

# Life at an "R1" university

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## Outline of presentation

- A little about me
- A little about University of Kentucky
- What I've learned so far
  - Research
  - Mentoring
  - Teaching
  - Service
- Other stuff
- Questions?

## A little about me

- Born and raised in Tallahassee
- Married, with two kids
- B.A. in French, B.S. in Biochemistry from FSU
- Ph.D. in Genetics and Molecular Biology from Emory University (2001)
- Postdoc #1: Institute of Human Genetics, Montpellier France, 2001-2002
- Postdoc #2: Jim Fadool, FSU, 2002-2009
- Assistant Professor, UK Biology Department, August 2009-present



December 2008

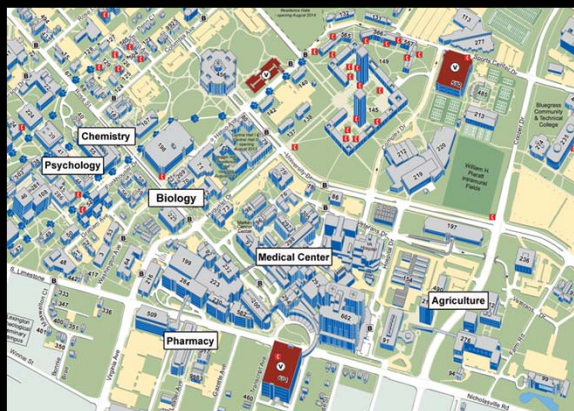
## My job search

- What I wanted: Biology department with a graduate program, tenure-track position, decent start-up and an animal facility
- Went on market in 2008-2009 – the beginning of “The Great Recession”
- Applied for 34 positions (4 searches were cancelled)
- Was invited to interview at two universities
- Got two job offers



## The University of Kentucky

- Located in Lexington, Kentucky
- A public, land grant university
- ~20,000 undergraduate students
- ~7,000 graduate/professional students
- ~80% of undergrads are Kentucky residents
- Biology is in the College of Arts & Sciences



- Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Medicine, Agriculture, Engineering, Pharmacy, all located on main campus within walking distance
- ~\$200M in research grants across campus (Carnegie designation R1, or RU/VH)

## My department



- Biology department, diverse faculty interests
- ~30 tenure-track/tenured faculty, 4 lecturers, 2 instructors
- 6 Assistant, 12 Associate, 12 Full Professors

## About my position

- My official "DOE" – 50% research, 40% teaching, 10% service
- My course load: ~1.5 courses/year
- Tenure review: sixth year

## Life at UK

August 2009



- August 2009: Arrive in Lexington, Kentucky
- November 2009: Lab renovations complete
- January 2010: start teaching
- January 2010: First rotation students
- May 2010: First grad students join lab
- December 2010: First paper accepted

- January 2011: Start teaching undergraduate Genetics
- March 2011: First grant funded
- December 2011: First grad student passes quals
- August 2012: NIH R01 grant is funded
- June 2013: First grad student lead-author publication

December 2012



## Some things I've learned

The importance of good mentors

Having a supportive chair

Invest in people

## Some things I've learned

Apply for everything...

...but stop (for a while) once  
you hit it big (NIH, NSF, etc.)

Your proposal development office  
can actually help you!

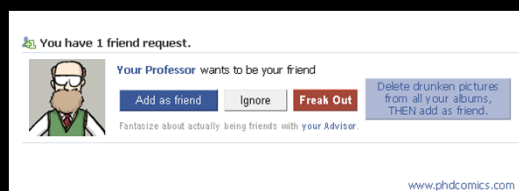
## Some things I've learned

### Mentoring and managing personnel:

Keep the drama to a minimum...

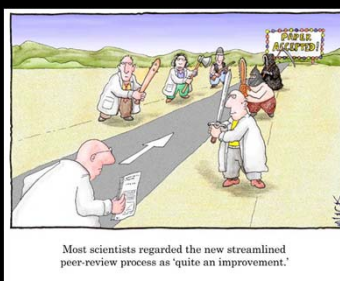
...but be available for those with serious issues

Be aware of (but don't exploit) your change in status



## Some things I've learned

### Publishing:



Approach and expectations are very discipline specific

Get an estimate of the “magic number” at your institution

Bring one or two unfinished “stories” with you that you can publish while you’re getting your own research program up and running

## Some things I've learned

### Teaching:

Teaching evaluations do matter

Avoid introductory (100-level) courses

Start with a 200-400 level course and get syllabus, notes, Powerpoints, etc. from a faculty member who's taught it before

Develop a senior/graduate level course of your own

## Some things I've learned

### Service:

Avoid most committee work  
(your mentors should help protect you)

...but some committee assignments can be useful

Departmental service:

Graduate student thesis committees  
Faculty search committee

External service:

Grant proposal review  
Journal peer review

## Some things I've learned

Speak up about work-life issues  
that are important to you

Don't neglect your life outside work



## Questions?