

# From research to administration

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# From research to administration

Since 2006: administrator, Centre for integrative genomics, UNIL

Before: scientific collaborator (first as trainee), technology assessment, CH Federal Administration, Bern

Even before: research and studies (research assistant and technician), Basel, Cambridge UK, Fribourg  
Diploma Biozentrum, Basel

From: Bulle, CH

# What does an administrator in research do?

There are plenty of different functions. Mine: taking care of a research department of about 230 persons, in all its different aspects

- assisting for the management of the department
- managing the services of the department
- coordinate with Human Resource Service
- coordinate the finances
- coordinate the communication

# What is fun...

# ...and less fun?

## problem solving job

need to learn, think, combine resources...

...needs patience, not everything can be discussed/  
challenged, can get tiring to deal with problems

## many different things to do

exciting, does not get boring too long...

... never ending, sometimes requires skills or  
knowledge I do not necessarily have

## a lot of contact with people

lively; time for discussions with clever,  
involved people...

...can be exhausting, also emotionally

## quite a bit of freedom –and responsibilities

I can propose and implement ...

...responsibilities not always clear; sometimes heavy

## public research and education

fits my values; work in close contact  
with research...

...things are not necessarily how I think they should  
be; I am not doing research

# How did I get there? Academia and after

For me: studying biology and doing research: a lot of fun! But...

- >Take the decision to quit
- >Make the transition, how?

In which positions can I project myself? With whom do I want to work? Where am I different?

- >Look for jobs, write CVs and motivation letters
- >Personal assessment
- >Talk to people I know with a similar background and a job out of research
- >Ask for short meetings with people who have jobs that could be interesting

# What did I learn in academia?

Languages and technical skills

Productivity: organization, planning, creativity, multitasking, take decisions

Think and argue: construct an argument/be critical

Social: Interactions with different people and cultures, difficulties of living alone in a different place

Know the priorities in research, the culture of the people in research and their challenges

Explain research to non scientists, show its value

Organize other people, deal with a boss

Define better my values and priorities

Face adversity, patience, persistence, self confidence

...

# Getting a job

In Bern: respond to an ad (and insist heavily) : first trainee, then full scientific collaborator

At the UNIL: respond to an ad (and talk to people who knew about the position)

Before and in between: quite a few responses to job ads and a few interviews, without success



Universit  de Lausanne

[www.vaud.ch](http://www.vaud.ch)

**Poste** Adjoint-e au directeur du Centre int gratif de g nomique (CIG)   100%, r f. 5535T

**Mission** Suivi administratif des projets du CIG (soutien   la direction et aux chercheurs) dans les domaines de l'enseignement et de la recherche. R alisation de divers mandats pour la direction (notamment dans le domaine de la communication).

**Profil** Formation universitaire, de pr f rence doctorat en biologie. Exp rience du milieu universitaire ou institutionnel. R daction fran aise et anglaise, bonnes connaissances d'allemand (lecture).

**Contact** Mme Nouria Hernandez, 021 692 39 01

**Dossiers** Service des RH de l'UNIL, M. Serafino Gagliardi, Ch teau de Dorigny - 1015 Lausanne

canton de vaud

- the experience in Bern was useful
- the experience in academia was useful
- a PhD would have been/be useful
- the job became something quite different

# What did I learn later?

Getting familiar with an administration

Research politics and organization

Research management (management, finances, human resources, etc.)

Adopting a less « absolute » attitude:

- being right is not always the most important things
- there can be some other priorities than the ones I see at first
- ...

(maybe I could have learned more while in academia if I had been facing the fact that I would do something else earlier)



# Advices that I still use

“Oh come on, make up your mind, it is not the end of the world ”

->mostly useful, but maybe I took some decisions too promptly

“Everything can be interesting, just get into it”

->mostly true, or rather, there is often a way to twist it towards something interesting

“At the end, it works”

->easier to see when one looks backwards. Until then, it can take a lot of time and energy

# Thank you for your attention!

And if you think I can be useful, do not hesitate:  
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