

## **The Sustainable Scientist's Guide to Goal-Setting for 2022**

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### **Overview:**

- A. 2021 assessment
- B. 2022 one-time goals
- C. 2022 maintenance goals
- D. 2022 obligations
- E. Dedicate calendar time to your goals
- F. Make it sustainable

### **A. 2021 Assessment**

- 1) Update your CV, and review the following:
  - Research – major discoveries, new information, new approaches or skills learned, projects wrapped up, projects abandoned
  - Products – posters, presentations, reviews, papers
  - Work finances – proposals submitted, grants funded
  - Team – mentors, mentees, collaborators
  - Web and social media – lab website, Twitter, podcasts, etc.
  - Service – to University, programs, discipline, academic community
- 2) What are you most proud of in 2021?
- 3) What are you resenting about 2021?

### **B. 2022 One-Time Goals**

Dream up 1-3 big-picture, work-related goals. You might wish to start a new research direction, publish an impactful paper, forge new collaborations or strengthen existing ones, or become more organized/efficient at work. Your goal might only be obliquely related to work; that's fine. The goals do not have to be doable, nor even very specific. Think big and without limitation.

### **C. 2022 Maintenance Goals**

These are goals that you do repeatedly like “read background literature on Monday mornings” or “have a night out with friends 1x per month”. If you can come with some maintenance goals that lead to accomplishing your one-time goals (write for 60 minutes a day→thesis written by September), all the better!

### **D. 2022 Obligations**

Enter into your calendar all of the obligations that constrain your time. Include courses you are taking/teaching, journal clubs, conferences you plan to attend, grant proposal deadlines, paper submission deadlines, fieldwork, vacations, holidays etc.

### **E. Set Aside Time**

For each of your big picture goals, identify 1-3 specific tasks you hope to accomplish in 2022. Assign each to a semester(s) (spring, summer, fall) where they will be the primary focus of

your best and most productive energy. Consider all of the other obligations you've already entered when you assign your goals to particular parts of the year.

Block off the time on your spring 2022 calendar that you'll dedicate to working towards your goals for the spring semester. You can plan for an hour so each day, or one or two big chunks each week, or whatever works for you. This is the time you'll spend working towards your goal. Right now, you don't need to commit to anything more than faithfully showing up on a regular basis to work on that particular goal during that particular semester. You can spend your first chunk of time deciding on a plan of action, or just get to work on the first thing that occurs to you. The key is that during these time blocks you are working towards your goal and nothing else.

#### **F. Make It Sustainable**

- Reduce extraneous activity: What can you take OUT of your calendar to make time and mental space for these new goals?
- Attend to physical/mental health: Where will you get the energy for your new initiative(s)? (sleep, exercise, play, healthy eating, etc.). Make sure there is a lot of margin in your day for these important activities.
- Think about gratitude: List 1-3 people/things/places/activities/animals/other etc. that enrich your life and for which you are grateful. Keep these in mind when the rocky times come.
- Remember the big picture: We are fortunate to work in a field where we can work creatively and collaboratively to contribute to the generation, dissemination, and application of new knowledge. Think about the place of your work in the bigger picture. How is your work contributing to the greater good? What are the most meaningful aspects of your work for you? What are you most excited about and proud of? Write these down and remember them when times get tough.
- For the seriously overwhelmed: consider writing a "to NOT do" list or putting together a "no" committee of friends that will help you stay focused on what really matters to you and your big 2022 goals.