

# Labs That Work FOR EVERYONE

*An Intentional Professional  
Leadership Curriculum Tailored for  
Researchers at HHMI and Beyond*

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**C.K. Gunsalus**

**Director, National Center for Professional and Research Ethics**

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*Labs That Work For Everyone is a collaboration between the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the National Center for Professional Research Ethics at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.*



*ncpre*

Developing values-driven,  
effective leaders and advancing  
institutional integrity through intentional  
professional development.

# Cultures of Excellence

Our premise is that excellence is more than *what* work is done, it also encompasses *how* work is done:

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with rigor, reproducibility, inclusion, and integrity.

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 Modular Professional Development Curriculum



Two modules developed and piloted; further modules to be considered collaboratively by NCPRE and HHMI.

Content developed and refined with HHMI, Investigator, and lab member participation.

Each module addresses multiple concepts and skills.

# Core Concepts and Skills



## HHMI Mission and Values

People advance science for the benefit of humanity and scientists are accountable



## Responsible Conduct of Research

Conduct research at highest levels of integrity



## Cultural Competency and Inclusion

Build relationships that transcend differences; understand how values, biases, assumptions influence behavior



## Power and Incivility

Understand the role of power, how to get help, report problems, the critical role of bystanders



## Leadership Skills

Manage the social nature of interactions in a lab



## Take Action

Enhance communication, motivation, and problem-solving skills; lab members also prepare for leadership

# Core Concepts and Skills

— *Bringing it all together* —



## For Lab Leaders

Enhance leadership skills, including, communication, motivation, and problem-solving



## For Lab Members

Enhance professional interactions; understand how to transition into a leadership role; why effective leadership matters for their own and others' success



We know that people are influenced by the choices of those around them.  
And by the **environments** in which they work.

# HHMI Researchers



On site at HHMI meetings



Before lab members



Researchers prepared  
to lead own labs in  
discussions of topics



Explore leader conduct,  
research group health  
and culture



Lab members do preparatory  
work through different paths

MODULE  
1

Path A



*Online content (videos, reading, exercises) followed by in-person PI-led session(s)*

Path B



*In-person sessions interspersed with other day of science activities*

Path C



*Combined in-person sessions: Lectures with assignments between discussions (2-3 hours each)*

Modular Professional Development Curriculum

*Pedagogy: Problem-based*



*Video Scenario Setup*

*Career Tragedies*



*Analytical Decision-Making Framework (DMF)*



*2 Minute Challenge(s)*



*How things go wrong*



*How things go right*

*How things go right*



Alternative video scenarios  
Concepts, skills, competencies



Skills practice, application  
Group discussion, takeaways



# Focus groups and interviews:

Real dilemmas relevant to challenges of audience

Scenarios built around the dilemmas to develop core competencies

# A Grad Student's Dilemma

## *The Situation*

At a conference, two female grad students are sitting at a table having lunch with their male advisors. One of the advisors starts a discussion with the other about the sexual preferences of their sex partners, both women in the department.

The two students know both partners professionally and feel uncomfortable knowing these details about women with whom they interact professionally. In fact, one of the partners is on the thesis committees of the two non-participating graduate students.

The students didn't know how to handle the situation. They ask you in confidence what to do in the future.

**What would you advise?**

# 6 Elements

## Decision- making Framework



What are the issues?



What policies or rules apply?



What questions do you have?  
What data do you need?



Who, what are your resources?



What are your options?  
Who is affected by each?



What will you do?  
*What (exact) words will you use?*

# Another Grad Student's Dilemma

At a lab group meeting, a male postdoc argues with the PI about the interpretation of results. The PI thanks him for the rigorous scientific debate.

Later in the meeting, a female postdoc brings up a point related to the interpretation issue. The PI responds, “that snarky attitude must be PMS.”

**What do you do or say?**

What if the comment had been less blatant, for example:  
“When you’ve worked with this team a little bit longer, you’ll understand better what we are trying to do here.”

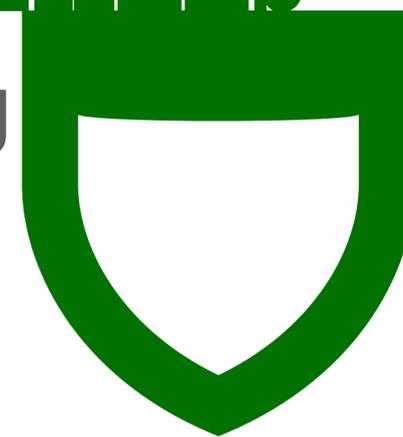
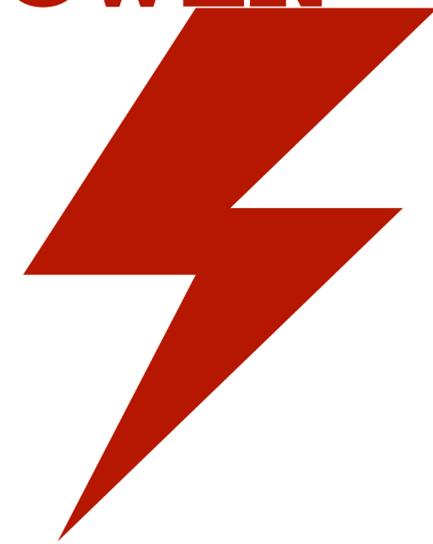
*Does that change the situation for you?*

# Personal Scripts

Words you have prepared, in advance, and practiced, for predictable situations.

So much about what goes wrong is about **POWER**  
– and how we treat those around us.

Things go right when you have **SKILLS**  
to respond if you see something  
going on, or that affects you.



# Personal Scripts

## Preemptive

- 1 Speaking regularly about values & mission
- 2 Building it into a habit to ask questions about others, their interests
- 3 For anticipated events: You know it's coming (feedback, evaluation, difficult conversations)

## Reactive

- 4 Buying time to think
- 5 Calling a pause in a topic or discussion that is getting off the rails, too heated
- 6 Turning the tables to the other/s: asking for solutions
- 7 Noting positives
- 8 Agreeing to disagree

# Possible Scripts for Grad Student's Dilemma?

*if you are senior enough...*

*“Those both sounded like rigorous scientific debate to me. I’d be interested in exploring that question.”*

*if you are senior enough...*

*“What’s the difference between Selina’s point and the earlier question raised by Lucas?”*

*if you are senior enough...*

*“I thought our rule was all questions are good questions in our seminars.”*

*if you are senior enough...*

*“Whoa, Bob. I’m not very comfortable labeling questions that way.”*

# What if it's said to you?

*"Wow. Ok."*

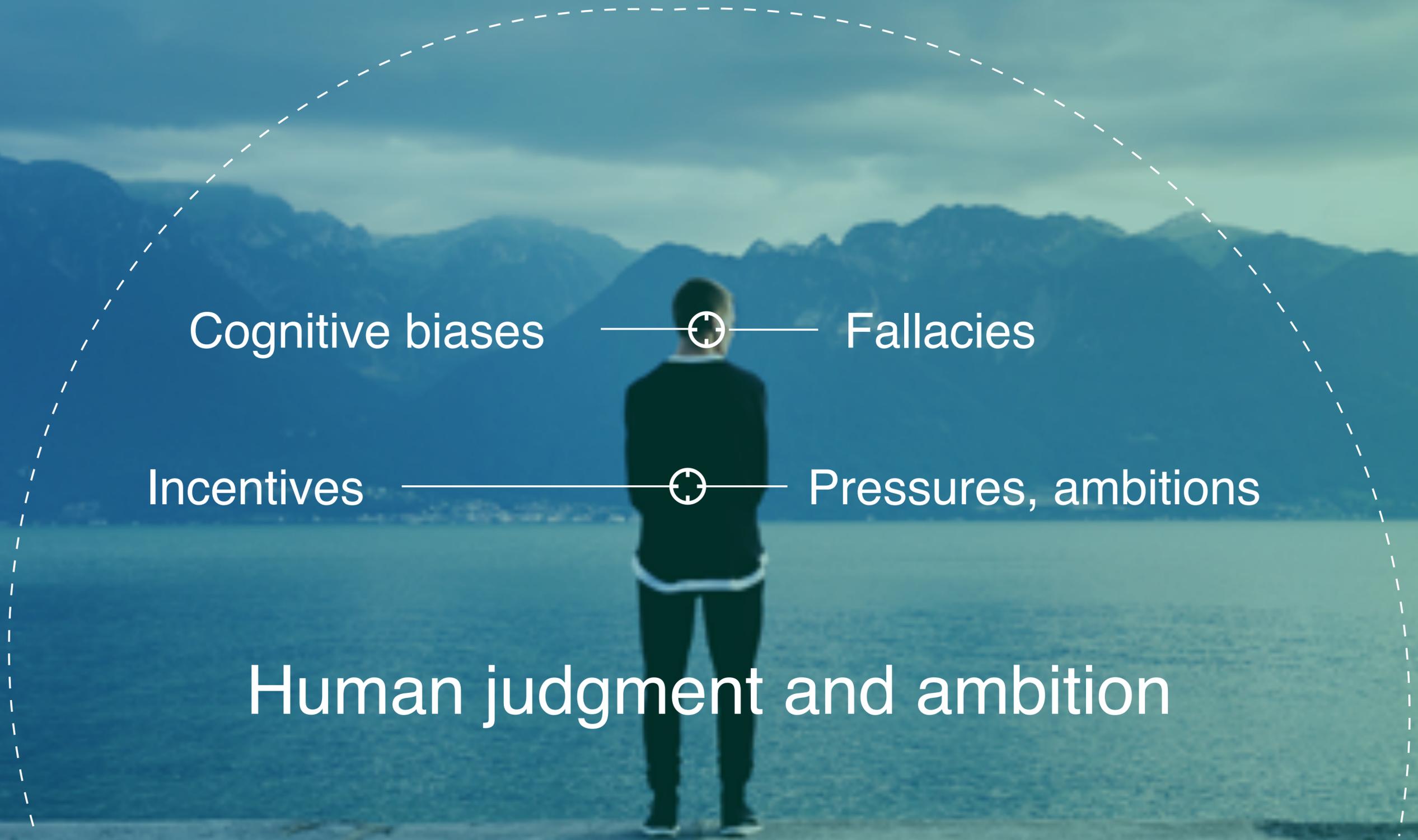
*(awkward laugh)*

*"What I was trying  
to say was..."*

# Bystanders: Not Very Senior

*(rephrases Selina's question  
and ignores the rest)  
(talk to Selina afterwards about  
what you were trying to do)*

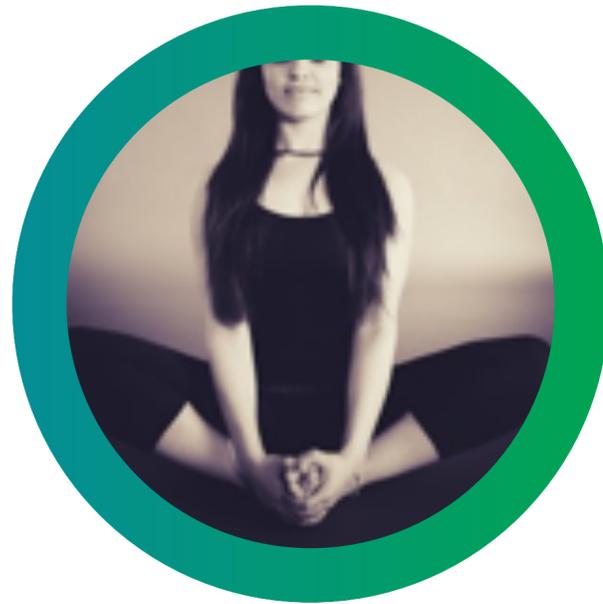
*“Maybe I'm missing  
something... what's our  
approach to that one?”*



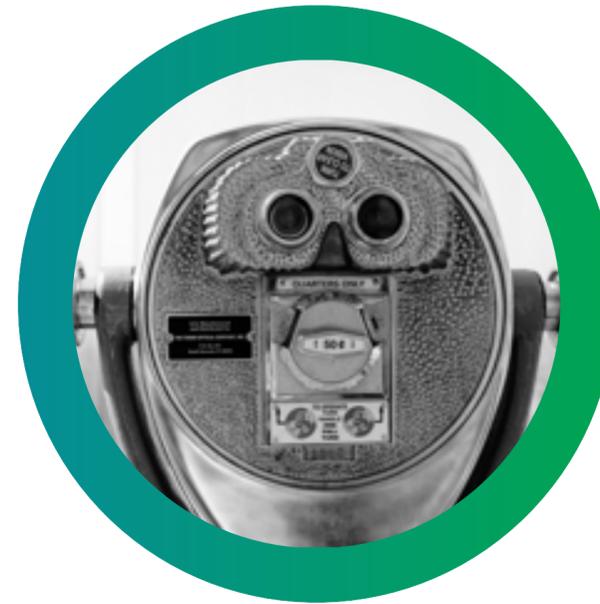
# Starting with Managing Yourself



Know  
yourself



Control  
yourself



Know  
others



Do something  
for others



**It's your job to build professional skills and manage your career to match your values and aspirations.**

# Career TRAGEDIES

- Temptation
- Rationalization
- Ambition
- Group, Authority Pressure
- Entitlement
- Deception
- Incrementalism
- Embarrassment
- Stupid Systems



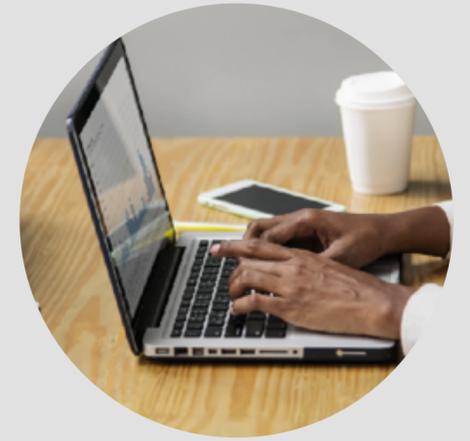
# How Things Go Right



Know and articulate your values



Use analytical decision-making framework



Prepare personal scripts



Develop good habits



Listen, ask questions

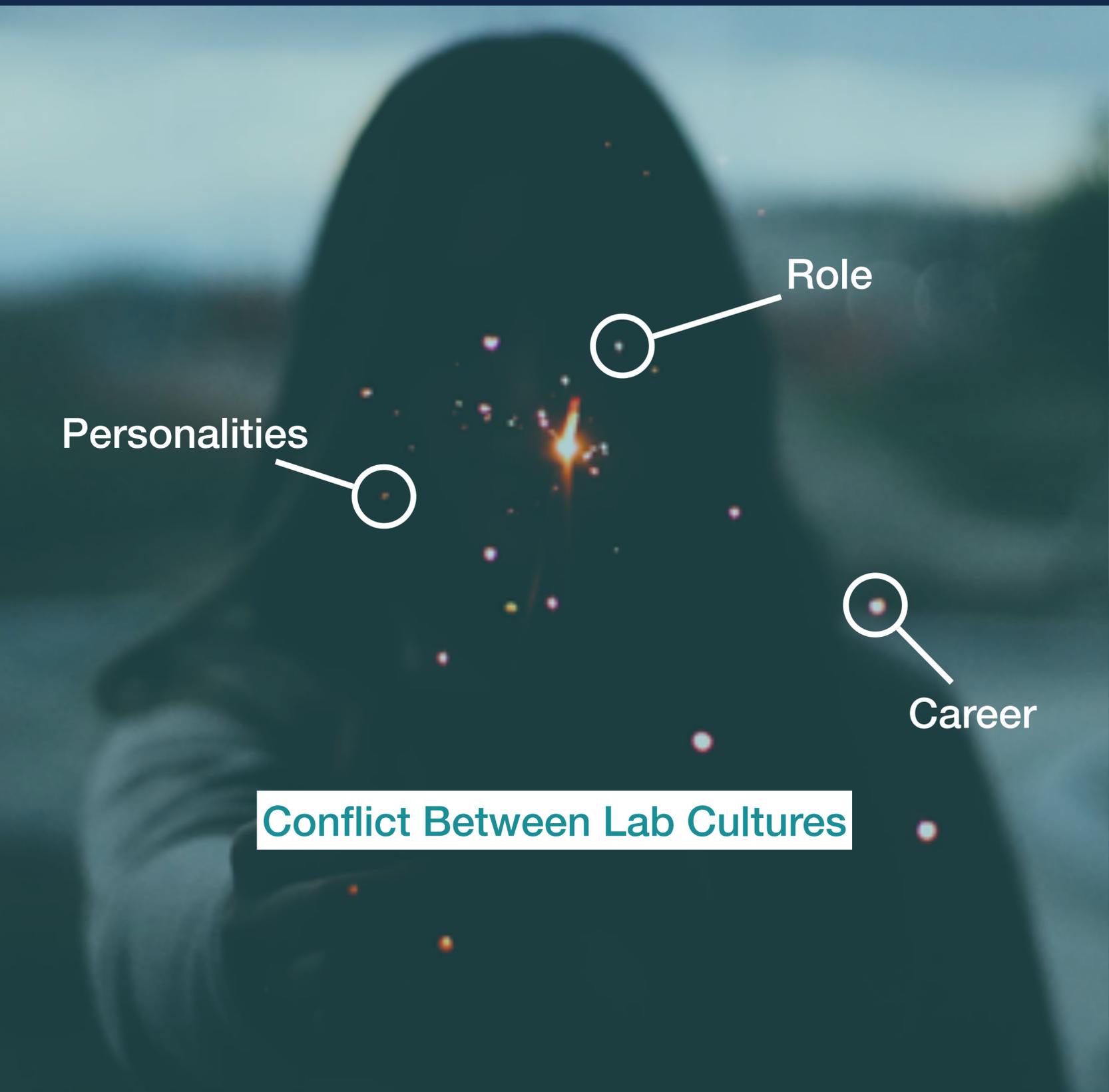


Conduct disputes professionally



*“Action expresses priorities”*





Personalities

Role

Career

Conflict Between Lab Cultures



