Starting New Research Projects

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I’ve finished my Ph.D.

- Now what?

- Continue developing your Ph.D. research
  - RY: 2 subsequent funded projects; publications spanned 26 years
  - PM: 2+ subsequent funded projects plus pubs
Explore your local environment

- Adapt methods and topics to local issues and opportunities
  - RY: African lakes → New York lakes

- Capitalize on student interest where practicable
  - RY: Acid rain and Environmental concerns
Develop New Collaborations

- Identify helpful colleagues in department
  - Those with complementary interests
  - Senior-level
  - Connections to funding agencies and sources

- Current Graduate Students
  - Connections to research areas
  - Interdisciplinary connections
Develop New Collaborations

- Talk to campus people outside department
  - RY: Water Resources Research Center: State support for Boston water research
  - RY: Physics, Astronomy, Science Education: major funding for research on science teaching and learning
  - RY: Environmental Engineering, Microbiology: large grant for remediation of acid-mine drainage
Expand Your Reach

- **Make time for reading**
  - Keep tabs on people doing related research
  - Develop ideas for possible collaboration
  - Approach them with a proposal

- **Identify “researchable moments”**
  - From your teaching
  - From your field experiences
  - From Departmental “Archives”
Expand Your Reach

- Build upon professional meetings
  - RY: Baikal Drilling Project
- Don’t forget the “cold calls”
  - RY: Rogers & Rosamond Lakes
Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

- **Pros**
  - An RFP indicates that money has been earmarked by a funding agency for research in this area
  - Don’t need to rely on enthusiasm of program officer

- **Cons**
  - They are often (usually?) over-competitive, attracting many proposals
  - Odds of funding can therefore be smaller.
  - May ask for things that you don’t really want to do
Special Solicitations Geared Toward Early Career Scientists

- NSF Faculty Early Career Development Grants ("CAREER" Award)
  - Prestigious
  - Not competing against established senior scientists
  - 5-year duration (the "treadmill slows down")
  - BUT odds of success may actually be much worse than unsolicited proposal route
  - funding per year actually tends to be a bit less, on average, than standard 3-yr NSF awards;
  - strong education/outreach component required

- NASA NIP (New Investigator Program)
  - must have strong NASA connections developed before you’ll be considered seriously