lessons learned from a nonlinear path to a nontraditional career in science management and policy

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Paths to Science Policy and Leadership
Career Goals

• Learn new things
• Teach others
• Work with a team
• Meet people
• Make a difference
My job in a nutshell

• Associate Director of Science for Biological and Environmental Research at the Department of Energy

• Manage research and scientific facilities

• Oversee broad portfolio ranging from genomics to earth system modeling

• Work with scientists

• Set research policies and design new initiatives

• Coordinate with other federal agencies

• Propose budget and spend appropriations
My specific career path

• Formal education—BS and PhD in Biochemistry
• Switched fields—broad interest in science
• Diverse opportunities—teaching, research, “lab mom”
• Program manager at Department of Energy
• Switched programs
• Started new research programs
• Rising through the ranks
Science Leadership

- Sets Vision
- Engages a Team
- Demonstrates Resilience and Flexibility
- Values Different Perspectives
- Delivers on Goal
Science policy

- Determines eligibility
- Sets priorities
- Identifies key partners and stakeholders
- Evaluates progress towards goals
- Roadmaps and milestones
Some things that don’t work

- Scare tactics
- Withholding information
- Going it alone
- Groupthink
- Not knowing your audience
- Inflexibility
Some things that worked

- Thinking outside the box
- Mentoring
- Diverse experiences
- "Volunteerism"
- Self-improvement
- Networking
- Teamwork
- Subject matter expertise (not necessarily technical)
- Communication
Leading from where you are

• Start small—and local
• Identify who you need on your team
• Mentor others
• Learn about policy issues impacting what you care about
• Get educated and acquire knowledge
• Don’t let perfect be the enemy of good
• Learn to tell a story
1. What are your top policy concerns?
2. What are some actions you can take to develop your inner leader?

GO INTO BREAKOUT ROOMS AND DISCUSS
POST YOUR BREAKOUT IDEAS TO THE CHAT