

# An unexpected life as faculty at a PUI

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~~B.S. in Marine Science~~ and B.S. Chemistry









# M.S. Marine Science



“The isolation and characterization of natural products from marine plants and microorganisms”

- ▶ Lessons learned
- ▶ Do not leave graduate school planning to finish your thesis. It took me 3 extra years to finish, and I almost didn't.

# PhD. Medicinal Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology



**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY

- ▶ Modulating farnesyltransferase substrate specificity: tools for altering protein function in vivo.

# The post doc

- ▶ Choice 1: The up and coming faculty at a moderate institution
- ▶ Choice 2: “All star” scientist at a good institution
- ▶ Choice 3: Scientist at Harvard University

Always keep as many doors open as possible



# The post doc

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# Substrate Specificity of Gamma Secretase

- ▶ Project was unsuccessful



**HARVARD**  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

- ▶ No first author pubs

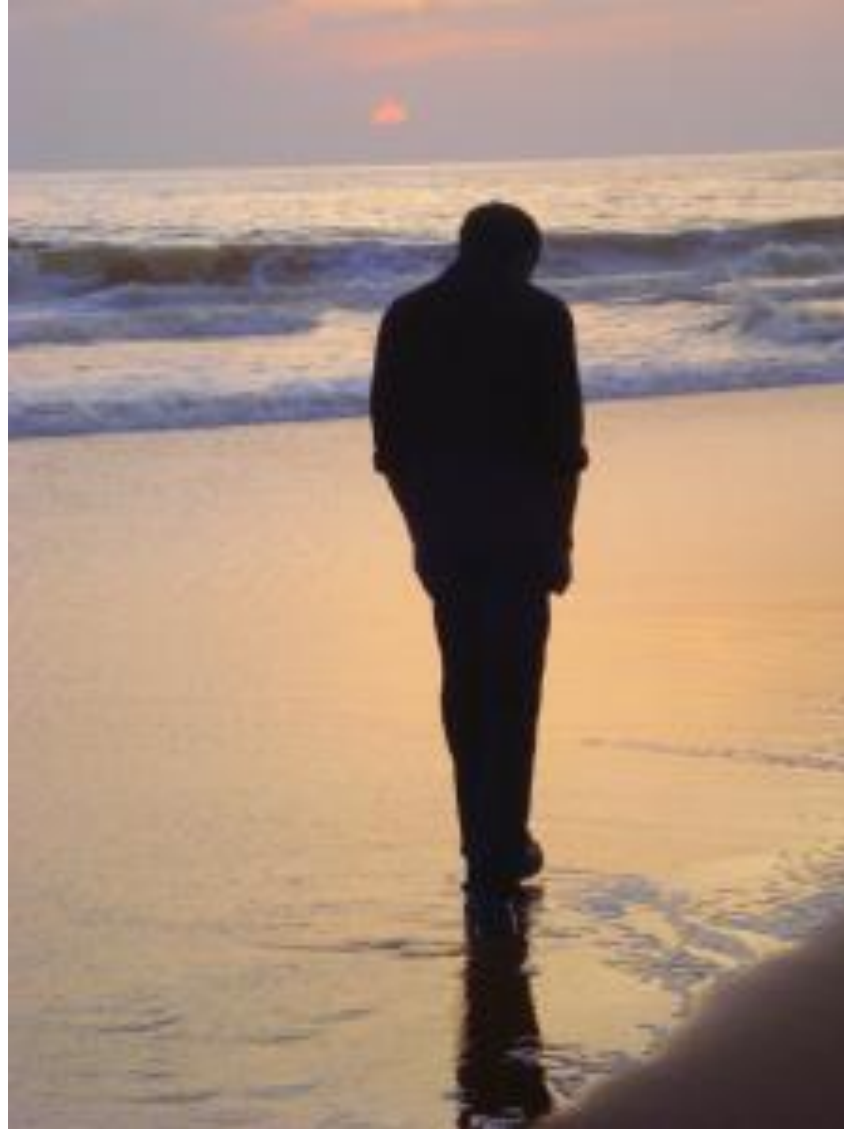
- ▶ No spin off work that I could or wanted to pursue on my own



**BRIGHAM AND  
WOMEN'S HOSPITAL**

# Soul Searching

- ▶ I liked science
- ▶ Did not like research enough to make it my sole focus
  - ▶ No more industry
- ▶ Academia...



# Academic options

## Major Research institutions

- ▶ Supervising graduate students and postdocs
- ▶ Limited interaction with undergrads
- ▶ Limited time in the lab
- ▶ Minimal teaching
  - ▶ TA's
- ▶ Leading/brainstorming multiple projects
- ▶ 10+ Publications required for tenure
- ▶ Grants required for tenure
- ▶ Portion of salary derived from grant funding (20-100%)
- ▶ Year round

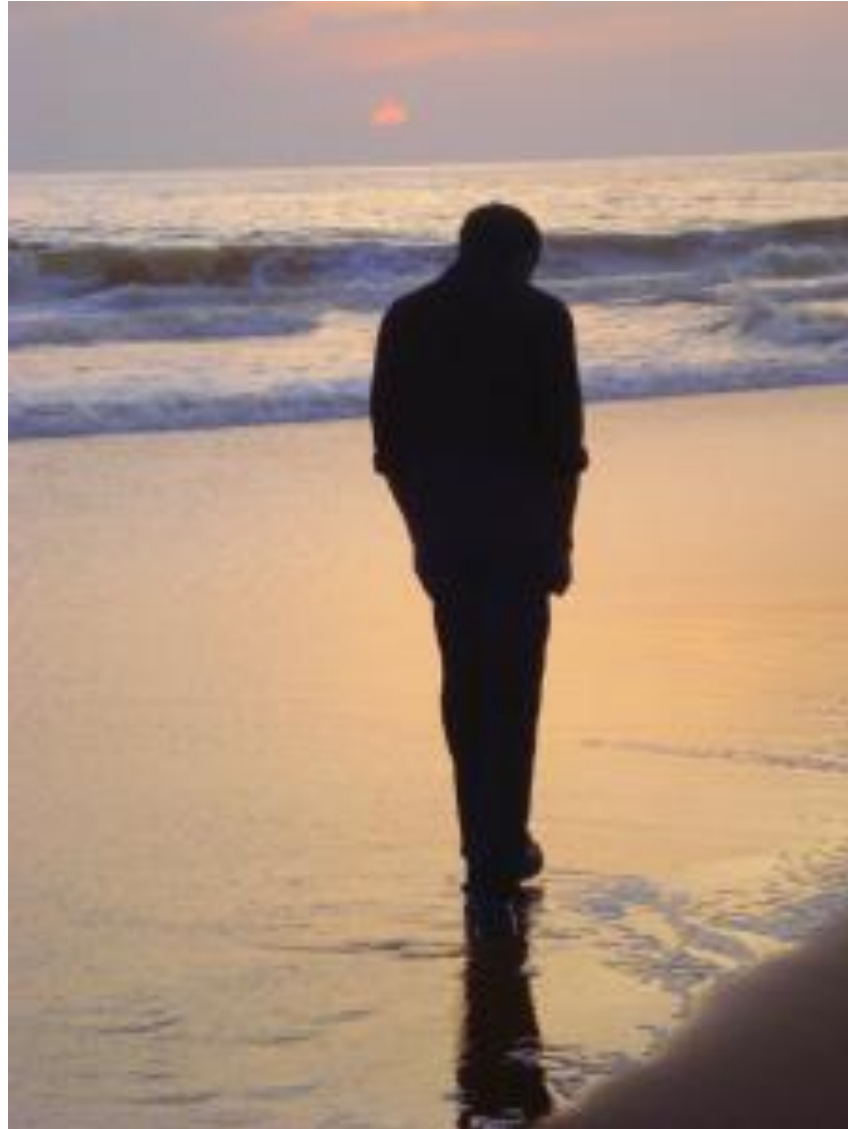
## Small Schools

- ▶ No graduate programs/post-docs
- ▶ Heavy undergraduate interaction
- ▶ Will be in the lab teaching classes and with research students
- ▶ Mostly teaching
  - ▶ No TA's
- ▶ Leading a single project that moves very slowly
- ▶ 1-2 publications required for tenure
- ▶ No grants required
- ▶ 100% salary from the institution
- ▶ Significantly smaller salary
- ▶ 9 month contract



# Soul Searching for my academic home...

- ▶ To be successful at a large institution,
  - ▶ You need to be able to be competitive in writing and obtaining grants to fund work
  - ▶ I didn't think I was good enough or motivated enough
  - ▶ Required me to do a 2<sup>nd</sup> postdoc and write 2 grant proposals and my heart wasn't in it
- ▶ Did I like teaching enough for it to be the major part of my day?
  - ▶ Lot's of TA experience and really liked it.
  - ▶ I had no experience leading my own course



# Adjunct faculty teaching a non-science majors course as the instructor of record

- ▶ What is the instructor of record?
  - ▶ Person listed in the course schedule
  - ▶ Responsible for curriculum, admits, exams, etc.
- ▶ 3 credit lecture
- ▶ “Human Health and Disease”
- ▶ Loved it!
- ▶ Was the best part of my day!



EMERSON  
COLLEGE



# Small College life was for me

I loved teaching.

I loved being in the lab.

I loved science.

# My job search...

- ▶ There were 14 biochemistry positions at small colleges advertised in the Fall 2011.
- ▶ My then fiancé (now husband) and I did not want to live west of the Mississippi, so I applied to the 7 schools east of the Mississippi River.
- ▶ I got a call from 2
- ▶ I got the job at Bellarmine







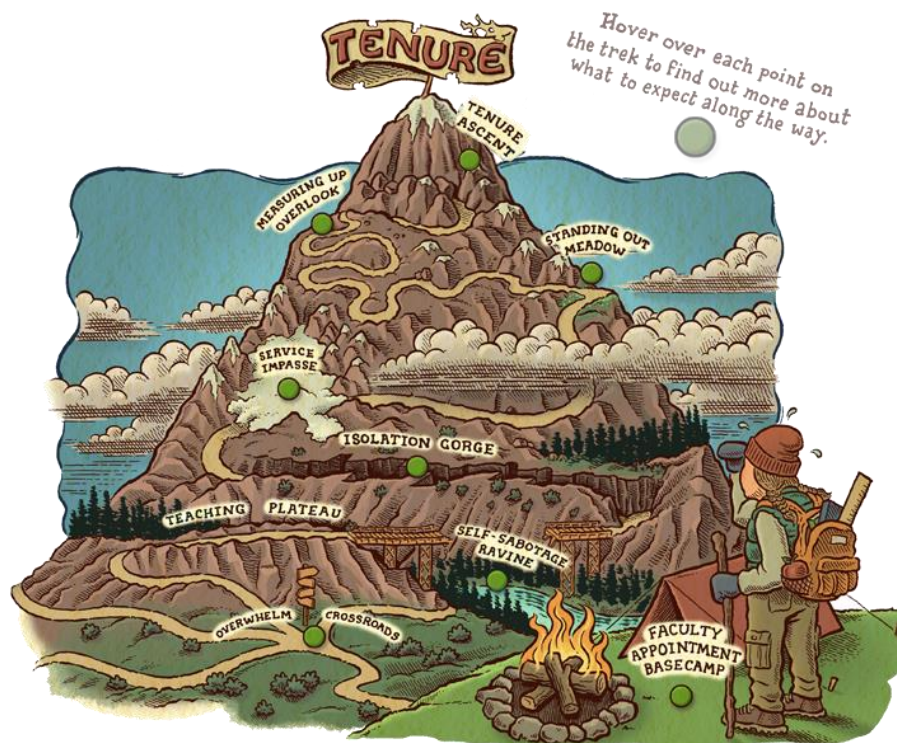
# Life at a Primarily Undergraduate Institution (PUI)

# Job facts

- ▶ 9 month contract August 15-May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- ▶ Contractually obligated to attend convocation and graduations (Dec & May)
- ▶ Teaching (70%)
  - ▶ 21 credit hour load a year.
  - ▶ Lecture Load is hour lecture:hour load
  - ▶ Lab load is 2/3 hour load:hour in lab (4 hour lab = 2.67 hour load)
  - ▶ Responsible for all instruction, materials and grading
- ▶ Scholarship/Research (15%)
  - ▶ 0.25 hours toward load for research students
  - ▶ Whatever time you have left in a day!
- ▶ Service (15%)
  - ▶ Advising students
  - ▶ Department meetings
  - ▶ University meetings (faculty assembly, college meetings)
  - ▶ Committee meetings (honors council, faculty compensation, etc)

# Tenure-Track at Bellarmine

- ▶ 6 year process
- ▶ 2 full years as faculty
- ▶ Submit a tenure binder for review
- ▶ 2 years to fill in gaps
- ▶ Submit your tenure binder fall of the START of your sixth year.



- ▶ Teaching
  - ▶ Course evaluations
  - ▶ Sample materials
  - ▶ Grade distributions
- ▶ Scholarship
  - ▶ 1-2 pubs required
  - ▶ I'm really close!
- ▶ Service
  - ▶ To your department: did you attend dept meetings
  - ▶ To the university
    - ▶ 3 search committees
    - ▶ Pathways to graduate school committee
  - ▶ To your profession
    - ▶ This talk
    - ▶ Judge undergrad poster sessions at ASBMB meeting

# A day in my life...I am teaching 4 classes this semester

## Tuesday

- ▶ Arrive on campus at 7:30am
- ▶ Teach biochemistry I 8-9:15am
- ▶ Teach biochemistry I 9:25-10:40
- ▶ Talk with students ~10:50
- ▶ Grab lunch till 11:30
- ▶ 11:30-1:40
  - ▶ Get biochem lab ready for the week
  - ▶ Get lecture ready for 1:40
- ▶ Teach advanced biochemistry 1:40-2:55
- ▶ 3-5 Non stop parade of students, responding to emails, try to squeeze in a little grading

## Friday

- ▶ Get in around 10
- ▶ Research students (in lab) from 11-1 and 2-3
- ▶ Lunch from 1-2
- ▶ Steady parade of students in office all day
- ▶ Get caught up on emails
- ▶ Get caught up on grading
- ▶ Post materials for the following week on moodle
- ▶ Leave by 5-5:30



# Demands of the job

- ▶ The first year is extremely stressful!
- ▶ Stress gets better as you get more experience, but...
- ▶ I've never been busier-The greatest demand is of your time!
  - ▶ In the classroom 13 hours per week (not including prep and grading)
  - ▶ I have 4 research students (~10 hours per week)
  - ▶ I have ~ 3 hours of meetings a week
  - ▶ 2 office hours
  - ▶ Steady stream of students coming to visit/needing help
  - ▶ I generally have no time during the day for lecture prep and grading.
  - ▶ I had to put off finishing writing the 2 pubs I am working on.
  - ▶ But...I spend about 2 hours a day talking with and helping students/colleagues. (If I would close my door, I could get a lot more done!)

# Shifting from postdoc at Harvard to faculty at a liberal arts college

- ▶ Research plans need to be simple
  - ▶ Designed with an undergraduate in mind
- ▶ Research plans need to be adaptable...
  - ▶ resources at small colleges are scarce and varied
- ▶ Research needs to be modular
  - ▶ Student will have a few hours here and there to give you
  - ▶ You will only have a few hours here and there to give
- ▶ You will have little to no money
- ▶ It will take you longer to do everything
  - ▶ Your time out of the lab will soften your skills
  - ▶ You will have to look for things
- ▶ You will have to fight to set time to do research.
  - ▶ It is very easy to get pulled away by students/serving on committees.
- ▶ Your work still needs to be publishable
  - ▶ Have to find a niche to work in

# Lessons from my life!

- ▶ Do not leave grad school until you finish your thesis
- ▶ Always keep as many doors open as possible
- ▶ Honestly assess your skills and interests
- ▶ Get as many relevant experiences as possible
  - ▶ Teaching a lecture
  - ▶ Supervising undergraduate researchers
- ▶ Be willing to move!
  
- ▶ Life at a PUI is no longer about your success...You take pride in what your students accomplish and their development.
- ▶ Your days are busy, but the interactions with students are fun
- ▶ You miss the pace of research, the focus of being in the lab, and not mentoring grad students.
- ▶ But you can't beat the 9 month contract and flexibility!

# What Bellarmine looks for in faculty hires?

- ▶ Teaching experience
    - ▶ Instructor of record for lectures
    - ▶ Visiting Professor
  - ▶ Research experience
    - ▶ Postdoc
    - ▶ Supervising undergraduates
    - ▶ Feasible research plan
  - ▶ Credentials
  - ▶ Desire for small college/liberal arts
  - ▶ Fit with the department/university
- ▶ Essential skills
    - ▶ Good communicator/teacher
    - ▶ Like interacting with students/colleagues
    - ▶ Patience
    - ▶ Passion for research
    - ▶ Adaptability
      - ▶ Ability to shift gears scientifically

thank you

danke 謝謝

tesekkür ederim

gracias

tapadh leat

moichchakkeram

maith agat

merci

obrigado

dziękuję

bedankt

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