

Career Development

The goal of this exercise is to write a personal career development plan. This essay is divided into three questions including, where do I want to be, where am I now and how I am going to get there?

1. Where do I want to be?

My personal goal is to seek a career in teaching and research in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. My long-term goal is to become a tenured professor in a top tier University that will allow me to teach and perform research. Although I expect some administrative duties, I do not want a full time administrative position (i.e. I do not have the desire to become a department chair or a college Dean). From my research it appears that the career path towards becoming a tenured university professor typically starts with a tenure track Assistant professor position. Although, in theory, it is possible to obtain an Assistant Professor position in a University, these positions are hard to find. Most new Ph.D. who desire to obtain an Academic position, work in a post doctoral position to establish connections, write many journal papers before making the transition from graduate school to an Assistant Professor. New Assistant professor appointments come with many responsibilities. Typical teaching assignments range from 2 to 3 classes per semester with little time for research. Research duties include actively and aggressively seeking funding opportunities and publishing peer reviewed journal papers. Also on the list includes attending conferences and scientific meetings. Most Universities also expect Assistant Professors to serve on campus committees. After 5 to 7 years, the next step is to

apply for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor that involves preparing a dossier and anxiously awaiting the results of the outcome. If the promotion and tenure decision is favorable then the newly promoted Associate professor has nine months of guaranteed salary from the University. The step from Associate Professor to Professor appears to take a long time and my research indicates that this could be anywhere from 10 to 15 years or more depending upon the proficiency of the individual and how successful they are in teaching, research and service. I expect a combination of linear and expert career progression. While the teaching hierarchy dictates that I move from assistant to full professor according to the rules of the University, the research hierarchy is more along the lines of expert career progression. This is motivated by a desire for competence that focuses on building knowledge and skill. In summary I expect to work in a postdoctoral position after my Ph.D. before I make the transition to an Assistant Professor.

My research goals are to work in Experimental Industrial Organizational Psychology. Of particular interest to me are the areas of motivation and pay for performance. I expect these interests to evolve and expand over the length of my career.

2. Where am I now?

I am currently a graduate student in the department of Psychology at UAH. My first short-term goal (1 – 2 years) is to complete a Master's degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. I plan to graduate in 2002. My second short term goal (4-6 years) is to obtain a Ph.D. in Industrial Organizational Psychology although I have not decided at which University I would like to get my doctoral degree. My strengths include a good background in mathematics and statistics that Experimental

Psychology requires. My weaknesses are the lack of knowledge on how to establish contacts and network with people and resources to be a better researcher. My opportunities at this time are limited because I have to obtain a Ph.D before I can become a full-fledged Principal Investigator in research. I have to patiently work through my graduate program to attain the goals and objectives. Some possible threats might include a total hiring freeze in Universities and also if funding agencies drastically reduce opportunities for research.

3. How am I going to get there?

The road to obtaining a dual teaching and research position appears to be a long and hard one. However at the end of the road, I hope that it is rewarding to perform research on topical areas of interest and teach graduate level classes in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. I plan to fully exploit my desire for research. To become successful as a researcher I should be able to read and assimilate past research quickly, understand where further improvements can be made in research areas and acquire good writing and communication skills to present my work. Specific steps to exploit this include reading journal papers (past and current) in the area of interest; work with advisor to establish research areas that will be of interest to the I/O community; aggressively pursue good writing skills and submit and publish journal papers while in graduate school.