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.
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:

with rigor, reproducibility, inclusion, and integrity.
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

Analytical Decision-Making Framework (DMF)

Career Tragedies

2 Minute Challenge(s)

How things go right

How things go wrong

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?
Decision-making Framework

6 Elements

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.”
“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?”
Human judgment and ambition

Cognitive biases

Fallacies

Incentives

Pressures, ambitions

People are complicated
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

Develop good habits

Use analytical decision-making framework

Prepare personal scripts

Listen, ask questions

Conduct disputes professionally

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“Action expresses priorities”
Holistic View of Why Things Go Wrong and How Things Go Right

Sexist Biases
Racial Biases
Stereotypes

Conflict Between Lab Cultures

Personalities
Role
Career