**TIBBS Career Blitz Career Profile Questionnaire**

1. Please provide your name and employer:

Sarah Holstein, Lycoming College (Williamsport, PA)

1. What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job?

I am an associate professor of psychology and co-chair of the neuroscience program. I have worked at Lycoming College for 7 years.

1. Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in?

I earned my Ph.D. in behavioral neuroscience from Oregon Health & Science University

1. Did you do a postdoc?

I did! And right here at UNC (Center for Alcohol Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). I also completed a teaching post-doctoral fellowship at Wofford College (Spartanburg, SC) to build up my teaching experience in preparation for a tenure-track job search.

1. What are your main daily responsibilities?

My primary responsibilities are related to teaching, including teaching 3 courses, doing prep work, grading, meeting with students, etc. But a lot of my day is also spent handling administrative work and service, including paperwork, academic advising, committee work, and attending department- and college-level meetings. I also do research, and so part of my day can also be spent training and supervising undergraduate students in the lab, running studies, planning experiments and/or analyzing data, ordering supplies, and just managing the day-to-day activities in a lab.

1. What are the keys to success in your career field?

Most importantly, you need to love to teach (and love to learn). But you also need to be adept at managing a long to-do list, shifting focus rapidly (and frequently) as you move between teaching and course prep, working with students, working on research, and attending way too many meetings.

1. What were the most important factors in choosing your career path and current employer?

Having attended a small liberal arts college myself, I knew that this was the type of environment I wanted to return to. I also knew that being a full-time researcher was not for me – I love to teach and work one-on-one with students. Lycoming offered that small college teaching environment I was looking for with an extremely collegial and supportive department behind me.

1. What activities (if any) did you participate in that helped you be successful in obtaining your job?

Teaching experience is one of the most important things you need if you want to pursue this kind of job. I sought out guest lecture opportunities at UNC and had the opportunity to teach a summer course in the psychology department. I also taught introductory psychology and psychopharmacology classes at Wofford College. I also sat in on courses and workshops at UNC that focused on effective pedagogy and course design, and took classes on how to put together a teaching portfolio.

1. What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours?

If you get the chance to teach, take it. Find out if you like it. Get feedback from the students. Have a faculty member observe you so that they can write a letter detailing your strengths and weaknesses as a lecturer. Be willing to ask for help – there are so many resources available to you and so many helpful people who can share their materials so that your class will be a success.

1. How is the work/life balance in your career field and how much of a factor was that in your career choice?

I have never had a good work/life balance, so I’m the last person that should talk about this. In a teaching environment, work/life balance can vary. During the summer its phenomenal. But come mid-semester, you’re putting in WAY above 40 hours / week on your job – ESPECIALLY in your first few years teaching. Teaching is not easy and it’s going to eat up whatever time you give it. Sometimes that means you need to settle for less sleep and not taking a day off for a couple of months. Other times it means settling for “good enough” so that you can prioritize sleep / family / rest. You need to find the balance that works best for you and accept that you will feel like you’re giving short shrift to something. And that’s okay.