- Identify the things that seem most exciting
- Set goals to achieve contributions in areas
  - Clinical Care
  - Additional Contributions
Demonstrating your contributions

- CV should tell the story of your passion, path, and contributions
- Standardized form (order)
- Use additional information (sparingly)
  - Director, Women’s Imaging
    - Direct large multidisciplinary program providing 47,000 studies per year
    - QI initiative resulted in 57% fewer dropped results
- Add an appointment with yourself each quarter
Outcome

• “If you can decide what it is you really want to accomplish then charting a course to the conclusion gets easier.”
• “I also subscribe to the Scarecrow approach: try to think of things you never thought before!!”
• “Sometimes you have to take changes and face rejection.”
• “Find what you are passionate about and what interests you. Then focus on how you can develop it/ be innovative and contribute to that area of need.”
• “I’ve never gotten discouraged about my career path, not once, because I have an absolute passion for....”
Objectives

- **Discern** passion
- **Determine** path
- **Define (and Demonstrate)** contributions