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DISCUSSION:

Start your graduate studies in NYC
Choose a Lab
Grow as a Graduate Student
Publish/ Defend your Thesis
Continue as a Post-Doc
Alternative Careers

-All these are based on MY experiences
(not the universal truth!)

**contact me for more!*

Choosing a University/Institute for your studies: most time they choose you!

Unique NYC advantage: Several great graduate programs (NYU, Columbia, Sloan/Cornell/Rockefeller, Mount Sinai, Einstein, SUNY...)

- Choosing a City:**
- 1) Scientific Cross-Talk, collaborations
 - 2) Future opportunities (PostDoc, Biotech, Wall Street)
 - 3) Social Reasons (Not everything is work!)
 - 4) Cultural Reasons (Being Greek or European in NYC)

- Starting in graduate school:** 1) Take the classes seriously (try to know the field as much as you can!)- You never know your job description in the future.
- 2) Take advantage of Lab rotations!

Choosing a Laboratory for Your Graduate Studies!

(a lab is like a relationship: it can bring you “down”)

1. The lab has to be “active”, to publish frequently and participate in meetings etc
2. The publications have to be good (or at least decent!)
3. Look for the Publication/Person ratio (US Mega-labs)
4. Find out about the median time for Ph.D. Student graduation
5. Look for experienced people in the lab that can help (you don't know everything!)
6. PI accessibility (if you need an appointment, think again!)
7. Large number of other graduate students is NOT always a positive thing!
(if you want to meet your friends go to a bar!)
8. Most Important: What are your Interests? How is your Project? Are you excited about it*

**once more the lab is like a relationship, if you are not 100% don't do it!!*

Once you are in the Lab of your Dreams:

1. Work!!
2. Think!!
3. Experiment, don't be afraid of doing mistakes!
4. Listen and Learn (once more, you don't know everything!)
5. Interact with others (in the lab and around)
6. Don't be afraid to criticize your project and the experimental planning!
(otherwise you could spend 4 years in a dead end!)

It is NOT only Work (actually, work is probably ~1/3 of the whole deal!)

1. Get your own Ph.D. Fellowship! (Training grants, NIH awards, NSF, Depart. Of Defense etc)
2. Try to go to meetings and take advantage of travel awards
3. Get to know people that can be useful at some point of your career
4. Interact with your PI (Understand his way of thinking, see where she/he wants to go with the project, set clear goals-milestones for your project)
5. Present your work as much as you can, discuss it with people
6. Question yourself, set specific goals!

Ready To Publish?

1. Write a first draft (your PI will appreciate it, believe me!)
2. Prepare the manuscript (figures etc)
3. Try to understand what it takes to put a manuscript together
4. Discuss it with people that you trust. Get their feed-back
5. Where to publish: Be rational- but, at lest in the beginning, Aim High!
6. Don't wait for the reviewers, try to address pitfalls during the review process!

Ready To Write your Ph.D. Thesis?

1. Take it seriously (it is reflecting the years that you spent in the program and the lab!)
2. Discuss the Aims/ Presentation style/ Conclusions with your PI before you start writing!
3. Don't take forever! (a little secret: It is NOT that important!)

Life after your Ph.D.: Weight all the Alternatives

1. Stay in academia (New York is giving you plenty of options!)
2. Stay in science but move to the industry/biotech (NY and NJ area very rich)
3. Consulting (hedge funds, investment firms, private foundations)
4. Editing, Scientific Writing etc...

What is important is that NOW you have choices!

If you decide to do a Postdoctoral Fellowship: Picking a Lab!

1. “Sell” yourself to the highest bidder (few US-based postdocs are left!)
2. “Know Yourself”. Independent Postdocs can thrive in big competitive labs. But these labs can also destroy your career!
3. Try to read the future of your field (5-7 years ahead). Choose cutting edge research.

Discuss with people and see where the field is going. Keep in mind that in 4-5 years you will be an independent investigator.
4. Keep in mind that being a student is different from being a postdoc. You have more responsibilities now!
5. Get a fellowship! Apply, reapply, write your own project. There are several foundations that give Postdoctoral Fellowships (*Cancer Research Institute, Irvington Institute, NIH, American Society for Hematology, EMBO, Human Frontiers, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society etc*).
6. Learn how to write grants!!

*Keep Ithaca always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaca to make you rich.*

*Ithaca gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.
And if you find her poor, Ithaca won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean*

Konstantinos Kavafis