How to Build a Great Research Team

Tom Chenevert - MRI

Find the right people – the most important lab investment !!!

• Chemistry is more important than physics
  ➢ Attitude can be as important as academic credentials

• Before understanding them, let them understand you
  ➢ Clearly state lab / team mission(s)
  ➢ Be honest - explain labs current strengths and weaknesses
  ➢ State expectations of candidate, and why their addition is important to lab

• Seek distinct / complimentary skills in different individuals
• Minimize redundant skills across individuals, avoid adversarial stress
• Gauge candidate enthusiasm & vision for potential & opportunity
• Welcome outsiders & different perspectives
Get return on your investment ...

- Think of lab as a business – develop a strategic plan
- Balance time / resources to cover essential tasks:  
  - Discovery & problem solving
  - Data collection / analysis workload (perhaps hard or mundane)
  - Administration, budget & finances
  - Lab documentation
  - Communications (presentations, pubs, reports, ... )  

- Establish authorship roles and responsibilities
- Proximity – Proximity – Proximity \( \Rightarrow \) creative friction
- Utilize distinct strength(s) of each individual
- Allow time for zero-risk brainstorming \( \rightarrow \) review literature
- Allow (some) discovery beyond lab agenda \( \rightarrow \) review literature
- Run an “Open Source” lab – data / tools / output are shared
Get the most out of your investment ...

• Mentoring
• Focus on career development of lab members
• Greater autonomy, responsibility, leadership, ... PI-ship
• Advancement out of lab viewed as promotion, not desertion

• Diversify your portfolio - broaden objectives / themes of the lab
  ➢ Collaborations with other UM labs → spread the funding load
  ➢ Encourage participation in multi-center initiatives & networks
  ➢ Collaborations with other Non-UM labs
    ✓ Consumers of your lab’s products → translation and rationale on renewals
    ✓ Expanded access to clinical trials
    ✓ Subcontracts → $$
    ✓ Professional recognition for lab members