

Scientific Careers Retreat

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November 4th, 2023



Breakthroughs that change patients' lives

The background of the slide is an abstract, artistic representation of a molecular structure. It features a network of thin, light blue lines that form a complex, branching pattern. Interspersed among these lines are numerous small, semi-transparent spheres in shades of light blue and light orange. The overall effect is that of a delicate, crystalline or molecular lattice, with a soft, ethereal glow. The composition is centered and fills the entire frame.

Talk outline

- 1) Where I am now...
- 2) How I got here...
- 3) Tips & tricks potpourri

Note: Jargon may be sprinkled throughout. Please interrupt if you need definitions.

Positions held at Pfizer, Inc

- Principal Scientist (2019-2021)
 - Requires >5 years in industry post-PhD
 - Reporting FTE*: 1 non-PhD Scientist (starting point)
- Senior Principal Scientist (2021-Current)
 - Requires >7 years in industry post-PhD
 - Reporting FTE*: 3 non-PhD, 2 PhD Scientists, 2 PD**



Main job fxns and responsibilities:

- Research collaboratively within Pfizer and externally to develop competitive drug research programs and support existing portfolio drug R&D
- Mentor junior scientists as they learn to be better “drug hunters” and have fun along the way



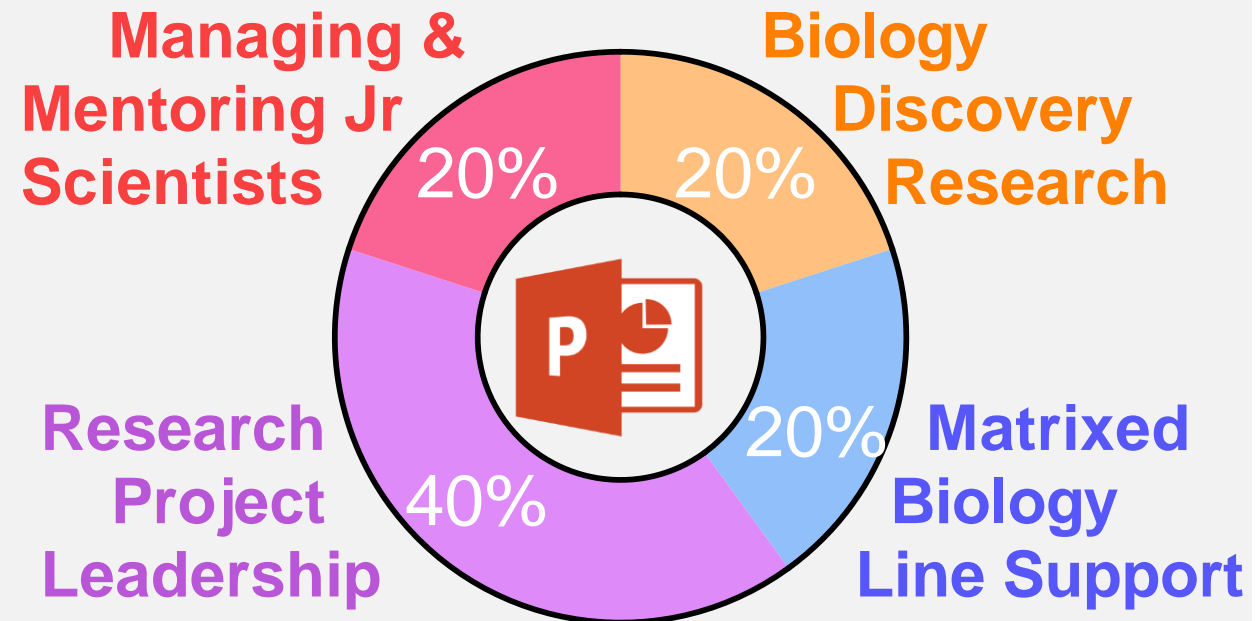
* FTE = Full-Time Employee

** PD = Post-Doctoral Fellows

More granular breakdown of key fxns...

- **Biology discovery research**
 - Most closely related to “academic-style” research
 - Focus: define novel drug targets that align with company strategy and directives
 - Regularly expands and contracts – depending on business
- **Matrixed biology line support (In vitro pharmacology)**
 - Leverage expertise and team’s bench skillsets to develop models and execute experiments to foster portfolio program progression – we are 1 of several discipline leads
 - Small molecule chemistry, In vivo pharmacology, Toxicology, Pharmacodynamics/Pharmacokinetics, Protein design/purification, Computational biology...
- **Research project leadership**
 - Help to align team on program direction, prepare for meetings with leadership, run regular group meetings to share progress and troubleshoot problems along the way
- **Managing & mentoring junior scientists**
 - Support report research project leadership
 - Foster professional development
 - Discuss experiment design, analyses, troubleshooting

Average weekly time split for key fxns...



~2-5 hrs of meetings a day - mix of leading/attending
(1:1 with manager, mentees and project team meetings)

The background features a complex, abstract pattern of thin, light blue lines that form a network or web-like structure. Interspersed throughout this network are numerous spheres of varying sizes, colored in shades of light blue and light orange. The overall effect is that of a dynamic, interconnected system, possibly representing a molecular structure or a data network. The lighting is soft and diffused, creating a sense of depth and movement.

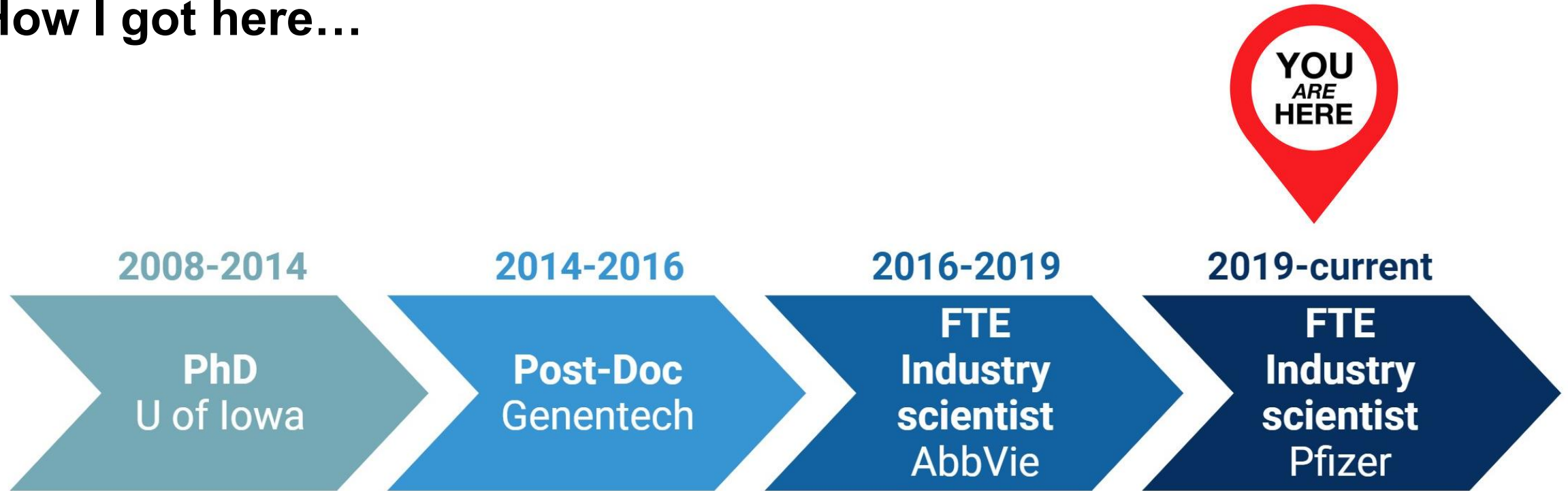
Talk outline

1) Where I am now...

2) *How I got here...*

3) Tips & tricks potpourri

How I got here...



My path...

- A series of step-wise transitions to new opportunities that fostered growth and had new ways to invest in myself
- Only looking 1-3 years at a time for the next opportunity because things will always change

Looking back (so far)...

- It was a great way to gradually diversify my own value and make myself more competitive down the road while making sure the path still aligned with my own interests

IOWA

PhD training – U of Iowa



Opportunity: Immunology PhD program

- Mentor: John Harty
- Major skillsets obtained and achievements:
 - Significant experience with cellular T cell immunology
 - Regulation of CD8 T cell responses via cytokines (IL12/Type I IFN) and FcγRIIB
 - In vivo pharmacology
 - Mouse viral/bacterial infection models
 - Flow cytometry
 - Publications
 - 2 first-authors, 3 co-authors

What was I looking for in the next opportunity...

- Gain greater experience in T cell signaling (beyond cellular)
- Make a greater impact on human health – wasn't sure how though
 - Get feet wet in industry without over committing → Industry Post-Doc



1 like

██████████ BFFs 4-EvEr! - AAI 2013

May 6, 2013

Post-Doc Fellowship



Opportunity: GNE Post-Doctoral Fellowship

- Mentor: Andy Chan; Location: South San Francisco
- Major skillsets developed and achievements:
 - Experience in TCR signaling/receptor internalization, mouse and human
 - Transgenic/KO mouse model design
 - Novel antibody campaign design and screening
 - High-level understanding for how GNE runs drug discovery programs
 - Solidified interest in building career in drug development
- Started Interviewing for FTE industry position after 2 years, before publishing – foresaw ~2-3 years left

What was I looking for in the next opportunity...

- FTE scientist role in drug development
- Early/discovery realm of research, a little outside of comfort zone (not T cell-related)
- Still in the San Francisco area

What is an “Industry Post-Doc?”

- Goal: Strengthen competitiveness to land an FTE industry scientist position
- 2 types – “long interview” and “thanks, but g-bye”
- Duration: Usually 2-3 years, some more academic-like
- Publications are often expected

How did I get this opportunity?

- Applied online to company job page (website) and cold emailing mentors if information was discoverable – *highly recommend this redundancy*



How did I get this job?

- 2 angles - Network colleague then application/recruiter
- Requirements: ~1-2 years post-PhD, strong communication skills, significant immunology training

What was the job?

- Senior Scientist I → II
- Key fxns and responsibilities
 - Discover novel drug targets in Immuno-Oncology* space
 - Myeloid-focused MOA* – intentionally not T cells
 - No reporting FTE/management
 - Work collaboratively (matrix) and solo at the bench

Major skillsets developed and achievements

- scRNA-Seq and CRISPR screens
- Functional screens for novel mAb
- Efficient proof-of-concept (POC) experimentation to warrant portfolio entry
- Promotion
- Publication on a pre-portfolio work

What was I looking for at the next opportunity...

- Direct portfolio project work
- Clear path to mentorship and management experience

Found Pfizer job through network then application/recruiter



Liked by [redacted]
 [redacted] Lookin' good, 'Goblins! Until next year...
 #formidable#workslowpitch#plusLevi#lowaringer
 June 27, 2018

* = new-to-me research space

Talk outline


- 1) Where I am now...
- 2) How I got here...
- 3) *Tips & tricks potpourri*



Tips and tricks potpourri

- Actively network - Plant seeds whenever and wherever you can
 - You never know who may be able to help you find an opportunity and/or advocate for you
- Always keep your eyes and ears open for jobs – new openings can be unpredictable
 - It never hurts to listen even when you aren't looking because you can always say “no”
- Location, location, location
 - Building careers in industry hubs vs isolated geographic areas can naturally shape trajectory
 - Major industry hubs: San Francisco Bay, Boston/Cambridge, Seattle
- Best places to find job openings...
 - LinkedIn, company websites, network, headhunters/recruiters are sometimes helpful but not required
 - Job titles are never consistent between companies, ask more details about responsibilities/exp required
- During interview process
 - Never say what salary range you are looking for, tell them you trust that they will compensate you fairly
 - **BUT ALWAYS** plan to negotiate once offer is received, otherwise you are leaving money on the table
 - Examples: salary (always ask for 15% higher than initial offer), sign-on bonus, relocation packages

Tips and tricks potpourri

- Cultures and work/life balance can vary substantially from place to place – big vs large companies
 - Assess during interview process, you are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you
- Be adaptable – not all waves will be perfect, but some are still worth surfing 
 - Company directives will change, inheriting reporting FTE may not be optimal BUT could lead to growth
- Use every opportunity/job to invest in yourself
 - Take jobs that you can see yourself being successful in AND have a clear path for growth that fits your next stage of development - DO NOT TAKE ON TOO MUCH RISK
 - Try to branch out as you go to better diversify your experience and make yourself more competitive
 - Do not become a “niche” expert, it is better to broaden your expertise to be more employable later on
 - Never stop honing your communication skills – need to advocate for your projects and self to novices and experts
 - Aim to establish evidence of success every where you go before moving on – don't “hop around for promotions”
 - Examples: Internal promotions, publications, filings (IND/patents)
 - Ask for feedback REGULARLY – from manager, colleagues, collaborators

Tips and tricks potpourri

- Biggest challenges in drug discovery
 - Industry science is often team-based work, not individualistic – no need to always carry the load alone
 - Managing mentees/reports
 - Business directives can change, sometimes research programs may have to follow suit or get cut
 - Keeping “clinical realities” embedded into the fabric of new research projects
- Biggest rewards in drug discovery
 - Leveraging cutting-edge technology to creatively solve complex scientific problems
 - Bringing new medicines to patients

Thank You



Breakthroughs that change patients' lives