ASHG 2014- Summary of session 7: Curiouser and curiouser! Navigating career transitions & challenges in genetics

For SMIG meeting October 24, 2014
Postdoc

Has a PhD

Temporary period of mentored research

Purpose: to become an independent scientist
Expectations trainee should have for his/her mentor

- Stipend
- Travel to meetings
- Place to do work
- Career guidance
- Networking
- Honesty and respect
Expectations of the trainee

- Active participation in lab activities
- Work ethic
- Progress in a reasonable time
- Professional skills
- Honest communication
- Foster collegial relationships
- Meet deadlines
When to start the search

Think about the exact area you want to be in (find your passion- papers you've read, invited seminar series, meetings)- exploration throughout grad school

Active searching as soon as you know when you'll defend
What to look for

- Want a lab publishing in high impact journals
- External funding record
- National/international status
- Rank, tenure status
- Prior training record; talk to previous/current trainees
- Lab organization
- Work ethic
- Other (geographical location, university reputation, etc.)
junior or established lab

Junior

Smaller group; more one-on-one time
PI driven to make it work
See up close the life of junior PI

Established

Larger; less one-on-one; work w/ senior post doc
Name and recognition and contacts

Opportunity for grant writing participation
How do faculty recruit

- Lab website, job recruitment website (Science, Nature, university job or postdoc postings)
- Letters/flyers
- Departmental labs and graduate program
- Unsolicited positions—not advertised; you contact them
Some tips- what PIs want

Ability to take charge of a project and execute it

Interest in the lab's research

Commitment

Communications skills

Enthusiasm, passion for science, creativity, drive, confidence
How to be recruited into a potential desired lab

Talk to the PI in person - express genuine interest in their research - be specific

Unsolicited email to PI (CV, cover letter, names & contact info for references)
The documents

Cover letter- no CV rehash, short, state why you are interested in the lab/position

CV- look at postdocs/PIs' CVs for what to include

References- people who will recommend you
Interview

- Hooray!
- Usually asked to give a research seminar
- Ask questions both science & lab culture
- be yourself
- Follow-up- thank you email reiterating your continued interest in the lab
Things to consider

Authorship

Ownership of data

Expectations for time working

Mentor's availability

Salary; vacation; criteria for renewal (in offer letter. May negotiate, if not sure ask current PI)
Research productivity

Need to attract and train excellent people

Continuous record of external funding

Publish continuously- volume, quality, impact, reviews, collaborations... Focus and finish

Develop a national reputation- host meetings

Be confident in yourself, and take care of yourself first
Final thoughts

Relationship with your advisor can be lifelong

But if it doesn't work out, you don't have to stay