**TIBBS Career Blitz Career Profile Questionnaire**

1. Please provide your name and employer: Nathan Boyd – National Cancer Institute
2. What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job? Health Science Administrator (Program Officer) – 1 year
3. Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in? University of Alabama at Birmingham – Immunology/Cancer Biology
4. Did you do a postdoc? Yes. 2 years at Emory University in the Department of Pharmacology and Chemical Biology
5. What are your main daily responsibilities? As a health science administrator, I am an NCI Genomic Program Administrator, I serve as a member of the NCI data access committee, I support the implementation of the NIH Data Management and Sharing Policy at the NCI, and I provide program support to the Childhood Cancer Data Initiative (CCDI). I develop strategies at NCI to address challenges and seize opportunities in international partnerships, education and outreach, diversity of institutional resources, and policy implementation to maximize the advancement of cancer research through data sharing and reuse.
6. What are the keys to success in your career field? Patience, tenacity, collaboration, interest in serving the public.
7. What were the most important factors in choosing your career path and current employer? In choosing my career path, it was important to follow my heart and pay attention to activities that motivated me, ones that were often ancillary to the goals of what paid the bills or satisfied the requirements of getting a PhD on paper. This required initiative and the courage to walk paths that aren’t necessarily straightforward OR a straight line. There are many opportunities in academia to test the waters and they are often hiding in plain sight – it is so important to recognize that you deserve to explore these opportunities to find what works for you.
8. What activities (if any) did you participate in that helped you be successful in obtaining your job? The defining moment of even understanding what “science policy” was took place at the beginning of my research career. I attended my very first scientific research conference during my master’s program and I went to a career panel. A former AAAS fellow spoke about her time at the US Department of State and this was the first time I had heard of a career path like this out of a PhD – this was pivotal and launched my interest in science policy. From there, I participated in numerous “extracurricular” activities throughout my research career and spoke to countless folks to get an idea of what types of activities interest me, and how to take steps to position myself for a career in science policy.
9. What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours? I refuse to use the word network -just talk to people! Go to career events, attend seminars, reach out to folks who interest you and ask them to chat with you. Policy is a huge field with numerous types of career opportunities, and it will serve you well to understand the landscape, especially the details that are not necessarily on paper in job descriptions. Second, while it may be a challenge and frustrating, especially if you know you don’t want to stick it out in academia, don’t lose sight of your work in the laboratory, your expertise, and skills you develop while in grad school/postdoc as this is important experience that you need to have to succeed in science policy, and you CANNOT get this elsewhere. Finally, be open to new experiences, this has been so important to discover my interests, and meet new people that helped me in many facets of my life.
10. How is the work/life balance in your career field and how much of a factor was that in your career choice? Government careers tend to be on the manageable side of work/life balance. This can certainly depend on your individual office, supervisor, employer, etc., but there are general cultural norms backed up by benefits and policies across the federal government that support a healthy work/life balance. I live with mental health challenges that make it extremely important to have a supportive cultural environment that promotes healthy work/life balance.