

Teaching Intensive Faculty Careers

by Mohor Sengupta

Panelists:

- ▶ Jacquelyn Cole, PhD *Assistant Professor of Chemistry, tenure track, Shepherd University*
- ▶ Rahman Monzur, PhD *Part time Faculty/Data Manager, Montgomery College*
- ▶ Nadeene Riddick, PhD *Professorial Lecturer, American University*

Do you see yourself entering a vibrant classroom that is waiting to be taught by you? Do you have a flair for mentoring? If yes, then a teaching-intensive faculty position might be your career path. Armed with a postdoctoral experience, you are already a step ahead of many others. To know how, read what these panelists had to say about their transition into a teaching career!

"I landed up my job at the Montgomery College by sitting in on one of the professor's classes, and then, I expressed my interest to the chairman, of working there, and she hired me", Dr. Rahman Monzur, part-time faculty member and data manager at Montgomery College said, stressing on the importance of approaching recruiters.

"My first academic semester ended, like, two days ago" Professorial Lecturer at American University, Dr. Nadeene Riddick quipped. A former AAAS fellow in Science Technology Policy, Riddick is in a non-tenure-track teaching position at the Department of Biology in AU.

"I started out in a small liberal arts college, the Bethany College", Dr. Jacquelyn Cole, recently tenured Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Shepherd University, said. She believes that she got the job at Shepherd because she and the Department Chair share the same alma matter. "I was a boy scout", and that would be enough to get you a job" Cole said, emphasizing on tiny things in the resume that help make a connection with the recruiter.

The first thing you'd need for a successful application is a 'teaching philosophy statement'. "It was really hard for me to write that piece of document; I wasn't good at writing", Monzur said. He encouraged would-be applicants to share their story in the document; what motivated them into considering a teaching career and writing about any expertise they have in the field. Riddick brought out her extensive and varied teaching experience in a creative way while writing her teaching philosophy statement. She also reached out to the career services at her graduate school for help with the document. "Make sure you use your network and whatever resources are available to you" she suggested.

Job hunting can give everyone some grief. Cole advised job seekers to be up to date on job postings, and to factor in exact preferences, like job type and job location, while searching. "Do not apply to a job that you don't like" Monzur added, emphasizing that the application gets weaker in such cases.

Experience counts. Guest lecturing or volunteering to take classes is a good way to gain experience before applying for jobs, Riddick pointed out.

Okay, so what happens when you clear the first hurdle and land yourself in a job interview? Riddick shared a trick of the trade. She used her successful applications in less desirable jobs on her list to leverage for the ones she really wanted. Cole added that asking for a face-to-face interview helps, as both recruiters and the interviewee can gauge each other's' body language and facial expressions, which lead to better communication. Monzur advised asking relevant questions to the interviewer. It is an added incentive for the hirer to get someone who has thought deeply about the position.

Publishing and grant application may not be a requirement, but they are prevalent in teaching intensive careers. The speakers also agreed that a PhD degree counts in a teaching intensive faculty position. Postdoctoral experience at NIH was an advantage in their transition. Monzur, for example, trained summer students in all of his NIH years, and the experience was valuable for him in his career trajectory.

Teach classes, mentor summer trainees and go ahead, talk with people about your transition plans. You could start with our three friendly guest speakers!

Mohor Sengupta is a post-doctoral fellow with the Laboratory of Retinal Cell and Molecular Biology at the National Eye Institute. Her longstanding scientific interest and current research focuses on regenerative efforts of the central nervous system after injury. She studies protection of retinal neurons after optic nerve crush in rodents. Mohor actively engages in scientific writing and volunteers to write for in-house publications at NIH and her IC. After completing her post-doctoral work, Mohor hopes to become a science writer.



CAREER OPTIONS FOR CLINICIANS

Career Options for Clinicians

by Mohor Sengupta

Panelists:

- ▶ Ovidiu Galescu, MD *Medical Officer, FDA/CDER*
- ▶ Kenneth Remy, MD *Assistant Professor, Washington University in St. Louis*
- ▶ Nina Schor, MD, PhD *Deputy Director, NIH/NINDS*
- ▶ Danielle Townsley, MD, MSc *Director, Oncology, Clinical Development, AstraZeneca MedImmune*

“Apply for grants early; learn how to manage staff; attend meetings for getting recruited”, were the mantra that Dr. Kenneth Remy asked clinical fellows to follow when transitioning into an independent position. During his 3-year clinical fellowship at NIH, Remy realized his interest in engaging in clinical research. He now heads a team of seven clinicians at Washington University in St. Louis where he studies RBC lysis and immune dysregulation in sickle cell disease. His time is split between translational research with human samples and adult and pediatric critical care. “Transitioning from NIH was smooth”, Remy attested.

“The NIH happens to be a pioneer in bone marrow transplantation”, Danielle Townsley, hematologist and NIH alumna said. With the training to design research protocols on cancer immunotherapy and with practice of drug development, Townsley became director of Clinical Development at AstraZeneca MedImmune. She now coordinates multi-center global studies. Townsley stressed the fact that a job as a clinician in the industry is very different from that in the lab. “The downside is that I don’t own the research”, she said, adding that “we’re the most regulated industry in the world”. Townsley envisions herself in a leadership position in drug development.

However, for many, the career path won’t be as charted. “The interesting thing to me is how in every step of the way, the blend of your interest and ideal model and the vicissitudes of the reality of the situation you find yourself in, forms sort of a hybrid, and ends up being the path that you actually take”, Dr. Nina Schor, Deputy Director of NINDS said, explaining how she was interested in neuroscience at the beginning of her career and how she ended up getting a PhD in experimental therapeutics instead. She then applied that knowledge to the

nervous system. Twenty years of research and mentoring at the University of Pittsburg gave Schor an invaluable experience of administrative leadership that forms the core of her responsibilities today. "I wonder every once in a while, if I should just slip into a lab at night and use the equipment for a few minutes" Schor mused, thinking of the research life that she misses, and bringing a smile to many in the audience.

"One of the few things NIH doesn't really fully prepare you for is the requirement of research outside the NIH, which means, acquiring grants and funding", Dr. Ovidiu Galescu, Medical Officer at the FDA said, recalling his plans to continue pediatrics research after his clinical fellowship at NIH ended in 2016. Added to that, English, being a second language to him, was a roadblock in grant proposal writing. "So, I chose to go to the FDA and write 3-4-500-page reviews instead!", Galescu exclaimed to the giggling audience. At the FDA, Galescu reviews grants and oversees regulation on new and existing endocrine products. His job requires thinking out of the box, team effort and coordination with researchers. Galescu laid out the importance of networking and visiting institutions of interest during the job hunt period, saying that this practice, and not the usual 'responding to a job post', led him to get the job.

In the Q&A session, Townsley and Remy acknowledged that their medical training was beneficial in their current role as translational researchers. Remy added that he doesn't have to depend on grants and can make a salary by doing clinical work. Galescu and Remy agreed that networking helps getting the closest-fit job; one that is "not open". "In other words, the position creates itself for you" Galescu added. Schor encouraged job seekers to evaluate salary requirement and job satisfaction in setting their priority during job hunt.

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