

Choosing  
a Thesis Lab

Manage  
*Up*

Professional Skills Workshops | The Office of Career and Professional Development

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# Engaging with OCPD

Every student gets five **free and confidential counseling** appointments per academic year. Come talk to us!



**Rachel Care, PhD**  
Counseling topics:  
-Choosing your thesis lab  
-Managing your mentorship  
-Difficult conversations  
-Choosing your postdoc



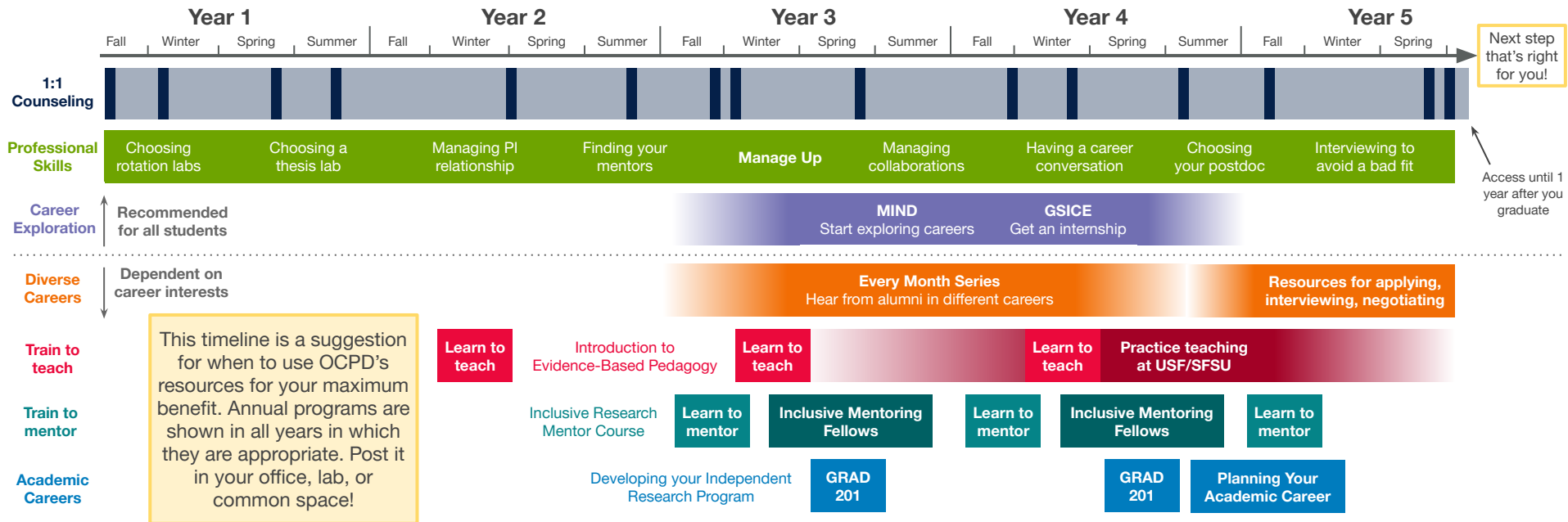
**Linda Louie, PhD**  
Counseling topics (for MIND/GSICE students):  
-Career exploration  
-Finding internships  
-Preparing for internships



**Laurence Clement, PhD**  
Counseling topics:  
-Exploring faculty positions  
-Planning an academic career  
-Inclusive mentoring  
-Inclusive teaching



**Michael Matrone, PhD**  
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-Designing a job search  
-Applying, interviewing, and negotiating for diverse jobs



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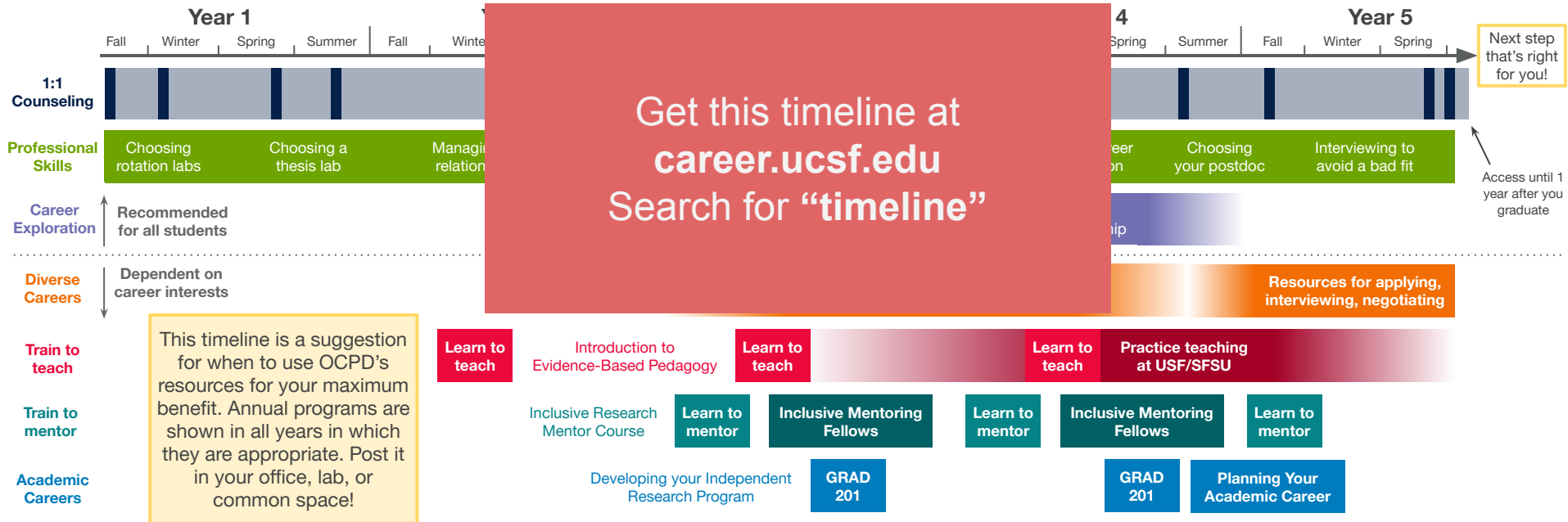
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# What makes a **good** decision?

## When you know:

- Your preferences and goals
- Your options
- The factors influencing you

A **good** decision  
is  
an **informed** decision



# What makes a **bad** decision?



## When you:

- Don't know what you're looking for
- See it but don't recognize it
- See it and ignore it

More on this at  
[bit.ly/OCPDrotations](https://bit.ly/OCPDrotations)

A bad decision  
is  
avoidable!

# A good decision is an informed decision

## Preferences and goals

What do you need to be productive and achieve your goals?



Know what you're looking for

## Know your options

**Part 1:** Lab vital signs  
**Part 2:** How close is each lab option to your ideal?  
**Part 3:** Understand the lab

Recognize it

## Influences and process

What other factors are influencing you?  
How do you make decisions?

Don't ignore it



# A good decision is an informed decision

## Preferences and goals

What do you need to be productive and achieve your goals?

## Options

**Part 1:** Lab vital signs  
**Part 2:** How close is each lab option to your ideal?  
**Part 3:** Understand the lab

Determine which lab is the best fit **for you**

## Influences and process

What other factors are influencing you?  
How do you make decisions?

**Feel good** about your choice

# Determine which lab is the best fit for you

## Preferences and goals

## Options

## Influences and process

What do you need to be  
productive and achieve  
your goals?



# What are your goals for your PhD?

*There are no established learning outcomes for graduate programs*



**Why UCSF? Why this graduate program? Why now?**

**Don't know where you're headed? Make the next best decision**

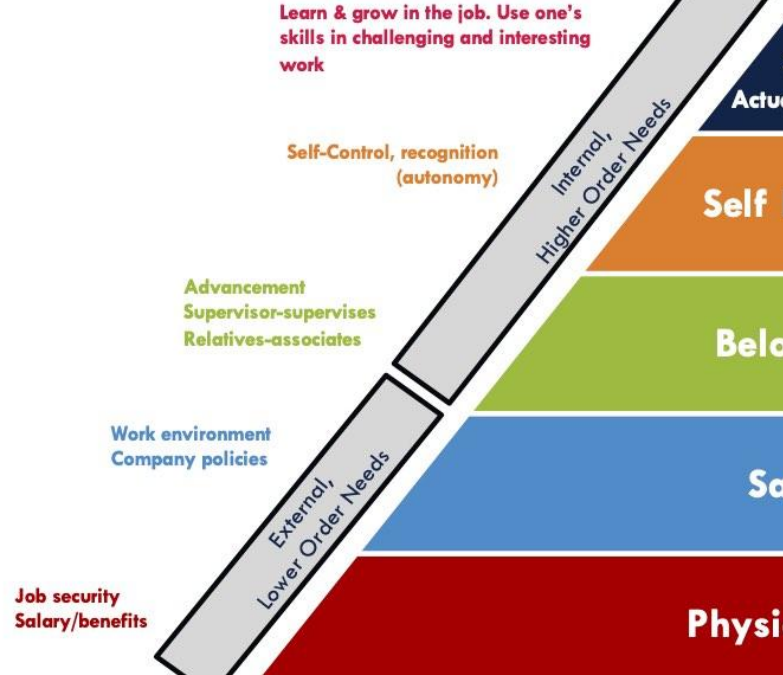
# What are your goals for your PhD?

**THINK**

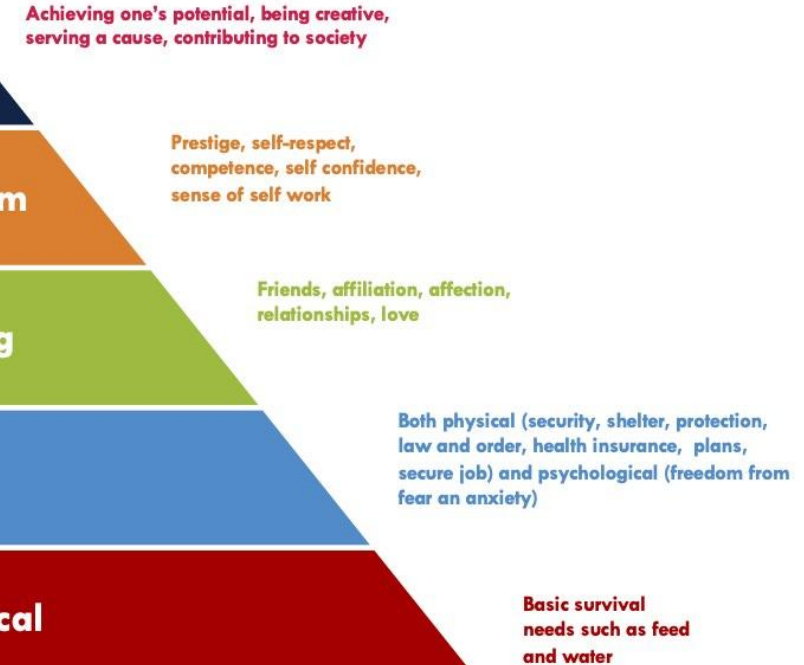
**What's one goal you have in each of those categories?**

# What everyone needs to be productive

## Frederic Herzberg Theory of Motivation (1968)



## Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)



# What do you need to be productive?

## THINK

**Think of a previous lab experience you've had.**  
What's one thing that helped you be productive?  
What's one thing that got in your way?

## WRITE

1. Go to **bit.ly/OCPDthesislab** (capitalization matters)
  - a. Under “Materials”, **download “Preferences, Options, and Influences Tool”**
  - b. **Go to “Preferences” tab**
  - c. **Fill in column labeled “Your ideal”** with answers to the questions in the yellow boxes

# A good decision is an informed decision

## Preferences and goals

What do you need to be  
productive and achieve  
your goals?

**Trust what you know  
about yourself**

**This is not the place to  
look for challenges**

## Options

## Influences and process

# A good decision is an informed decision

**Preferences and goals**

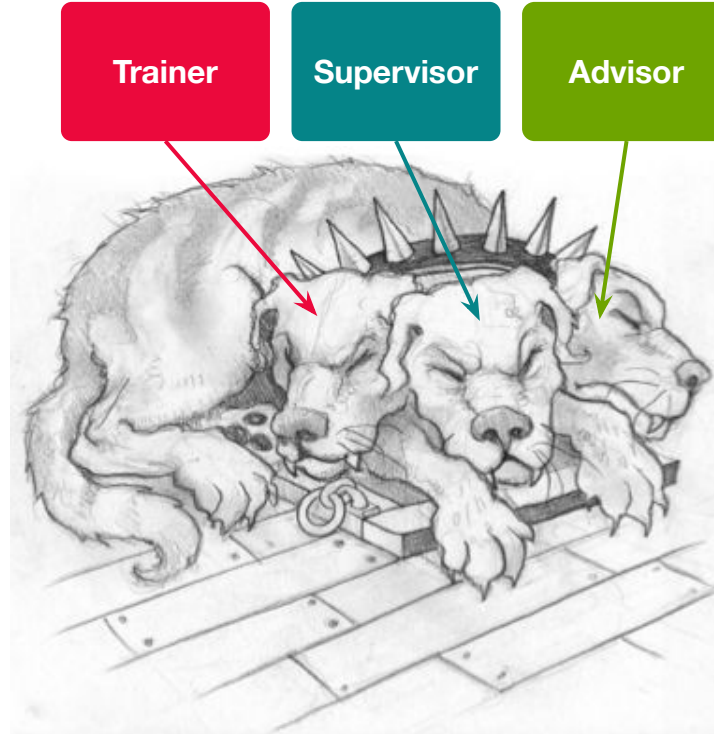
What do you need to be  
productive and achieve  
your goals?

**Options**

**Part 1:** Lab vital signs

**Influences and process**

# PIs are actually three things





# PIs are actually three things

Role	Cares about	Responsible for
Trainer	Training goals	Teaching scientific knowledge
		Training on technical skills
		Developing scientific thinking
		Developing scientific leadership skills
Supervisor	Lab productivity goals	Hiring, promoting, terminating
		Managing performance, behavior, productivity
		Allocating resources, assigning projects
		Authorizing sharing of products and data
Advisor	Personal, career, professional goals	Career development
		Psycho-social support

# Supervisor role has biggest impact on your productivity

- 1 Set expectations and take baseline assessment
- 2 Teach/train and delegate effectively
- 3 Give positive, corrective, and evaluative feedback continuously
- 4 Recognize progress and reward achievement
- 5 Articulate and enforce consequences
- 6 Manage conflict
- 7 Provide support

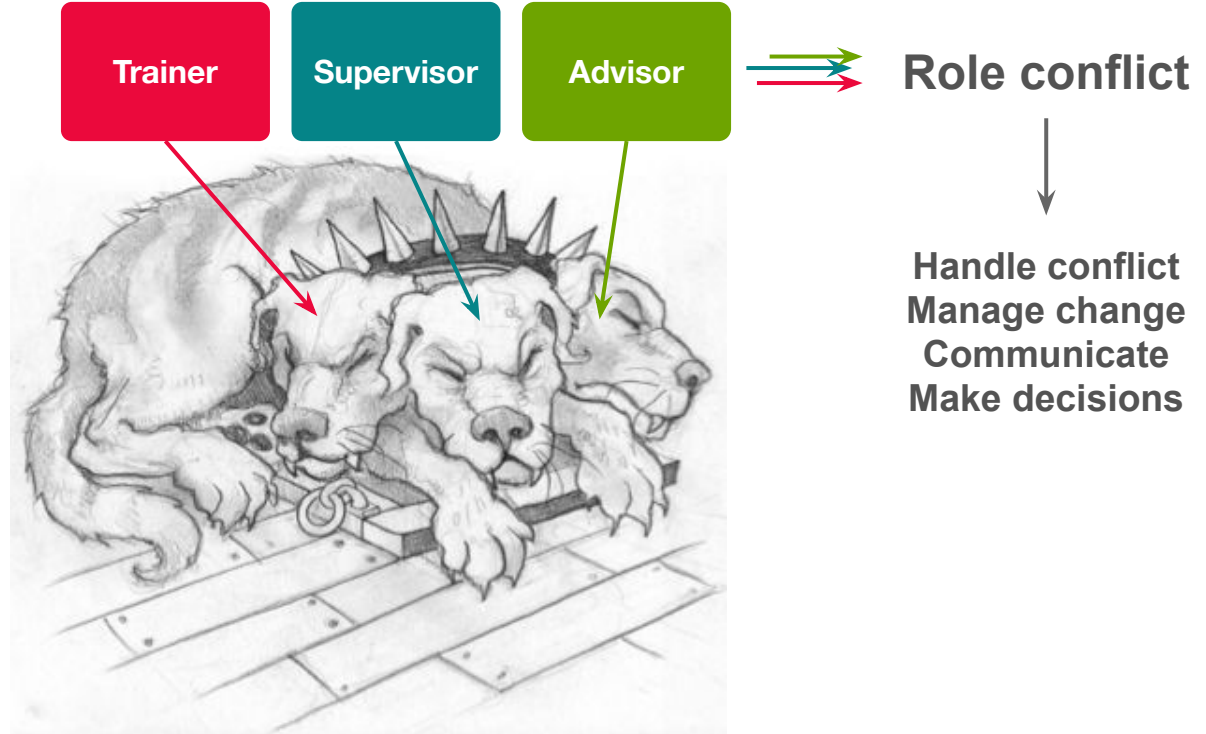
## Seven Responsibilities of a Supervisor

Assess your professional relationship with your PI

TAKE THE QUIZ!

Assessment tool at  
[bit.ly/OCPDsupervisor](https://bit.ly/OCPDsupervisor)

# Lab vital signs show during role conflict



# How are the lab's vital signs?

## Handle conflict

Think of any issues that have come up between you, lab members, with the PI, or with another lab.

## Manage change

Think of how the lab dealt with new university policies and practices (as well as lab members' needs and availability) due to COVID-19, or changes in project direction, funding, equipment availability.

## Communicate

Think of routine communications and special communications (emergencies, world events, important lab news): When do they happen? How? What tone is used? What is talked about/not talked about?

## Make decisions

Think of hiring decisions, assignment of authorship, responsibilities, or project ownership

# Four vital signs of a lab

## WRITE

1. Go to the “Options” tab on the Excel sheet
2. Fill in what you’ve experienced of the four vital signs for the labs you’ve rotated in
  - a. Think of an example for teach
  - b. Did it work for you? How did it feel?

# A good decision is an informed decision

## Preferences and goals

What do you need to be  
productive and achieve  
your goals?

## Options

**Part 1:** Lab vital signs

## Influences and process

**Believe what you see**

**Believe what you hear  
from lab members**

# A good decision is an informed decision

## Preferences and goals

What do you need to be productive and achieve your goals?

## Options

**Part 1:** Lab vital signs  
**Part 2:** How close is each lab option to your ideal?  
**Part 3:** Understand the lab

## Influences and process

### LATER

#### **Part 2: In the “Preferences” tab:**

- Fill in the columns for each lab you rotate in
- Compare each one to your ideal

#### **Part 3: In the “Options” tab:**

- Fill in the “Data you need” column for each lab
- Get answers for any box left blank



# A good decision is an informed decision

## Preferences and goals

What do you need to be productive and achieve your goals?

## Options

**Part 1:** Lab vital signs  
**Part 2:** How close is each lab option to your ideal?  
**Part 3:** Understand the lab

Determine which lab is the best fit **for you**

## Influences and process

What other factors are influencing you?  
How do you make decisions?

**Feel good** about your choice

# Consider the other factors influencing you



# Consider the other factors influencing you



**LATER**

- 1. In the “Influences” tab:**
  - a. Identify the internal and external influences you feel
  - b. Decide how much you want that to weigh in your decision

What your partner or family need from you

Being conflict-avoidant

Afraid to look like you don't know

Your values

Other people's expectations of you (peers, Pls, etc)

Time limitation

What other people have told you about the lab

Beliefs you have

Your personal goals

What your mentors want you to do

What other people have told you this decision

# Consider your decision-making style



**Reflect on when you feel most in-tune with yourself**  
**Consider how you made other big life decisions**

# Consider your decision-making style

## THINK

1. Think of **previous decisions** you've made and **when you feel most in-tune with yourself**.
2. Decide what your **decision-making style** is.
3. Think of **one thing you'll do** as part of your decision-making process

# A good decision is an informed decision

## Preferences and goals

What do you need to be  
productive and achieve  
your goals?

## Options

**Part 1:** Lab vital signs  
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lab option to your ideal?  
**Part 3:** Understand the lab

## Influences and process

What other factors are  
influencing you?  
How do you make decisions?



# Let them know

Dear Diana/Dr. Prince,

In person: Thank you so much for meeting with me.

By email: I hope you're well.

I wanted to let you know that I decided to join Bruce Wayne's lab. I wanted to let you know as soon as I decided.

Thank you for allowing me to rotate in your lab. I appreciated the opportunity and learned a lot.

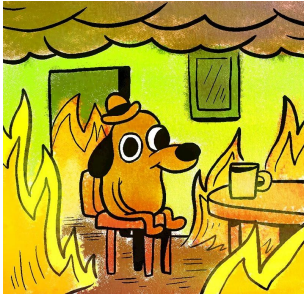
Thank you again.

Regards,  
Peter

More sample language at  
[bit.ly/OCPDrotations](https://bit.ly/OCPDrotations)

# No lab is perfect: Own your decision

(within reason)



## Make a strategy to manage the things that you don't love about your lab

- Don't pretend they're not there!
- Engage your Community of Magnificent People
  - Current and past lab members
  - Classmates, other PIs, staff (like me!)
  - People in your field, wider world

**Set boundaries that will keep you healthy**

**Develop your strategy in a counseling appointment**

**Reach out to other lab members to ask for advice**

**Learn how to find and manage mentorship with OCPD programs**

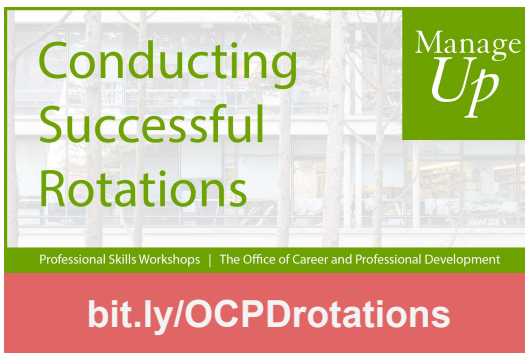
**Set a standing quarterly meeting with a mentor that's not your PI**

# Resources from this workshop

## Now what?

Pick **at least one** of these things:

- ❑ Set aside time to complete the “Preferences” and “Options” tabs
- ❑ Identify something you need to learn about a lab
- ❑ Open up one of these resources to follow up on
- ❑ Tell a friend about one of these resources or what you learned
- ❑ Make a counseling appointment

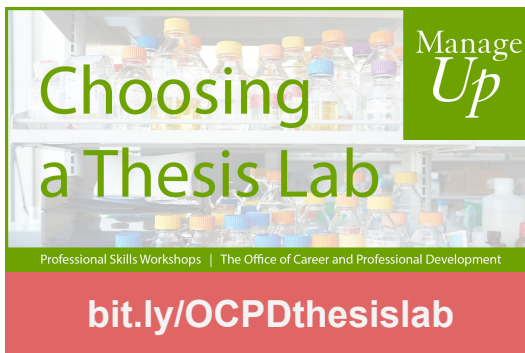


Conducting Successful Rotations

Manage Up

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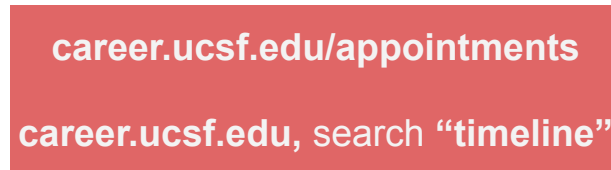
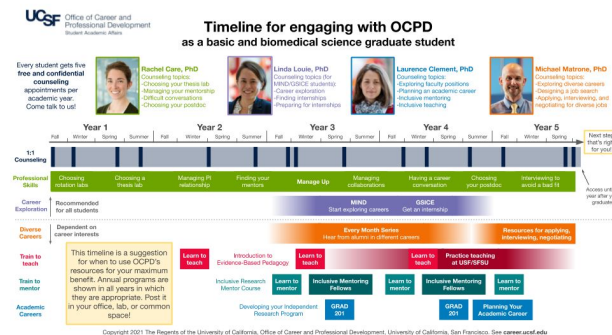
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[career.ucsf.edu/appointments](https://career.ucsf.edu/appointments)

[career.ucsf.edu](https://career.ucsf.edu), search “timeline”