Developing a Program of Research: Tools for Success in Academe

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National Association of School Psychologists, February 24, 2012

Objects

o What is a program of research?
o Why does it matter?
o How do research programs develop?
o How can you foster productivity?
o How can you articulate your agenda?

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AMANDA L. SULLIVAN

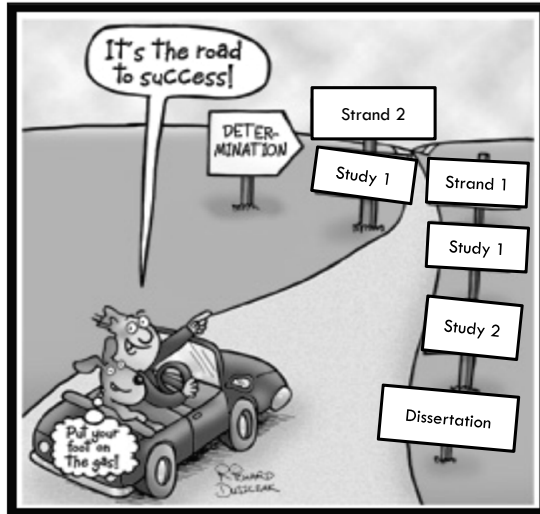University of Minnesota

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What Is a Program of Research?

☐ A coordinated set of related research projects
☐ A cohesive sequencing of a series of studies building new knowledge in an area of science

How Do You Identify a Program of Research?

☐ Interests
☐ Expertise
☐ Resources

Start Early

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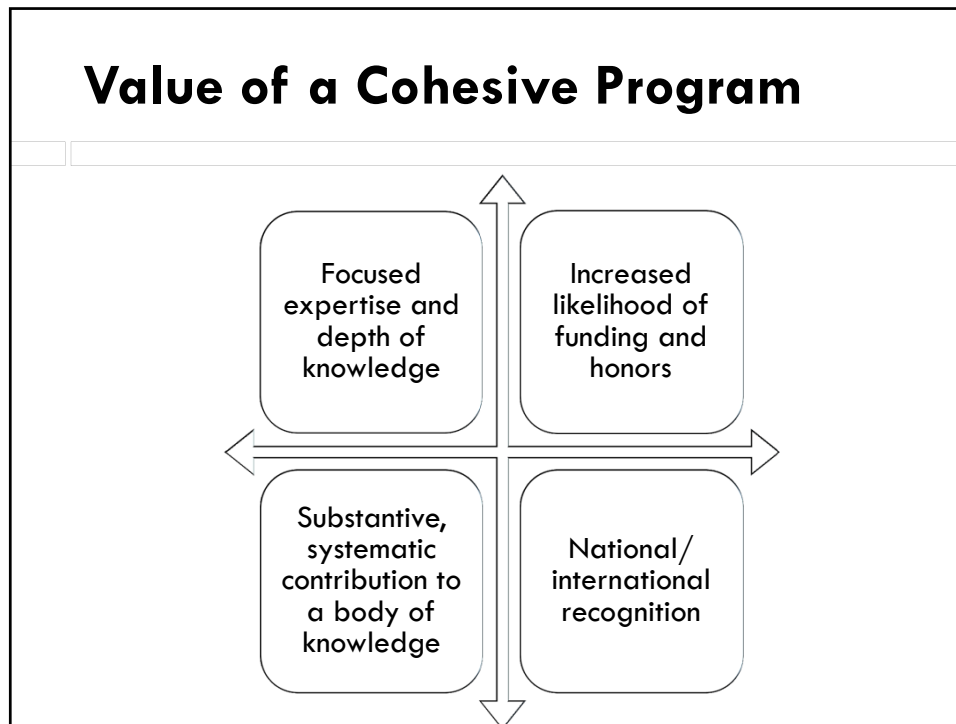
What Is a Research Agenda?

- What have you done?
- What are you doing now?
- Where are you going in the future?
- What is the context of your work?
- What contribution does it make?

What Makes a Productive Agenda?

Good Agenda

□ Bad Agenda

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Value of a Cohesive Program

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                    ↑
  ┌──────────────┐  │  ┌──────────────┐
  │   Focused    │  │  │  Increased   │
  │ expertise and│  │  │ likelihood of│
  │   depth of   │  │  │ funding and  │
  │   knowledge  │  │  │    honors    │
  └──────────────┘  │  └──────────────┘
←─────────────────────────────────────→
  ┌──────────────┐  │  ┌──────────────┐
  │ Substantive, │  │  │              │
  │  systematic  │  │  │  National/   │
  │contribution to│ │  │ international │
  │  a body of   │  │  │  recognition │
  │  knowledge   │  │  │              │
  └──────────────┘  │  └──────────────┘
                    ↓
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Why Does It Matter?

☐ It is central to your identity as a scholar.

☐ You will need to articulate it during:

- ❑ Job searches
- ❑ Promotion/tenure process
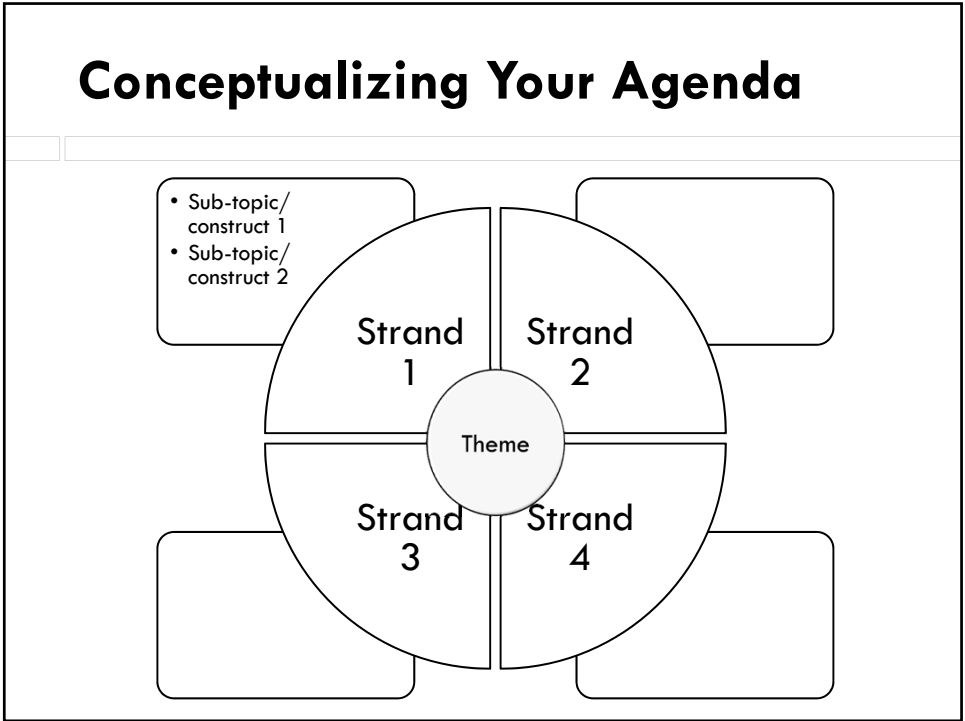- ❑ Funding applications
- ❑ Award applications
- ❑ Networking
- ❑ Recruiting

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┌─────────────────────┐
│  Detailed written   │
│      statement      │
└─────────────────────┘
          ⇩
┌─────────────────────┐
│    Brief summary    │
└─────────────────────┘
          ⇩
┌─────────────────────┐
│   Elevator Speech   │
└─────────────────────┘
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Conceptualizing Your Agenda

- Sub-topic/ construct 1
- Sub-topic/ construct 2

Strand 1

Strand 2

Theme

Strand 3

Strand 4

Questions to Consider

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
What is the overarching theme of all of your research or scholarly activity?	What are the major topics that you will pursue over the next 3-5 years? What are the particular topic(s) within your theme to which you plan to devote significant effort now or in the near future?	What resources will you need to conduct this research? What additional knowledge will you need? What collaborators should you seek?	What are the products that you want to produce within each topic? How are these products related? Do they naturally fall into a sequence that builds upon itself, or do they form a cluster around the central topic? How will each of these be evaluated towards future promotion?

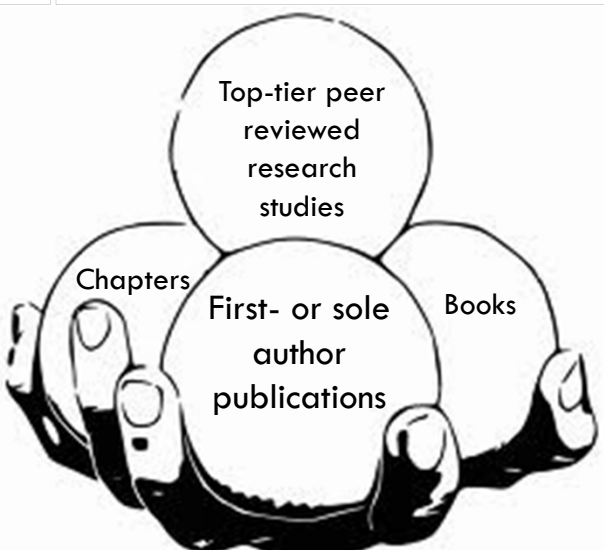Sullivan A. L., Christ, T., Wodrich, D., Dempsey, A., & Harris, B. (2012, February). *Developing a program of research: Tools for success in academe.* Symposium at the annual convention of the National Association of School Psychologists, Philadelphia, PA.

Plan to Manage Multiple Projects

In Press

Under Review

In Progress/
Revision

In Development

Know What Products Are Valued

Top-tier peer
reviewed
research
studies

Chapters

First- or sole
author
publications

Books

☐ Peer-reviewed
   publications
☐ Books
☐ Book chapters
☐ Conference
   presentations
☐ Abstracts
☐ White papers
☐ Technical reports
☐ Manuals
☐ Newsletters
☐ Book reviews

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Keep Track

Theme	Strand	Study	Collaborators	Product	Status
Disproportionality in Special Education Identification and Outcomes	Variations and correlates across systems and levels of analysis				
	Early childhood risk and services				
	SPY practices in identification of CLD students with disabilities				

Ted Christ

University of Minnesota

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to Discover℠

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David L. Wodrich

University of Arizona

1. Recognize the importance of research, or know why not

- At research intensive universities
- Research
- Research
- Research
- Supported with $ $ $ $ $

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2. Start researching what you know
(what your mentor knows)

- You can't expand on something you don't know
- Knowing takes a long time
- Knowing is relevant to:

1. Study execution scale (measure) variables	2. Participant recruitment and IRB intricacies
3. Publication outlets	4. Funding sources

Like: *Effect of chronic illness on schooling*

- 20 years at Phoenix Children's
- Descriptive of school psych practices vis-à-vis epilepsy
- Observations of students with diabetes in class
- Quasi-experimental diabetes, hemophilia
- True experimental, teachers' understanding of students with epilepsy and diabetes

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5. Develop an academic theory of mind

⇩ ⇩

I'm only thinking what I am thinking	I'm thinking what they are thinking
Wanted: *The Greater American Institute on Bullying* seeks grant applications to reduce cyber-bullying among college students	**Wanted:** *Junior professor to teach elementary and advanced statistics*
You shouldn't respond: I seek funding for my innovative and theory-based program to curtail playground bullying among kindergartners	**You should respond**: *I am able to teach elementary and advanced statistics effectively because……*

6. Become adaptively OCD

✓ Check spelling
✓ Check format
✓ Check reference style
✓ Then **compulsively** rechecking spelling
✓ Then **compulsively** recheck format
✓ Then **compulsively** recheck reference style
✓ **Find someone else to recheck**

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Academia can make you feel like

What strategies can help early career scholars to advance their research agendas?

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What potential pitfalls should early career scholars avoid?

Resources

○ http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/careerprep/jobsearch/research_statement.html

○ http://www.insidehighered.com/career-advice/mentor-memo

○ Darley, J. M., Zanna, M. P. & Roediger, H. L. (Eds.). (2004) The complete academic: A career guide 2nd edition. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

○ Lucas, C. J., & Murry, J. W. (2002). New Faculty: A practical guide for academic beginners. New York: Palgrave.

○ Schoenfeld, A. C., & Magnan, R. (1994). Mentor in a manual: Climbing the academic ladder to tenure. Madison, WI: Magna Publications.

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Other Relevant NASP Sessions

O **Dollars and Sense: Understanding Funding Opportunities for Research and Training**
  - O Friday, February 24th, 3:00-3:50pm
  - O Marriott Philadelphia Downtown, Room 301 (3rd Floor)

O **Developing and Sustaining Healthy Work-Life Balance in Academia**
  - O Friday, February 24th, 4:00-5:20pm
  - O Marriott Philadelphia Downtown, Grand Ballroom A (5th Floor)

Contact Information

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