

My Leadership Journey

Lecturer: Geoffery S. Baird, MD, PhD

My journey into management and leadership was something that I used to think was very odd and specific. And there wasn't a lot to be learned from it, because it was so unique to the circumstances that I was in. However, the more that I've spoken with individuals from UW Medicine, my employer, and talk with, say, the other chairs and vice chairs, I've come to realize that everyone has a journey, you know, their own origin story, which is rather unique. But there are certain things that I think can be can, you know, certain lessons to be learned that are instructive. So, my journey into leadership really began with my education, which was rather broad. I resisted at a very early age, and then continued on to resist getting to sub specialize in my interests. And I was always much more interested in the broad view of how things worked. And so, while for pexample, many of my colleagues chose pathology sub specialties that were very, very focused, so kidney pathology, skin pathology, brain pathology, gynecologic pathology, I chose chemical pathology, for one of the main reasons for doing that was because I didn't have to actually select a specific system that I was interested in, I felt that chemistry was very broad, in its in its scope. And so, what happened with being interested in chemistry is that it gave me a very broad insight into how clinical laboratories operate, how laboratory medicine is taught, how research is done in laboratory medicine, and how faculty and staff interact. And so, my profession, ended up being something where one needs to be a leader, just at the very beginning.

So, my first job, I was the director of clinical chemistry at our Harborview site, which is our county hospital. And I was immediately a leader with, you know, 20, some medical laboratory scientists on a given shift. And, you know, I was responsible for quite a lot. So, it started off early in a profession, that in itself implied some degree of leadership. And then, as I move forward, what I found is that my real sort of what I ended up being good at, was having large sort of oversight and seeing how all the pieces come together, as opposed to spending a lot of time on one, one discipline. I'll say that that did not serve me perfectly for some of my career from my research career, not being able to focus on one problem and beat it to death was was actually something that probably put me at a disadvantage for writing grants and having successful papers, etc., like that. But the idea of being able to see how all things integrate clinically, research wise educationally was something that was very helpful to me to see how things come together.

The second thing that's very situate, additional is that our department at the time that I became the department interim chair, was undergoing great flux. There was a management decision made above our department that was to merge our department with another department. And I happened to be selected for reasons I don't really understand from above. So sometimes, one can just be asked, you know, seemingly out of the blue to say, are you interested in leadership? And in fact, that's exactly what happened, I got called into my boss's office, the Dean, who asked me, have you ever thought about a career in leadership? And my response was, yes, at some point, I'd like to lead the lab. But for God's sakes, I never wanted to

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be a department chair. That's literally what I told him. And the second time we met, it was clear that I was actually being asked to become the department chair. And I thought, you know what, I'll give this a try. It looks to be an interesting mix of sort of everything that we hope to do in academic medicine, to oversee education, clinical work, and research. And it's been a lot of fun.