
MIDSTATES CONSORTIUM *for* MATH AND SCIENCE

July 14, 2017

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this weekend's early career faculty development workshop. We hope you leave this weekend feeling confident, energized, and more focused on what you can do to prepare for your future professional and personal success. Throughout the weekend, you will have plenty of opportunity to make some good contacts among other early career faculty on other Consortium campuses.

One of the goals of this weekend is for each of you to develop a personal strategic action plan complete with a vision, goals, strategies and actions for the next 2-3 years of your professional life. Over the course of our time together this weekend, we hope you find the presentations and conversations informative and thought provoking. In what ways can you use your unique talents and interests to make your campus a more vibrant and affirming place to live and work? We encourage you to think creatively about the many ways you can contribute to your research groups, your departments, your campus and your broader scholarly and personal communities.

A second goal is to meet new colleagues and enlarge our networks of professional contacts. We will be spending time in conversations in small and large groups, over meals and, if desired, during the free time. We hope you listen carefully and respond thoughtfully to the ideas of your colleagues. We can help each other by providing constructive criticism of the visions, goals, strategies and actions that we each develop and we can serve as sound-boards for each other well past this weekend's meetings.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Seymour



Professor of Chemistry

Director of the Midstates Consortium for Math and Science

Hope College

Beloit College Carthage College Colorado College Grinnell College Gustavus Adolphus College Hope College Knox College

Lawrence University Luther College Macalester College St. Olaf College University of Chicago Washington University

Schedule

Friday, July 14, 2017

12:00 – 4:30	Check in
5:00 pm	Welcome, hospitality, & introductions Strategic planning for your career: How & why (and who, me?)
6:00 pm	Dinner (Interpretive Center)
7:00 pm	Level 1: Vision, Mission, Vocation
7:30 pm	Exploring vocation through deep listening

Saturday, July 15, 2017

8:00 am	Breakfast buffet (Interpretive Center)
8:30 am	Debrief Level 2: Major goals
9:00 am	Research
9:30 am	Teaching
10:00 am	Break & time for individual reflection
10:30 am	<i>Check-in:</i> Whose goals are these, anyway?
11:00 am	Connections & Mentoring
11:30 am	Taking care of self
noon	Lunch (Presidents' Dining Room, Jackson Campus Center)
1:00 pm	Individual work time
1:15 pm	<i>Check-in:</i> Prioritizing
1:30 pm	Peer coaching
3:00 pm	Break & time for individual reflection
3:30 pm	Level 3: Strategies
3:45 pm	Teaching & Research
4:45 pm	Connections & Mentoring, taking care of self
5:45 pm	Depart for dinner (3 rd St. Tavern)

Sunday, July 16, 2017

8:00 am	Breakfast buffet (Interpretive Center)
8:30 am	Debrief Finishing up and following through Level 4: Making action plans & setting your timeline Monitoring progress and staying accountable
9:15 am	Transfer plan to large paper
9:45 am	Review as many plans as possible
10:30 am	Break & review your feedback
11:00 am	Staying on track: What could derail you? How will you avoid it?
noon	Lunch

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Strategic planning: How and why (and who, me?)

“There are some people who live in a dream world, and there are some who face reality; and then there are those who turn one into the other.” - Douglas H. Everett

Strategic planning language and format: don't get hung up on it

Vision, goals, strategies, tactics... these words bring different things to mind for each of us. Organize and talk about your plan in a way that makes sense to you. What matters is that you take an organized approach to setting and prioritizing the details of your plan. In this workshop, we will talk about aspects of your plan in four levels:

- **Level 1** is the big picture. Who are you? Why are you doing what you do? What do you hope to achieve with your life? What brings you joy? What would make you feel successful?
- **Level 2** is about setting goals that bring you closer to alignment with your vision in Level 1. Think about the next 1 - 3 years. What major milestones do you hope to reach in that time? You will have to start to get more practical here, considering external pressures, your own strengths, and available resources, along with your hopes and dreams.
- In **Level 3**, we break down the goals into achievable parts. Ask yourself how you're going to get from where you are now to the realization of your goal. Do you need to gather information, get training, secure funding, establish collaborations or seek expertise? You will need to continue to be vigilant about prioritization and practical limitations at this stage, so that you don't overload yourself.
- **Level 4** is your "To Do" list. For this workshop, we will try to stay out of this level until the rest of the plan is coming together. This level is where you plan your action items to keep you moving towards your goals. Some of these may be one-time items, like attending a particular meeting. Others may be repeating, like scheduling weekly meetings with a community partner to discuss how a new service-learning course is going.

Whatever the language, strategic planning includes

- Identifying a vision of the future
- Analyzing the current situation
- Setting goals to achieve the vision
- Determining strategies to meet the goals
- Acting on those strategies
- Monitoring or assessing progress toward the goals & vision
- Adjusting the plan as needed

Strategic planning tools

There are a number of tools and approaches you can use to organize your thoughts as you develop your strategic plans. Here are some that we have used:

Analyzing your current situation

- In a **360 degree review**, you seek feedback from multiple directions, including self-reflection. This kind of review is used by many businesses in evaluating individual job performance. In the case of developing a strategic plan for your career, you are essentially reviewing yourself. You could gather information from a professional peer, a senior colleague, a student, a friend outside of work who knows you well.
- **SWOT analysis** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) is another method used often in business. This one is more commonly used in evaluating and strategic planning for organizations or departments, but we find it can be useful for self-evaluation as well. In this method, you identify personal strengths and weaknesses, then before you think about what goals you want to set, you consider the environment you are working in. Are there special opportunities because of your location, because of who you are currently working with, or other factors? Are there people or other factors that make certain things difficult for now? Will this change with time, or is there something you can do to make needed change?

Outlining the plan

- **Basic outline model** - Use a standard outline to represent the hierarchy of your vision, goals, strategies, actions, etc. See the Strategic Action Planning article by Karen Nordell Pearson.
- **Logic model** - This model includes everything from resources to a grand vision, and sort of guides you to make sure each piece is linked and supported. This approach focuses more on the hierarchy of ideas, and less on how each piece is connected. Maybe that new lab technique you learn will advance your goals in both your research lab and your teaching. See the example logic model, and feel free to download and use as a template.
- **Mind-mapping** - This model is useful if you find that the connections between items are more important to map out than the hierarchy. The hierarchy still needs to be there, if it's to be a mind-map for a strategic plan, but the focus is more on how the ideas are linked. See the mind mapping example, and talk to Scott about useful software.

Vocation

Vocation is “the place where our deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.” - Frederick Buechner

“Vocation is more than your job or career. Vocation is something that grows out of our life experiences. It has to do with being of service to others in roles and relationships throughout one’s life. Thinking about vocation as a ‘calling’ can cause a person to think about the source of the call, which can be different things for different people. For some, it is God or the Divine; for others it is community, other people and their needs, nature, or one’s deepest self. Finally, vocation is linked with reflection and implies an ongoing dynamic of listening and responding, seeking and discovering, questions and ‘answers.’” - from the web page of the Gustavus Servant-Leadership program.

In this workshop, we are asking you to “think big” about yourselves and your careers. We know that there are external factors telling you what you “need” to accomplish, to get tenure, to get a certain job, etc. But your work is still your own, especially in academic careers. It is helpful to regularly reconnect yourself with a deeper sense of purpose, and to align your goals and how you spend your time with that purpose.

Tonight, we will spend some time reflecting on our own sense of vocation (or vision, mission, purpose...) while also practicing the technique of *deep listening*.

Exploring vocation

Deep-Listening Exercise

Introduction

Mary Rose O'Reilley, in her book *Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice*, writes of the power of close listening: "One can, I think, *listen someone into existence*, encourage a stronger self to emerge or a new talent to flourish." And in learning to listen well, one can also learn to be *listened to*, "to be able to stand being heard. It's frightening because true attention... invites us to change." She continues with this:

Attention: deep listening. People are dying in spirit for lack of it. In academic culture most listening is critical listening. We tend to pay attention only long enough to develop a counterargument; we critique the student's or the colleague's ideas; we mentally grade and pigeonhole each other. In society at large, people often listen with an agenda, to sell or petition or seduce. Seldom is there a deep, openhearted, unjudging reception of the other. And so we all talk louder and more stridently and with a terrible desperation. By contrast, if someone truly listens to me, my spirit begins to expand.[1]

For these conversations,[2] we'll divide into pairs and take turns listening to each other explore substantive, potentially very "personal," questions in depth. Listen to your partner carefully for the full time allotted, asking some of the following questions and/or, if you choose, some others of your own. This is not intended to be primarily a two-way "conversation" (although there will of course be some natural "give-and-take"). Rather, you are to devote all of your attention to your partner for the entire time, providing a safe, courageous space of attuned hospitality to whatever your partner wishes to share with you as s/he explores the landscapes into which the questions lead.

When the time is right, take a short break and then switch roles. The new listeners should again simply listen and attend, and the new speakers should use their turn to explore the terrain opened up for them by the questions. By the time you are finished, be sure to have an understanding with your interview partner(s) about what you would like to remain confidential.

1. What people or experiences influenced your educational experience the most?
2. What did these people or experiences teach you about good teaching and learning.
3. What would you say is your key commitment – as a person, and/or as a teacher and/or researcher and/or scholar – at the moment?
4. What is at the heart of your professional life?
5. What is at the heart of your personal life?
6. How do your professional life and personal life relate to each other?
7. What do you believe to be your calling in life, and why do you believe this?

8. How would you say your work (teaching and research) matters to yourself and to others?
9. How do “your deep gladness and the world’s deep need?” intersect in your work?
- 10.. In what other aspects of your life would you say that is true?
11. What are the most important relationships in your personal life and working life?
12. How do you sustain those relationships?
13. When and how do you feel most at peace, most at home “in your own skin”?
14. In what moments, activities, and life experiences have you felt most in touch with your authentic self, your true self, the “real you?”
15. What brings you a sense of deep satisfaction, a sense that “YES, this is what I should be doing with my life; this is really who I am and who I’m meant to be?”
16. When did you first realize that you *are* a teacher and/or researcher and/or scholar.
17. What was that realization like, and how has that feeling changed over time?
18. What are the most important features of the “inner landscape” of your life as a teacher and/or researcher and/or scholar, and how would you like to enhance them, or deepen your sense of being “grounded” there?
19. How do the inner and outer landscapes of your life inform each other? How might you nurture the connection between them?
20. What would you like your legacy as a teacher and/or researcher and/or scholar to be?
21. What would you like your legacy as a human being to be?
22. How are you (or are you not) “living your legacy” now?
23. What else would you like me to ask you? What is one question that nobody ever asks you – and you really wish they would?

[1] Mary Rose O’Reilly, *Radical Presence : Teaching as Contemplative Practice* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1998), pp. 17–21.

[2] This exercise is influenced by, among others, Jim Keen’s “Lives of Commitment” workshop; Matthew Fox, *The Reinvention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994); Claudia Horwitz, *The Spiritual Activist: Practices To Transform Your Life, Your Work, and Your World* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002); and Parker Palmer, *The Courage To Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).

Let’s get to it! Strategic planning for your career.

This is to try to help you reflect on your personal vision/mission/vocation and assess the environment in which you find yourself. From there, you can set reasonable goals that meet who

you are and what you need to do. Be selective...don't think about trying a billion new teaching styles at once, for example.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list; rather, it is a sampling of the kinds of questions that can be helpful at each level. Levels are not rigidly defined, nor are questions unique to a given topic or level. Don't get held up by trying to decide if a question (or answer) belongs at this level or that. The important thing is to consider things (plan) that it will take to be successful (strategic) in the activities (action) you do. Hopefully, this will also give you a sense of priorities so that you aren't so overwhelmed at the end of the planning that you can't act.

Research

Level 1: Mission/vision/vocation

What kinds of projects are you interested in and why?

How many projects can you sustain?

How broad can your research be?

What are your department's priorities?

Level 2: Information gathering

How does your research fit into the department/ college's portfolio of research?

How broadly accessible is your research? (i.e. can work with 1st year, need to be junior/senior)

What does a successful research program look like to you?

What are the hallmarks of success in your department/college? (specific # of publications, presentations, etc.)

What are the key components to a successful research program?

What support do you have in the department?

At the college? (e.g. grants officer, student research funding, etc.)

What are the pieces of external support available (funding agencies)?

Level 3: Plan for actions

What grants do you need to write?

How are you going to recruit students?

How are you going to mentor students?

How are you going to assess students/progress/research?

Teaching

Level 1: Vision/Mission/Vocation

What is your overall teaching philosophy?

Who are your students?

What kinds of pedagogy can be used?

How many new pedagogies can you learn and then deploy at the same time?

What standards do your colleagues use to describe excellent teaching?

Where do you have opportunities to develop new things (new activities or pedagogies).

Where are things laid out for you (shared lab curriculum?)

Level 2: Information gathering

How does your set of courses fit into the departmental curriculum as a whole?

How do your classes fit into the college's curriculum?

Who do your courses serve?

What are the objectives of your course (with respect to department and college)

What do students need to take away from your courses?

What kinds of pedagogy work best for the students

What kinds of pedagogy work best for your college

What kinds of pedagogy work best for your department

What resources do you have for developing course materials? (e.g. Kendall Center)

Level 3: Plan for actions

What kinds of assignments do you need to develop

What kinds of activities?

What kinds of AV do you need to use?

How do you assess the success of your course?

Connections/mentoring

Level 1: Mission/vision/vocation

How valued are collegial relationships in your department? Across campus? Within your discipline?

When is it appropriate to start building networks?

What kinds of relationships do you need to be healthy and productive?

Are there natural affinity groups on campus?

What do you need from a mentor?

Level 2: Information gathering

What opportunities exist within your department? College? Within your discipline

What support does your department/college/discipline have? (social hour, travel grants, seminar program, faculty mentor program, etc.)

Level 3: Plan for actions

What meetings do you want to attend on campus?

What committees should you think about joining?

Who are your confidants and allies?

What conferences should you go to?

What grants should you volunteer to review?

Self Care

Level 1: vision/mission/vocation

What are your important personal relationships?

What activities/practices build/strengthen those relationships?

What activities/practices help you relax?

How does stress affect you? (e.g. shut down, eat, etc.)

What does good health (physical and mental) look like to you?

Level 2: Information gathering

What support does your institution provide (gym access?)

What atmosphere does your department foster?

Which colleagues share the same activities/practices?

What support for activities/practices does the community provide?

Level 3: Plan for actions

What is your personal fitness plan?

What diet do you want to maintain?

What memberships should you hold? (library, church, gym)

What schedule are you going to keep?

How do you assess good health/relationships?

Peer Coaching

We are frequently faced with significant challenges and we sometimes find ourselves looking for a new direction. The best way forward for *you* depends upon *your* underlying motivations, the resources *you* have at your disposal, the obstacles that *you* face in working through the challenge, and even how *you* frame the problem. It can be helpful to talk ideas through with another person, but without a deep understanding of the underlying issues and a clearly articulated problem to solve, the conversation can be counter productive; it can become mired in unsolicited advice or half informed solutions to partially articulated problems.

"Coaching is a relationship that uses questions to accelerate insight." (Rebecca Sok)

This version of peer coaching is inspired by the Quakers' Clearness Committee and shaped by the idea of action learning. **The process** is simple:

1) Form a group. The group should be between four and six people. More work, but it becomes difficult to listen to so many voices. Fewer are also ok, but you have fewer new perspectives considering the problem. **For this exercise, we will be in groups of two to four. One person should take notes for the focus person.**

2) Each person in the group thinks deeply about the issue they wish to bring forward to the group. As each person takes their turn as the focus of the group, you should provide:

- A concise statement of the issue; if there is not clarity around the issue, the peer coaching can help provide that clarity.
- Relevant background or factors that may bear on the problem.
- **Today, try to keep this to 5 minutes**

3) When the focus person is finished with the introduction of the issue, the peer coaches ask "open and honest" questions (as in the deep listening exercise). The peer coaches should remain totally attentive to the focus person and her/his needs. **Do not let this part turn into a "grilling" session. Questions that can be answered in one or two words are not open enough.**

4) The focus person can respond, though the answers should be kept brief. The more the focus person supplies, the more material the peer coaches have to work with.

5) Each focus person should be given attention for the full time allotted. Don't be afraid of silence; keep your attention on the focus person and the issue, and new perspectives may arise from the silence. **For this practice exercise, allot 10 minutes for questioning.**

6) Change the focus person in your group and start again, choosing a person to take notes. Make sure to give the notes to the appropriate person of focus when the session is over.

7) Conduct a reflective self-evaluation. **What did you learn, and what action will you take as a result?**

Peer Coaching Rules

1) What's said in the group stays in the group. The process is confidential because the focus person will become very vulnerable during the process. This also means you should not ask questions outside the group if the focus person is not receptive. Respect the group.

2) The only questions allowed are open and honest.

Take yourself out of the question. This means: No preamble (this is really just to make the questioner look smart) and no "wisdom" (your experiences are not the focus). No "Why don't you...", or "When that happened to me, here's what I did...", and no amateur psychoanalysis.

- An "honest" question is one that the answer can't easily be anticipated.
- Ask questions that help the focus person to discover solution from within themselves. (Or at least discover what they need to learn in order to provide a solution.)
- Good questions can lead the person to reframe the issue, see it from a different perspective. Questions that employ different metaphors can be useful for reframing.
- Questions should be short...no preamble and no extra words (e.g. "So, I'm wondering....") should be necessary. A good rule of thumb is to take the question you are forming in your mind and cut it in half. If it isn't germane to the actual question, don't say it.
- Trust your intuition...even if it leads to bizarre questions like "What does that problem taste like? What would the solution feel like?" These can help reframe and bring new perspective.
- Begin with inquiry word: What, Where, How, Who
- Don't use judging words: Why, do, are, is
 - Why do you believe that?
 - Do you think that's true?
 - Are you sure?
 - Is that a good idea?

3) The focus person can refuse to answer any question. An unanswered question is not lost...it may be the question that is so important that the focus person keeps thinking about it for a long time.

Things to remember

1) Being an attentive listener and effective coaching partner takes practice. Asking good questions is a learned skill.

2) When done properly, **a group of 4 should take two hours!** This exercise is just to give you a taste.

3) Being comfortable enough with the group to be vulnerable requires establishing good relationships. It's hard to get the full effect of the peer counseling in just one session with relative strangers...or worse yet, colleagues you don't yet trust. The peer counseling groups themselves can help build stronger relationships, but it takes time.

4) Ideally, the group would meet somewhat regularly and hold each other accountable for the actions you propose to take as a result of what you learned in the session.

Reflection on Peer Coaching

1) How do you rate your participation as the person of focus? What would you do differently to improve your participation?

2) How do you rate your participation as a listener / questioner? What would make you a better listener / questioner?

3) How do you rate the group overall? What would have made the group more productive?

4) What did you learn about yourself or the issue you brought to the group?

5) What actions will you take as a result of what you learned?

On the large Post-It

Your name

Job title & institution (for the upcoming years)

Brief summary of context, challenges, opportunities

Your strategic plan: Levels 1 & 2

Example of Level 3 item (ideally, one you plan to start working on soon)

What goal(s) does it serve?

What are some (or all) of the steps/actions you need to take?

What is the time line?

What is one action you plan to take in the next week?

What are 1-3 actions you plan to take in the next 2 months?

Who is going to hold me accountable for this? How?

If you have particular questions for those who will be reviewing your poster, write them down!

How to use your SAP once you leave the workshop

- **Post It:** Print or write your SAP on brightly colored paper and pin it to the bulletin board right above your desk or tape it to the wall right inside your office door. You may even be able to fit a copy of your SAP in your daily planner or calendar.
- **Share It:** Review your SAP with at least one other person, preferably two or three people including a research mentor, a collaborator, a colleague in your department a family member or a friend. If someone else knows about your SAP and you give them permission to comment on it, chances are much higher that in 6 months or a year from now it will not just have been another good, but now forgotten idea.
- **Use it with your calendar:** Make use of your SAP in connection with your calendar. While your SAP is fresh, make some notes on your calendar that correspond to action items in your plan. Remind yourself of upcoming deadlines, calls, emails and appointments that you need to schedule to your list each week and carry them over to the next week if you don't get them done.
- **Use it for decision making:** Your SAP can be an excellent tool and reference when making decisions. If you're asked to teach a course, give a seminar, review a manuscript, take on a new research student, or be a co-PI on a proposal, take time to see where this opportunity may fit into your action plan. Evaluate the opportunity realistically in terms of the time it will require and whether the benefits associated with it are worth the costs. Maybe this new opportunity is perfectly timed to help you accomplish part of your SAP and you can eagerly accept. However, that may not be the case. While this new opportunity may be very appealing to you, resist the urge to over-commit yourself if you've already got a full schedule.
- **Review it:** On your calendar, schedule a minimum of 30 minutes each month to revisit your SAP. To make this review more appealing, take yourself out for coffee or lunch with your action plan and your calendar. Spend that time reviewing action items you've accomplished and progress you've made and make notes in your calendar about next steps.
- **Revise it:** Upon reviewing your SAP you may discover that you need to make major or minor revisions. Go ahead, this is a living, changing document that should not constrain you as much as motivate you and help you prepare and realize your goals of success. If you make major revisions, remember to post it, share it, use it and so on.

Karen Nordell Pearson, based on material in a CUR article, Spring 2008