Skill-up 4: Leading a research lab

Kate Hertweck (@k8hert)

University of Texas at Tyler (till mid-June)
Fred Hutch Cancer Research Center, Seattle, WA (after mid-June)

CarpentryCon 2018, University College Dublin

http://pad.software-carpentry.org/carpentryconSkillUp4

Most researchers aren't taught to lead and manage people, and may even be actively discouraged from focusing time and energy on developing these skills

What is a research lab?

How many people work there? Who are they?

Does everyone work on the same thing?

Who decides these things?

What is a research lab?

How many people work there? Who are they?

Does everyone work on the same thing?

Who decides these things?

http://pad.software-carpentry.org/carpentryconSkillUp4

Who are other stakeholders in a research lab?

Who/what cares who works in the lab?

Who decides what is being researched?

A research lab is a peculiar and highly structured work environment, with often overlapping and sometimes conf lcting priorities and timelines.

Leading a lab means you are ultimately accountable for all associated people and activities.

What are the main responsibilities of a research lab leader?

Get grants

Align research objectives with funding agency solicitation

Write about awesome research ideas, submit grant, and bask in the accolades of peers!

Identify timeline with your institution's grants office

Talk to staff at funding agencies

Create budget

Identify research goals and design experiments

Negotiate with collaborators

Draft supplemental documents required by funding agency

Obtain preliminary data

Manage entry-level employee (student or technician)

recruitment

onboarding

Setting expectations (Lab Carpentry resources?): how/when communication occurs

Developing a style of leading, mentoring, and managing

- How do you ensure you are providing appropriate levels of support to each lab member?

- How do you resolve issues when they arise?

- How do you encourage a sense of ethics and responsibility in your lab group?

Leading a research lab:
Take home messages

1) Don't panic!

2) Commit at least some time to developing "soft skills"

3) Find a mentor for yourself

4) Be prepared to mentor other people

5) Consider the culture of your institution and of your lab

Resources

- How to become a good lab manager, ASBMB

- Practical Guide to Scientific Management, HHMI

- Faculty Professional Development, Training, and Mentoring; Fred Hutch