TIBBS Career Blitz Career Profile Questionnaire

Career Profile: Kenneth Gibbs, PhD
I’m a socially minded scientist, interested in synthesizing research, policy and practice in complex, important systems, specifically health and education. My current focuses are:

- Cancer prevention and control (with an emphasis on health inequities), and
- Ph.D. and postdoctoral training in the biomedical sciences

What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job?
Since July 2013, I have been a Cancer Prevention Fellow at the National Cancer Institute. From 2011-2013 I was a AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowship at the National Science Foundation (Directorate for Education and Human Resources).

Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in?
Stanford, Immunology

Did you do a postdoc?
Yes

What are your main daily responsibilities?
The first year of my current position is a funded Masters of Public Health (MPH) degree. So I am at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of public health doing a mix of course work (focused on statistical methods and health policy), and related research projects. After the MPH is done, I’ll work at the NCI doing work that bridges research, policy and practice.

What are the keys to success in your career field?
Like in all of life: work hard, stay humble, and network a lot

What were the most important factors in choosing your career path?
I pursue problems that I think are important and interesting (because intellectual engagement is important). I pursue them in avenues that allow me to live the life that I think is important (i.e. time to spend with my family and in the community).

What activities (if any) did you participate in that helped you be successful in obtaining your job?
My science training was very important. I also lead a number of student groups and was on university committee when I was in graduate school, which helped in developing leadership skills.

What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours?
Don’t be afraid to verbalize what you're interested in—some people might not support it or approve, but you'll likely find people who can help you get where you want to go. Also,
connections matter: I wouldn’t have known about my current job had it not been for networking. It’s your career—don’t be a passive participant. Go for it!