Starting New Research Projects and Building Collaborations

Early Career Faculty Workshop 2019

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New Research Projects

You’ve finished your PhD and/or post-doc. Now what?
Continue working along the line of your PhD/post-doctoral research?
Start in new directions?

New Research Projects

How do you develop new research directions?

(questions pre p. 3-17)
Write down strategies for how to develop new research directions.

What are some considerations to take into account when developing new research directions?

New Research Projects

Brainstorm new ideas yourself
- Address questions you have had in the past
- Read papers on topics related to your field
- Attend different sessions at conferences
Talk to other people
- PhD/post-doc advisor
- Colleagues in your department and/or the person you replaced
- Make new connections

New Research Projects

Things to consider when choosing new directions:

• Make sure topic is of broad interest
• Build on your strengths and expertise
• “More of the same” is not easy to fund
• Don’t aim too big – the topic needs to be solvable given your experience/capabilities
• Find out what is being done already in your field (don’t want to do something that is already being done!)
• Collect preliminary data to demonstrate feasibility

New Research Projects

Things to consider when choosing new directions:

• Take advantage of your local resources
  • How to apply your expertise to the local geology/environment
  • Local industry
  • Use existing departmental facilities
  • Capitalize on student interest
**New Research Projects**

**Diversify** - Try to build your research so you are working on more than one project at a time.

- Variety is the spice of life!
- Minimizes delays due to equipment failure or competitive NSF programs
- Will provide projects for a larger number of students
- You can be working on writing up one project while starting another
- Ideally will provide a steady stream of papers

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**Expertise** – It is important for you to become recognized as an expert in some area(s)

- Develop a common theme or themes to your research
- You will become known for that work and recognized as an expert in that field
- You will be invited to give talks, submit papers, etc. in that area

**#1 What is that area for you?**

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**New Research Projects**

Take a moment to think about some possible new areas for new research projects.

**#2 In what new areas might you develop a new research project?**

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**Building Collaborations**

Collaborations close to home

- Colleagues with complementary interests
- Senior-level colleagues
- Colleagues with instrumentation that may be of use to you
- Colleagues within your university but outside your department

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Collaborations farther from home – how do you meet people?

- Professional meetings
- Try some new, smaller meetings (e.g. Gordon conferences) – good investment of start up
- Go to smaller functions at big meetings (e.g. Area of interest meetings at AGU)

**#3 Who might be able to work with you (near or far) in new or ongoing research?**
Building Collaborations

How do you get yourself known?
• Convene sessions at professional meetings
• Invite big names to give talks in your session or at your home institution
• Serve on panels and committees
• Introduce yourself to people whose work you know
• Use social networking like ResearchGate

#4 List some activities you can engage in to get yourself known

Initiating Collaborations

How do you ask?
1) Do your homework. Know what your collaborator does and what they can contribute.
2) Introduce yourself first – ideally you have the opportunity to interact with them or meet them in person first
3) Send them an email, Call them on the phone, Talk to them at a conference
4) Sell the science
5) Make the contributions/expectations of each partner clear

Starting New Research Projects and Building Collaborations

#5 Commit to one thing you will do.

#6 Pitch