Advice for your first year on the job

Time

- For the first time ever, you will not have large blocks of time to work on things. Get organized.
- Set aside one hour a day for writing and ALWAYS do it.
- Discipline yourself. For help, try Dave Allen's "Getting Things Done"; scientists like his no-nonsense approach to management of knowledge-based work.
- Somehow, you have to keep ALL of your priorities in focus, from meetings in the next hour to what kind of life you want in 10 years. Don't let the minutiae obscure your real purpose in living.
- Friends and family are important. Vacations are important. Time not doing science is important. Make time to have a life outside of your lab!
- Research is a creative business; make time to talk to colleagues about science in general and your research in particular. Find a friend on the faculty (maybe in another department) whom you have coffee with and talk about ideas on a regular basis. Organize a departmental tea break!

Grants

- Grants are a high priority. You can get out in front if you show up with one ready to submit.
- Keep initial proposal reasonable in scope and choose your collaborations carefully. Don't go for the biggest $$$ and being the n^{th} co-PI until you have a track record of individual funding.
- Local foundation funding for new faculty (e.g., Jeffress Grants in VA: $30,000 in first year, $10,000 in each of second and third) makes a good starter. Showing you can get one of these helps enormously at NSF and NIH.

Lab setup

- First choice: one year without teaching to get research off the ground
- Second choice: one semester. Fall off: you have time to get lab up and running, but will be waiting for some equipment and supplies. Spring off: you get your feet wet teaching and can order things so they are ready to go in January.
- Negotiation for purchasing equipment takes more time than you think.
- You will make mistakes in what you order: bad brands, stuff you don't use, etc. Just let it go....
- Hire a technician. In the first few years, this person will be vital in getting your lab running and those first papers out the door. Do not rely on students for this.

Research undergrads/grad students/postdocs

- Part of your job is taking some responsibility for their future. Do not forget that.
- Most places expect you to involve undergrads in research. Recognize that this takes time, effort, and mentorship. Be respectful and think of how their efforts can contribute to your research and their career development.
- Be picky about your students. Your first Ph.D. student will be with you during the full tenure process. They better be strong and self-propelled.
- Postdocs should be strong and self-organizing. Treat them like you would any peer collaborator, but make a plan for helping them get on the job market. Give

postdocs a budget and students (both undergrad and grad) to help with their research. Let them teach a little, but not too much. Help them clarify their career goals. Be a friend.
- Have weekly lab meetings with all students & postdocs. Treat everyone in your lab like a colleague, regardless of their academic level.
- Keep notes on student accomplishments, strengths, weaknesses. You will have to write letters at some point. Good letters, like the ones that helped you land your job, contain real details. Plan on writing these letters. They take more time than you can guess.

Teaching
- Try to get a stable teaching assignment; teaching the same courses every year for several years is the wisest use of your time.
- First time on a course will require about eight hours prep for each hour in class (maybe more for higher level courses). Be prepared to invest a lot of time... Updates each year can take one to three hours (more for higher level courses)... Take notes immediately after class on what needs to be changed!!!
- Set limits on your prep time; at some point, more time will not make a proportionately better presentation.
- Inspire your students; show them how science is an important way to know the world (but not the only way). Display your passion for your field.
- Engage in active, student-centered pedagogy ("scientific teaching") from the outset. With a little effort, it is relatively easy to keep abreast of and implement contemporary pedagogical practices in the classroom and teaching lab. Resources are available to help you become a more effective teacher; use them!
- Being a bad teacher takes nearly as much time as being a good one and is much less satisfying.

Tenure
- Learn ASAP what the expectation is and make sure you exceed it. Otherwise, don't worry about it, just do your best. Steady productivity, not bursts, will be rewarded. Remember that all faculty vote on tenure, not just those in your field.
- Do not count on students or postdocs for the papers you need for tenure. These are your responsibility. Invest in technician to do the work that must be done.
- Get to know the publicity office at your university. Let them know about interesting papers, awards, invitations, events that you are involved in. Everyone benefits from this.
- Make a tenure folder and keep it handy. Put everything that might be useful for your tenure case (copies of seminar posters, news articles on your research, letters from students and collaborators, etc.) into it.
- Do not apply for jobs in your first year. It never looks good to anyone. You need to give yourself a chance in a new position. If you do apply, your reputation will suffer at both places, even if the new guys really want you. Think hard about this if you find yourself in this position.

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Service & Community

- Assume that this might be the only job you ever have; work to make your department the kind of place you want to spend your career.
- Be friendly and polite to your colleagues. Accept social invitations, send thank you notes, invite people to lunch and coffee. Be the kind of person you would like to have for a colleague.
- Get to know and appreciate the staff in your department. Be kind and respectful.
- Within your department, limit your committee duties as much as possible; best committees for personal development include graduate program, search committees.
- If faculty are expected to do student advising, then enjoy it. It's a chance to get to know the students.
- Be a good departmental citizen. Go to faculty meetings and participate. Go to department seminars. Meet with visiting speakers.
- Professional service is very important. Be a prompt and cheerful reviewer of grants and papers when asked.
- Serve on a NSF or NIH panel as soon as possible; it's a lot of work, but a great education and you will make some important contacts.
- Service to your professional society might wait a year or two. Editorships should wait until you are willing to risk making enemies. Both, however, are very rewarding.
- Be a citizen scientist; write to your representatives on issues that you have expertise on. Participate in your community, sharing your knowledge.
- Get involved locally, in schools, local environmental groups, charitable organizations, church groups, etc. Subscribe to the symphony, the opera, or the theater. Make a life for yourself outside of the lab.

Travel

- Limit your travel; make sure you are around enough for folks to get to know you.
- Attend at least one professional meeting per year.
- Participate in a working group!!!

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