Early Career Members

Research Support Team: The Difference between ‘Make It or Break It’

by Olga Walsh

You are absolutely thrilled—you interviewed for a faculty position at the University Of Your Dreams and received a job offer! You did your celebratory dance, told your family and friends, and called your mentors and your colleagues to let them know the great news. Now you have two options: (1) You accept immediately and sign all the paperwork (highly inadvisable—you would be crazy to...); or (2) You thoroughly read the terms of the job offer letter and weigh it against your requirements and your wishes. The next step is to negotiate the job offer with the new department/college.

Making ‘The List’

You got this—you are going to do great because while you were waiting for the offer, you’ve researched everything there is to know about faculty job negotiations. You searched the web, talked with your colleagues who just went through the hiring process, sought your mentors’ advice, and have made “the list.” This is a bulleted list of everything you are planning to request from the department/college you are joining. You have divided the list into two parts: your requirements and your wishes. While you may wish to receive your own separate lab, the reality of it is that you most likely might need to share the lab with another faculty member. This is not the end of the world, and you still will be able to function effectively if you utilize the allocated space wisely.

Now look at your list, and if “funding for support staff” is not number one among your requirements, go ahead and make it number one. Trust me, this is the best decision you will ever make during your beginning faculty career. You may think that: (1) There are more important things needed to your job like equipment, a vehicle, travel funding, reduced teaching/service load, and that (2) You can do most of the things yourself, especially as you are just starting out and

Overcoming the ‘I Can Do This Myself’ Myth

You are so excited to receive this new offer, now you have the opportunity to put all your knowledge into building your own program with things that you have developed a great passion for. You are ready to work day and night, but you need help! You need support staff to help you. You need funding for support staff to make this happen. You need a requirement and get those funded asap yourself later.