

## Student Generated Discussion Scenarios Part 2

### Acting Decisively

Analysis Paralysis by Orrie Feitsma – John is a graduate student that you are mentoring in the lab that you run at your university. John does very good research and pays close attention to detail, but always takes a very long time to collect data and make decisions about his research. Even after you meet with him and give him advice on how to proceed with his research, he still takes too long to complete tasks, overanalyzes, and misses deadlines.

1. How can you encourage John to act decisively and not overanalyze his research project?
2. What is the best way to show John that not acting quickly enough will be harmful to his current research and future career?
3. Fear of failure, fear of alienating others, and lack of information are three main reasons why people are indecisive. How would you address these areas with John to increase how quickly he gets his research done?

### Assertiveness/Saying No

The GA Sets Some Rules by Gasselle Cordova - I needed to work with the lab manager performing different activities as part of my GA duties. I was very willing to help since I just had started, but later I realized that too much of my time was being used on these tasks. This situation became uncomfortable when I noticed that the lab manager was always late and left me alone doing all the work several times. Additionally, I was neglecting my own work.

I started putting some boundaries in place regarding my availability to help since working on these activities was part of my duties. I started telling the lab manager the specific times I was available, the specific amount of time that I could help and started splitting the job so even if they were late, I could still start working.

Even though the lab manager changed their attitude towards me, this worked in my favor since now I can focus on my work without neglecting my GA duties.

1. What other approach(es) could I have used?
2. I am worried that now I am not seen as a team player. How should I talk to my advisor about this situation?

K Needs Help by Andrew Egesa - A new employee K has started in the life science lab you work in. The type of work setting involves experiments and fieldwork. After the orientation and initial training, your supervisor states that should K face a challenge in assigned tasks, they should consult you for some direction since you have knowledge from the five years' experience in required tasks.

Sometime later, K abruptly mentions to you that they need some help in completing the design for an experiment involving sampling before they can plan data collection set to begin on the following day. But K does not give details on the part of the design. Furthermore, you are working on a deadline that is particularly important for an upcoming office meeting, yet the planned experiment is crucial for the office. You inform K that you are busy at that moment but may be available later, or the following day. K looks frustrated from their facial expression and

mentions that the supervisor wanted to approve the design that day so that they could begin the task on the following day.

1. How should this situation be approached?
2. How do you empathetically say no to K?
3. It is likely that K could have misjudged their knowledge of the assigned task only to realize that they needed help too late.
4. Is it justifiable for you to sympathize with K?

*Facing Multiple Deadlines* by Orrie Feitsma – Your coworker comes to you to ask for help this week with an experiment that should finalize their Ph.D. research and will lead to a patent or cultivar release for your lab. Your coworker's experiment is time sensitive. Your boss told you to help them out whenever you can. However, you have an important exam, a section of your thesis due, and your own research projects to keep up with this week.

1. How should you respond to your co-worker?
2. If you say no, what is the best way to communicate it?
3. How can you prevent a similar scenario from happening in the future?

*Difficult Boss and Difficult Decisions* by Hadi Ghasemi – You are a new Ph.D. student at a well-known university. The university has high-tech facilities, the stipend is proper for a student, the city where you are living is beautiful, and you have a good feeling about the situation outside of your workplace.

However, after a semester, you find out that your supervisor always makes unreasonable requests, and they push you to do or accept their requests. You find yourself saying yes to things you really do not want to do in this workplace. Besides, you know if you say no your advisor will be upset and will make the work environment unfriendly or very hard for you. Also, you fear that you may lose your position if you say no to the requests. Regardless of these red flags, studying at this university would be considered a big win for you and would look great on your résumé.

You manage to navigate your student responsibilities well enough and are more than qualified for the position. You like your university and program, but you are experiencing high-stress levels because you feel that you cannot say no to all requests. Also, this situation may affect your future life and life outside of campus.

1. How do you see this situation?
2. Would you consider continuing here?
3. If you want to continue, how should you say no to your supervisor?
4. Does this type of scenario tend to happen more in Ph.D. level and at well-known universities as opposed to others? Explain.
5. Would this workplace setting be more difficult for a student to be successful? Why?

*Too Many Undergrad Interns, Not Enough Time* by Taehoon Kim – You are a Ph.D. student who has a research assistantship under your advisor. Your advisor hired many undergraduate researchers, and they frequently ask your advisor some experimental questions. One day, three undergraduate researchers with different experimental projects visited your advisor and acquired technical support for their experiments. Because your advisor is currently extremely busy while writing many manuscripts and well-equipped with the skill of saying no, they

redirected the students to you. You are also busy conducting your own experiments and analyzing data. However, you do not want to damage your advisor's authority and emotions.

1. Should you say no to the undergraduate researchers?
2. How would you behave in this situation?

*The Pilot Study that Almost Crashed* by Harrison Meekins – You have been put in charge of your first major research project. The project is a pilot trial examining the impact of different types of media on the ease of rhizome cleaning. You have been growing ginger and turmeric in two different locations for the past year, and it is now time to harvest the rhizomes from these plants in the more remote location. You have been coming out to the remote location on your own to manage the trial, and during this time you had one representative from this location helping you as needed.

When it comes time to conclude your experiment, you have only two days to harvest over 350 plants, record fresh weights, and gather accurate data on how long it takes to clean the rhizomes. It is incredibly important that your data is accurate, especially when it comes to recording how long it takes to do each task.

To make matters more chaotic, you have been given a crew 10-15 additional people that you did not previously plan on having. You have never worked with this group before. To mitigate this, you split everyone into stations, but this also makes it more difficult to track everyone's time. Furthermore, people keep moving to different stations, which interferes with the results by altering the number of person-hours for each job.

Ultimately, you harvested all the plants and obtained the data you needed, but it took significantly more time and effort than you planned.

1. How could you have used assertiveness to improve the overall efficiency of the harvest?
2. How might being more assertive have helped in managing the labor present?
3. Where could you have been more assertive in your preparations, and how might that have changed the outcome?
4. Would it have benefitted you to say no to some of the extra labor? Explain.

*Working with a Microbiologist – It's the Little Things That Count* by Carlos Montoya – Maxwell works in a microbiology laboratory. He is facing communication problems with the leader of quality control (QC). Generally, the QC leader does not utilize the correct tone of voice to request some routine analyses. Additionally, their body language points to emotional conflicts that affect relationships with the team. For example, the QC leader puts on a happy face when they are with the department head. But the QC leader displays a heavy and tense demeanor in the company of the other coworkers. On some occasions, they have raised their voice discussing lab routines instead of using a friendly tone of voice.

One colleague wants to find another job due to the situation. Also, the new trainee was always stressed and gave up their position after 2 months despite receiving a competitive salary. Maxwell decides that he needs to be more assertive regarding the QC leader's behavior.

1. What can Maxwell do to be more assertive in this situation?

2. Assume that Maxwell follows your advice, but the situation does not improve. What does Maxwell do now?

*John the Procrastinator Wants Attention Now* by Jesse Pott – John is finalizing the second year of his M.S. program and is well-known as a procrastinator. John asks the lab manager, who is currently at the benchtop, to review the discussion section of his thesis before sending it to his advisor.

The lab manager responds: “Oh, you have reached the discussion, that’s great. Unfortunately, I cannot help you now, but I will be able to briefly scan the document in 15 minutes or you can wait for 2 hours, and I will be able to go through it thoroughly and provide feedback”.

1. Should the lab manager give reasons why he is unable to help at that moment?
2. Should the lab manager just redirect the student to the PI and or committee members or ask related questions?
3. Is the Lab manager providing too much information on when he can provide the help?
4. Can the lab manager do anything differently? Explain.

*Sticking to the Schedule* by Givanna Roper – Assertiveness and saying no is somewhat common in the workplace and in a professional setting, but what about saying no when it comes to family. I come from a Caribbean background. It is common to be told what to do and when to do it, even as an adult. My grandmother is 96 years old. It is not as easy for her to move around as she once did. This prompted my family to get on a schedule amongst the five of us to help her with daily routines. We assigned each family member a day of the week while all coming together on the weekends.

I noticed some family members asking to switch days, sometimes not showing up until later, or not showing up at all. This threw off my grandma’s routine. At the end of the day someone would have to fill in to help my grandmother. That person was usually me. There were no issues getting the job done since saying no could impact her health.

I finally spoke up one weekend. I noted the missed days and stated how filling in had a cascading effect on my daily schedule. I also reminded my family how we must commit to the days we have scheduled for the sake of my grandmother.

We were able to push through and figure it out, sticking to a solid routine, but I often wonder...

1. Is there a different way I could have approached this situation in terms of being assertive?
2. Did the assertiveness that I show come from frustration or could have been seen as such?
3. How can I navigate challenges to my assertiveness?
4. Could we have included my grandmother more in the scheduling?

*Marley Goes All in at Big Happy Firm* by Maria Rose-Voge – Big Happy Firm holds quarterly meetings to touch base, organize the business goals for next quarter, and to share large success cases. The meeting is attended by senior management. Every meeting is scheduled one month in advance and includes a very structured schedule of topics.

New employees Carla and Marley both joined the firm one week prior to the upcoming quarterly meeting. Their manager Alex decided to lead the presentation on behalf of the team, and to introduce Carla and Marley as new employees of the company. Their colleague Jose would be presenting along with the Alex. All the team members were made aware of this arrangement.

The day before the meeting, Marley sent an email to Jose that circumvented Alex. Marley advised Jose that she wanted to introduce herself to the other participants of the meeting. She also wanted to review the content of the team presentation so that she may decide whether she would join as a presenter. Marley had not been asked by Alex to present or introduce herself during the meeting.

Jose advised Marley that Alex would be leading the presentation and has full ownership on the content therein. Furthermore, Jose said that it would be highly inappropriate. Jose advised Marley to discuss her intentions with Alex directly. As expected, Alex reiterated his plan for the meeting, reassuring Marley that she would indeed present at the next quarterly, but not this time.

The meeting went ahead, and both were introduced to the group. Employees share very large financial successes and achievements that bring large revenue to the firm at the end of the meeting. Marley, unable to resist the urge to share, announced that she had also had a success in her first week at the firm, by having a very promising client call. However, this was inappropriate as Marley was not yet fully licensed. This status strictly precludes her from contact with clients.

Meanwhile, Carla, who was also yet to be fully licensed, spent her first week brainstorming how to improve the revenue grid and began putting together a proposal on how to implement it. She reached out to several team members with more seniority to hear their feedback Carla also asked for their support. Carla ran her ideas by Alex to ensure that her project was in alignment with the yearly business plan.

A position became available ten months later for which Marley and Carla applied. While both have the technical skills required for the position, Carla's aptitude for leadership, and calm assertive demeanor won her the role.

1. Marley is clearly very driven. How could she have shown her enthusiasm in a more effective way?
2. The line between aggressiveness and assertiveness is sometimes unclear. On which side of the line did each of her behaviors fall?
3. How can Marley show initiative going forward?

*The Overbearing Advisor* by Nathalia Tello – You are working on a manuscript that your advisor asked you to prioritize to publish as soon as possible. However, your advisor keeps adding experiments to your workload. Your advisor also expects you to finish these experiments within a short period of time. You will be forced to work over-time and some weekends to finish the experiments, while still submitting the manuscript on time.

1. How do you establish which projects should be prioritized and which can wait until the manuscript is finished?
2. How do you establish a realistic timeline for the projects that need to be prioritized and what tools can your advisor offer you to accomplish them in a timely manner?

*Your Advisor Assaults Your Agency* by Nathalia Tello – You have been asked to be a guest lecturer for a class. The time and date was established for a while, but the professor reaches out to you asking if you would be able to move the lecture to an earlier date. You know that preponing the lecture will not be possible due to your work schedule. However, your advisor reaches out to the professor and says that you will do it with no issue. You are dumbfounded when you see your advisor's reply because they did not reach out to you before accepting the new date.

1. Do you accept the new date, or do you communicate with your advisor to let them know that it will not work with your schedule?
2. What is the best way to have this conversation with the advisor?
3. Imagine your advisor does not agree with your reasoning because "it's a short class and doing it earlier won't be a big deal." How do you maintain your assertiveness?

*The Yes Man* by Chengyao Yin – I once worked as an intern in a financial company for two months, during which I was forced to learn how to say no. However, because this was my first time in a professional position, I wanted to have a good relationship with everyone in the company. I thought that as a newcomer a good way to build relationships in the company was by helping others. So, I shaped myself into a person who was willing to help. However, I found that more and more people came to me for help. This left very little time for me to do my work.

1. Should I have continued to maintain this state or change it? Explain.
2. What approaches can I take to refuse others' requests despite them thinking I am the "go-to" person for helping them out?

*Tim, Dave, and the New Technique* by Andy Shuang Zhou – Tim was in the Department of Environmental Horticulture at a top university working as a graduate research assistant. Tim's major professor wanted him to learn about NDVI sensors for his research project. However, no one in his group knew how to use these types of sensors. Tim had to devote considerable time reading about NDVI sensors, deciphering instructions for use, and watching on-line videos on various applications of NDVI sensors in horticulture. It took him several days to work through all this information.

Tim's major professor also wanted a post-doc named Dave to add NDVI measurement to a research project. Therefore, Dave asked Tim to do the NDVI measurement for him. Tim agreed at first. He did the NDVI measurement twice for this post-doc. However, the measurements took much time to collect. Tim felt overwhelmed. Tim tried several times to imply to Dave this task is hard for him, and it is not his responsibility. However, Dave always came up with reasons to let Tim do it.

Tim is hesitant to say no directly to Dave because Dave has been working for the major professor for six years. Tim has only been in the program for several months. Tim also felt he would lose the relationship with Dave if he said no. Therefore, Tim watched videos about how to say no. He also practiced with his friends to say no.

The following week Dave asked Tim to collect NDVI data again. However, Tim does not have the time to continue collection NDVI data for Dave. Tim replied: "Hi Dave, sorry, I cannot do the NDVI measurement for you. Here is what I can do. I can teach you how to do it. Then you can do it yourself."

Dave then said, "Only you know how to do it. I have no time to do this."

1. How should Tim navigate this situation?
2. Does Tim need to provide any explanation to Dave? Explain.
3. What should Tim do if Dave comes up with more reasons as to why Tim needs to collect the data for him?

## **Bias**

*The "Weaker" Gender Gets Ready to Walk Out* by Gasselle Cordova –A lab that primarily conducts field research is composed of a crew with nearly twice as many men as women. Lately, the men have been doing a lot of field work because of the start of the season. However, the women feel they are seen as the "weaker gender" and do not feel valued or considered. The women are sent to do very simple tasks instead of field work. As a result, the women are not able to see how the field work gets done.

The situation is making the women on the team uncomfortable because they know they are more than capable of doing the work. Moreover, they feel that they are not going to be able to grow professionally because they are not getting the experience they want. Likewise, the supervisor does not seem very satisfied with their contributions. The women are considering looking for jobs in a different lab because even though they like the work they do, they want to be able to learn and become better professionals.

1. How should the women approach this situation?
2. Should they talk to their male coworkers or go directly to the supervisor? Why?
3. How can these types of issues be prevented in the future?

*Hurry Up and Wait Attitude Hides Bias* by Andrew Egesa – Alex is a member of a three-person field data collecting team. Alex believes that hard work involves punctuality and careful record-keeping. He does double checks and combines handwritten and soft copies of data. However, John is more time conscious. John tends to stick to digital data collection formats and finishes his tasks faster. As such, he does not show up some days.

John, in a meeting to discuss work progress, mentions that he feels that coming to every data collection is a waste of time since he always waits after his part, due to the double entry made by some team members. He suggests taking a day off to wait for those behind in their part of data entry. Jerry also feels that they should not come to the field when part of their work is done and should finish their work then leave as fast as possible to save time.

Alex mentions that the work will not be perfect as earlier imagined due to hastened nature of data collection and irregularities in data entry that may arise from work by both John and Jerry.

1. What type(s) of bias may be at play in this scenario? Explain.
2. How should Alex handle the situation?
3. Why does Alex associate digital data entry with irregularities?
4. Is Jerry, right?
5. How should the team establish working harmony?

*Confident John Creates Groupthink* by Orrie Feitsma – You are leading the release of several new products at your company. You have heard several great ideas from individual team

members during one-on-one meetings. However, when you have a group meeting, John talks the most and is very confident in his idea. This causes everyone else in the group to agree with him and not bring up their own ideas. You know that other group members have valuable ideas, but they do not share them since everyone has already agreed with John.

1. How do you stop this kind of groupthink and promote healthy debate?
2. How do you acknowledge John's contributions while also considering other perspectives?
3. How should future meetings be handled?

*Multicultural Workplace, Multicultural Bias* by Hadi Ghasemi – You have many colleagues and friends from different cultures and countries in your workplace. You often judge them based on the differences that you see. Also, your supervisor has some biases based on different cultures, races, and so on.

These biases make relationships harder between employees, and communication is sometimes unpleasant. You do some research on bias and find that our brains make quick judgments of people and situations around us, often without realizing it. This is referred to as unconscious bias. You also learn that unconscious bias is based on your previous experiences in and outside of work.

All the employees and leaders understand that bias is an issue in the workplace. The group agrees to a meeting to talk about issues and present their ideas to solve them. You are tasked with leading the meeting.

1. What type(s) of information on bias do you include?
2. How do you get employees and leaders to discuss bias in the workplace?

*Sweet Strawberries and Sour Bias* by Taehoon Kim – You are a manager of a team in a strawberry breeding company. One of two researchers in your team is supposed to promote to a middle-manager level by the end of the year. You are thinking of recommending researcher A for the promotion based on their performance. However, one of the vice presidents, who has the authority to promote one of two employees, is thinking of promoting researcher B because they graduated from the same university. This does not seem like the best criteria for promotion since you are the one who knows which employee is most eligible for the promotion.

1. What type of bias does the vice-president display? Why?
2. How would you point out the bias to the vice president?
3. How would you persuade them to promote researcher A?

*Jamie's Halo Bias Hurts* by Harrison Meekins – Jamie is the hiring manager at a large company. Jamie meets a candidate named John during the interview process for an open position. John appears to be a good fit. He is clean-cut and self-motivated. So, Jamie offers John the job.

Jane, the operations and training manager, is excited when she hears about Jamie's glowing review of the new hire. But Jane quickly finds that John is not fulfilling his job duties according to standard operating procedures. To make matters worse, many of the other employees at similar positions to John are having to pick up his slack.

Jane and the rest of the team manage to hit their targeted goals despite John's poor productivity. A couple months go by before Jamie comes back to visit the facility and see how



things are going. Jamie sees that the team is hitting their goals. Jaime mentions to Jane how nice it must be to have someone like John lending a hand. Jane is frustrated with this comment but does not want to say anything because of the halo effect that John seems to have in Jamie's eyes.

1. What can Jane do to help Jamie understand the actual situation? Should she discuss bias?
2. What can Jamie do to get past this halo effect, and prevent this type of bias in the future?

*Groupthink at the Gene Level* by Carlos Montoya – Pedro works in a plant physiology laboratory interested in the patterns that govern tissue growth and development. The lab has a collection of cloning vectors and host cells that they use to perform plant transformation and gene-editing in selected species. Pedro's supervisor requests that he check for available reagents in the laboratory to use in his master proposal. Pedro has had difficulties finding some plasmids and *E. coli* cells mentioned by the supervisor that could be useful for him. Pedro found the materials in the ultra-freezer in complete chaos with no labels on them. Pedro asks his lab mates if they have access to an inventory of biological and DNA material, but nobody knows about that.

Pedro suggests creating a shared inventory during the weekly lab meeting. The inventory would contain detailed information on the location within freezers of plasmids, host cells, resistance genes, and antibiotics.

After a minute of silence, 4 of the 6 lab personnel agreed that kind of inventory requires too much effort. They decide to continue working as before. The PI of the lab said he agrees with the decision of the majority because he "Does not work in the wet laboratory" and so "the students need to make the decision". After that statement, Pedro also agrees because he does not want to generate controversy within the lab.

1. Does Pedro need to identify a non-negotiable aspect or base line in a consensus group decision?
2. Should Pedro give up his ideas to fit within a work team?
3. What could Pedro do when his ideas are not taken into consideration?
4. Are you a person who takes initiative in group decisions even though there is risk or unknown result for the team? Explain.

*Is the District Attorney in Hot Water?* by Jesse Potts – Mark, a prominent criminal lawyer, is now under investigation for embezzlement of state funds. The district attorney, who was a college mate of Mark, made a public announcement claiming he is certain that Mark has always held high morals and standards. Furthermore, the district attorney states that Mark has worked according to the constitution and he expects the case to hit a dead end then be thrown out despite concrete evidence and eyewitness testimonies.

1. What kind of bias is evident in this situation?
2. Are the attorney general's comments appropriate, how does it affect the integrity of the investigation?

*Animals, Catheters, and Pizza: Confronting Bias Informally* by Givanna Roper – All jobs have their challenges but working in an animal hospital is particularly challenging. When it comes to animal husbandry and treatment there are many ways to "skin-a-cat". One method for insemination involves placing an intravenous catheter.

I noticed, when working at a particular animal hospital, that conformity biases existed between the doctors and some of the older nurses that caused miscommunication regarding this procedure. The conformity bias between the older nurses and doctors was evident to some of the new workers. This created a sense of animosity and poor performance. Unfortunately, the challenges with this type of bias accompanied by resulting miscommunication and poor performance spilled onto the clients. This situation presented the “elephant-in -the-room” and had to be addressed.

One day after work we all decided to go out to a pizza bar and talk. This to me was the prime opportunity to speak about workplace bias.

1. What is conformity bias?
2. How can conformity bias be addressed in the workplace?
3. Are other biases at play in this scenario? Explain.

Andrew's Unconscious Bias by Maria Rose-Voge – Andrew has been an employee of the firm for over 25 years and has been a team leader for five. He is beloved by his colleagues for the caliber of his work and for his deep understanding of corporate culture. He is an appropriately charismatic leader who is a pleasure to work with. Andrew can do no wrong.

The employees of the firm are representative of the diverse city in which the firm is based, and of the firm's prioritized commitment to diversity. Andrew sat on many interview panels for prospective employees before he became a team leader and a high-ranking executive. While Andrew's input was always taken into consideration, the ultimate decision whether to hire the candidate was someone else's.

However, the time came to expand the team by several members. Andrew was promoted and the responsibility to hire new members was now his. There were seven senior positions and three junior positions among the new hires. The candidates he chose for the senior level were all men who practiced the same religion as Andrew. The three remaining positions were occupied by one man of the same religion and two women of different ethnicities.

A year or so down the road there was an opportunity to promote one of the three junior employees, and each was qualified. The man who practiced Andrew's religion was ultimately promoted. But even before the change had been announced, there were rumors circulating that he would be getting the job, since he and Andrew had coincidentally become members of the same badminton league. They had become friends over the last six months.

Upper management was very pleased with Andrew. The new team functions well and it will likely be expanding again within the next 8-12 months. Yet, the hiring dynamic seems poised to repeat itself. Andrew clearly has a blind spot regardless of his genuine open-mindedness progressive demeanor and leadership style. Since nobody brought this pattern to the forefront, no change is expected in the upcoming expansion. Andrew is unwittingly narrowing their team perspective and ultimately reducing their long-term success in the market by reducing team diversity.

1. How can Andrew be made aware of his unconscious bias?

2. If everyone seems fine and the work is completed, why is it still a good idea to hire a more diverse team?

Keeping Quiet Keeps the Problem Going by Nathalia Tello – Mario is in a group meeting with co-workers and Thomas their supervisor. They are brainstorming a solution for an issue that Lauren had on one of their projects. Sara, one of their coworkers, comes up with an idea that is immediately approved by Thomas. Thomas approves quickly because he feels the idea is time and cost efficient. Thomas also wants the meeting to be over as soon as possible.

Lauren thinks that the idea is good but knows it won't fully solve the issue they are having. Mario has another idea that Lauren thinks is more adept to solve the problem. But Thomas waves it off as they had already decided on Sara's idea. To not go against Thomas, Lauren agrees that Sara's idea is the best and that there is no need to come up with any others. Mario usually feels confident enough to talk through their ideas and explain their benefits. But they feel embarrassed at being dismissed so easily and remains quiet. Lauren notices, but doesn't say anything, as Thomas is content with how easily the issue seems to be solved.

1. What bias(es) is at play here? Explain.
2. Should Lauren address this issue with Thomas?
3. If so, how should she go about it?

There's Just No Chemistry Between Us by Chenhyao Yin – I was taught chemistry by a young, female teacher when I was in high school. My first midterm exam was not good, only 68%. Therefore, the teacher defined me as a student who was not good at chemistry. However, in the second exam, I reviewed the textbook and completed practice exams in advance. I finally achieved 95% score. However, the teacher said frankly that I could not get 95%. It must be that the score was miscalculated. The teacher's first impression of me led her to think that my knowledge of chemistry was terrible.

1. What type of bias could this be? Explain.
2. What actions should I take to eliminate her prejudice against me?

Above Average Bias by Andy Shuang Zhou – Xiao was a graduate student originally from China. She attended a top university in the United States. Her advisor Dr. Mark is originally from United States. Dr. Mark is an accomplished professor. However, he is not good at statistics. Dr. Mark usually seeks help for data analysis from the statistical consulting group in the Mathematics Department. It is a prolonged process. For example, Dr. Mark must schedule an appointment and wait about ten days before he can be seen by a consultant. Moreover, he usually needs two or three sessions to solve the statistic problems.

Dr. Mark saw that Xiao's GRE quantitative reasoning score was high. He also thinks Xiao must be good at math and statistics because she is from China. So, Dr. Mark asked Xiao to solve the statistics problem for him. Xiao struggled to solve the problem. Actually, Xiao has no statistics training and she is not very interested in the subject. She only wants to learn enough statistics to do her research. It turns out that Xiao also needs help from statistical consultants.

Dr. Mark thought that Xiao would be very good at statistics if she took some courses. So, Dr. Mark asks her to take several hard statistic courses, hoping she will be an expert for his group. Xiao has concerns about that. She thinks she should spend some time developing presentation skills, because she wants to be a professor or lecturer in the future. However, Dr. Mark

considers English as Xiao's second language and that she is very shy. Therefore, he avoids giving presentation opportunities to Xiao.

Xiao tried several times to talk to Dr. Mark about giving her speaking opportunities and have less statistical responsibilities. Dr. Mark pushes back because he thinks this is good for the whole team.

1. What kind of bias does Dr. Mark display?
2. How should Xiao talk to Dr. Mark about the bias?
3. Does she need outside help?
4. Who else should she call for help?

## **Communicating Across Cultures and Generations**

*Not Seeing Eye to Eye* by Gasselle Cordova – A new graduate student from the U.S. started his Ph.D. this semester and he is ready to be a good team player. He has coworkers from different countries and generations. He thinks it is exciting to have so many perspectives and cultures in one place. Even though he thinks he has been a great team-player, in his eyes some of his coworkers do not seem to like him very much. So, he has been avoiding them because he does not want to have problems in the workplace. His coworkers do not seem very talkative and just want to finish their work as soon as possible.

He needs to start working on a new project and will need help from some of his coworkers in the next weeks. He is trying to organize the project so that the help needed is minimized as much as possible, but his advisor asked him to involve his coworkers so they can learn from this experiment. He thinks it is time to have a conversation with them because they have many years to come working together.

1. Should the new graduate student talk to his advisor first? What should he discuss and how?
2. How can he know if the coworkers do not like him, or if they are just busy with work?
3. How can he avoid similar issues in the future?

*Young and Old Like Oil and Water* by Taehoon Kim – As a manager it is crucial to maintain impartiality with all team members. You manage a lab with people from different generations. Some younger generation team members are motivated to do more work because they want to produce more publications to help them have a better job in the future. Some older generation members care more about the relationship among the team and they want to build a tight relational bond in the lab. Thus, older members sometimes want to have small talk with the younger members who tend to avoid those situations. The older members think the younger members are disrespectful while the younger group thinks the older group is not productive.

It is crucial to maintain impartiality with all team members as the lab manager. You personally think that the older members are still doing well with their research tasks and the younger members are not being rude. You are worried that the lab members are completely split into two groups by generations, which is detrimental for the teamwork.

1. How would you approach both groups to start talking about the situation?
2. What type of actions would you take to resolve the situation?

Communication Breakdown by Jesse Potts – Mark is a team lead at a multinational company. Mark asks Joshua, one of their highest-performing team members, who recently transferred from one of their international offices, to handle two large projects simultaneously upon arrival. Mark checks in with Joshua who assures Mark that he is “okay”, and his workload is not overwhelming.

Later, Mark finds out from other members and security staff that Joshua has been staying late each night to complete the projects. Mark is from a straightforward speaking culture, hence took Joshua’s word for what it was. However, in Joshua’s culture, it is disrespectful to complain to their managers or other senior staff because they worry that speaking up or complaining about their workload would negatively impact their career.

1. Should mark have done more due diligence into communication across cultures given his position and most importantly the company he represents?
2. What is the best method to relate the pressure or job overload to superiors?

## **Failure as Growth**

Picking Up the Pieces by Chengyao Yin – Eric has just started his graduate program and is full of enthusiasm for research. So, he and his advisor designed a very innovative experiment. Eric may make a great discovery if he can successfully obtain the experimental results. However, the experiment is very long, taking about one and a half years to complete and requires full commitment. Eric will have wasted this valuable time if the experiment fails.

Eric did not hesitate and chose to start the experiment. However, a worrying situation occurred one year after the experiment started. Half of the experimental samples were damaged due to unknown diseases, making it impossible to continue the experiment. Eric did not despair in the face of this failure. He decided to start a new experiment immediately. But now he faces a question: should I start this innovative experiment again? If we get the results successfully, that’s perfect, but what if the experiment does not provide the expected results? Can I graduate successfully after wasting two years? These are all issues Eric needs to consider.

1. Eric gained some experience through this failure but has spent a year in the process. Do you think this failure was helpful to his success? Explain.
2. Without knowing whether the next experiment will succeed, do you think Eric should start the experiment again? Explain.
3. If he decides to start the experiment again, how should Eric adjust his mind in the face of the pressure of graduation and experiment failure?

Tony’s Protocol Flop by Andrew Egesa – Tony is a technician in an ecology laboratory with over ten years work experience. He understands routine lab procedures and advanced lab protocols, and he can do them without needing to revisit his notes. He developed a protocol to analyze chemical Y from water samples three months ago. However, the readings were too low. He needed to adjust the standards to ensure the values were reasonable.

Then a new experiment was set up to analyze chemical Y from soil samples from an upcoming study site. The project leader also obtained additional stocks of the laboratory reagent X which is used in the analysis of chemical Y. However, the new reagent was obtained from a company different from the routine supplier. In the experiment Tony used the same protocol from three

months earlier and got satisfactory results. However, while preparing a report, Tony realized that he used triple the amount of reagent X. He also realized that the protocol used was not standard since he had adjusted it to fit samples with a low concentration of chemical Y in his last experiment.

1. What should Tony do to address the situation?
2. What are the sources of Tony's failure?
3. How should Tony positively learn from this situation?

*Trouble with New Equipment* by Hadi Ghasemi – Brad is a new graduate student and is excited to learn new skills and improve his knowledge. In the first semester, his supervisor asked him to start working with a piece of equipment he was unfamiliar with. He told his professor that he did not know how to work with that device, but the supervisor expected he should learn it himself. This story resulted in the failure of the project and the loss of funds, time, and statistical validity.

1. What should the supervisor do to address the situation?
2. What are the sources of this failure for both sides?
3. How can both the mentor and the mentee benefit from this experience?

## **Managing Ambiguity**

*What to Do When It's All Up to You?* By Harrison Meekins – Vanessa is starting a new job at a start-up company where she will have a role in upper management. She has been working in industry for about five years, so the title change is a substantial jump up for her. Vanessa also knows her knowledge of the industry landscape is second to none.

At her old job, standard operating procedures (SOPs) were well established and communicated. At Vanessa's new job though, it is mostly up to her to decide how to allocate her time and resources. She is excited for the chance to pave her own way but feels slightly paralyzed by her boss' lack of time and direction. Vanessa knows she could get the ball rolling if her boss could provide her with a little clearer information about his vision for the company.

1. What should Vanessa do to get clarity on her boss' vision?
2. How can she turn this ambiguous situation into a situation she can be proud to take ownership of?

## **Mentee-Mentor Relationships**

*Huo's New Plan* by Andy Shuang Zhou – Huo is a Chinese student pursuing a Ph.D. at X University in the United States. He graduated with a M.S. degree from Y University also in the United States. Therefore, mentor-mentee relationships are not new to him. He reflected on his time as a M.S. and recalled some relationship issues with his advisor.

Huo was very close with his advisor during his first semester at Y University. For example, Huo's advisor gave him rides because he didn't have a car. Huo's advisor also helped him find an apartment, with classes, solve financial issues, and loneliness. However, Huo felt very isolated because he is in a foreign country and English is not his native language. He also did not realize the importance to make connections. So, he put most his needs on his advisor.

Huo's advisor felt overwhelmed and began to distance himself during the second semester in Y University. Huo felt the lack of connection with his advisor. However, he did not talk to his advisor why this happened. Huo thought he was not independent. So, he carried his issues inside. This led to Huo's depression when he is about to graduate.

Huo thought he can make some changes with his PhD advisor. He realized his mentor was not the only one person available for mentorship. The teachers from the class he took are his mentors. His committee members are his mentors. Huo also decided that he can make connections with other professors in the department, and then they can become his mentor. Huo realized that he did not need to rely solely on his advisor and that he should improve his networking skills.

He also considered that he should not put too many needs of his personal life to his advisor. Firstly, too much attention on personal issues will shift the focus away from academics. Secondly, it is not the responsibility of his advisor. Huo thinks that if he wants his advisor to help him, that he will create a reciprocity relationship instead of a one-way helping relationship. Then the relationship can be long lasting. Huo also wants to build trust with his advisor. He thinks he will share some of his vulnerabilities with his advisor, so his advisor can understand more about him. He also realizes if his advisor shares some of his vulnerability with him, he will listen with compassion and keep it between them. He thinks this will help their communications in the future.

1. How do you think of Huo's plan for his mentor-mentee relationship with his PhD mentors?
2. What else can he improve?

*New Student New Mentor New Challenges* by Hadi Ghasemi – You are in a new Ph.D. program in a lab with a young mentor. It is a beautiful place to live, the stipend is appropriate, the university has high-tech facilities, and you feel good about your situation outside of work. However, after a while, you realize that the relationship between you and your mentor is not good. The level of communication between you and your supervisor is not good, it is hard to find another mentor to talk to, and all things are unclear for both sides. Also, you may lose your graduate assistant position if you cannot improve the relationship while the mentor may not earn tenure if they lose a graduate student. Therefore, this situation may affect your future lives in and outside of campus.

You and your mentor have expressed an interest in resolving the situation in a mutually beneficial manner.

1. What should the next steps be?
2. What is the expectation of both sides in workplace?
3. If you could go back in time, what would we need to change in our relationship?

*A Mentee Jumps Ship, then Burns the Ship* by Maria Rose-Voge – Victoria is a member of senior management at a company She is also an expert in her field with over 25 years of experience. Victoria is very generous with her time and knowledge and has successfully mentored dozens of people throughout her career. Recently a younger colleague, Jessica, who had about 5 years' experience, and with whom Victoria had a very cordial relationship, approached her about the possibility of mentorship. They discussed their expectations and agreed to an arrangement that would be mutually beneficial. Jessica would hone her expertise

in an area that was Victoria's forte. This would likely catapult Jessica's career. Meanwhile, Victoria would have some assistance in an area she was often bombarded with.

The company for which they work has a very structured corporate ranking in which each employee normally interacts with those of the same rank. It is highly unusual to "jump ranks" in either direction. Victoria was the same rank as Lawrence. Lawrence is Jessica's manager's boss.

Teams within the company regularly collaborate on projects and clients due to their specific, respective expertise. The leads of the project communicate with each other, make decisions, and then inform their respective team members of the work to come. Victoria and her peer Lawrence did just that. Lawrence subsequently shared the vision with Jessica's manager, who then informed her of her part. Victoria did not discuss this with Jessica as it would have been highly unusual, and not relevant to their mentoring relationship.

As expected, Victoria's mentoring significantly improved Jessica's expertise, which led to an interview for a highly coveted position at a competitor. This opportunity simply would not have become available to Jessica without Victoria. Jessica shared that she got the job. It was at this point that their mentor-mentee relationship would come to its natural end. They had a finalizing conversation to wrap up the engagement. It was at this point that Jessica decided inexplicably to drop her corporate persona. After thanking Victoria for the "help", Jessica announced, by using expletives, that she was angry at Victoria. Jessica stated that Victoria had "disrespected" her several months back by not communicating directly with her on the project and instead went to Lawrence. Victoria took this as another opportunity for a quick mentoring. She explained to Jessica how outrageous and inappropriate her behavior was. A few weeks later, Victoria noticed that Jessica was still in her position and had not actually been offered the new job. Not only was she bypassed for the new job, but her flippant and disrespectful attitude irreparably damaged her reputation at the current company.

1. Jessica did so many things right in the beginning. Where did she go wrong?
2. How could she have addressed her concerns with Victoria more appropriately? Or should she have even said anything at all?

## **Motivating Others**

*Motivating Others While They March to Their Own Tunes* by Givanna Roper – Motivating team members requires specialized tactics tailored to an individual's strengths. I had the opportunity to lead a band of over 250 individuals when I was drum major in high school. While music was universal, attitudes were not. I quickly learned that some individuals require more attention than others.

It was a breeze for me to motivate an individual. I always kept our interactions professional. However, motivating the entire band as a unit was a challenge. I would spend countless hours listening to motivational speeches that I would regurgitate to the band. But it was not working. Lost for ideas, I decided to simply remain calm and collected while showing subtle forms of appreciation to all band members.

To my surprise, this technique prompted the band to act as a cohesive unit. This was the motivation I was looking to obtain and it naturally happened. I ran with this technique and continued to reward the band versus individuals.



1. What are some other incentives I could have used to motivate the band?
2. Can people motivate others, or does motivation come from another source? Explain.

*We are Not All Robots* by Chengyao Yin – I joined a robot programming club when I was in high school. Our club activity was to assemble robots, program them, and design their functions to participate in the competition according to the rules. There are ten people in our team, one of whom is the team leader. The team leader's programming skills are excellent. But there are always problems with communication and team organization. The leader overestimates the team's abilities given difficult goals. He also relentlessly criticizing others' talents.

Once we went to a national competition. Our leader attached great importance to this opportunity. So, he set a very high goal and created a high-pressure environment. Obviously, the team leader's EQ is not high. He speaks tersely and will not consider other people's feelings. Usually, team members are patient. However, in this high-pressure environment, conflicts occur easily.

The leader and a team member ended up having a quarrel that affected the mood of many people. Some members even had no intention of debugging the machine and planned to give up on the game. I naturally need to come out and mediate this dispute as a bystander and a friend of the leader.

1. How can I motivate these conflicting members to focus on the competition again?
2. How should I communicate with the leader to make him set reasonable goals and communicate with the team members correctly.
3. As a team member, what should I do to maintain the harmony and stability of the whole team?

## **Navigating Change and Thinking Strategically**

*Out With the Old In With the New* by Carlos Montoya – The company Plant & Plant Pathogens (PPP) was launched on the market 5 years ago. PPP was the leading company in pathogenic detection in commercial crops in the area when it opened in 2002. An innovative technology for the rapid detection of viral and bacterial pathogens was introduced in 2008. PPP conducted a general audit in 2010 and found cumulative financial losses that if not stopped could bring the company to bankruptcy.

The company started a strategic planning campaign to reduce the losses and to position the company as an industry leader again. PPP found that they were using old and expensive methodologies that needed to be changed. Fortunately, they were approved for a loan to update their technology. However, an identified priority was the urgent training of the analyst in the new techniques before acquiring or renting the costly equipment.

PPP managers notified employees of future changes in a monthly meeting. Laura, the leading analyst, was not happy. Laura felt she was very skilled at the current technique. Additionally, she thought the current laboratory technique, despite taking more time, was validated and is the gold standard for pathogen detection.

1. Do you think the strategic plan of PPP considered the ideas and knowledge of their current employees? Why or why not?

2. What strategies should PPP use to show employees like Laura the benefits of changing technology?
3. Do you recommend Laura to change her workplace?

*Problems with the Best Laid Plans* by Jesse Potts – James works for a company that has an upcoming fundraising event to purchase research and development materials. James was selected as the head of the events focus group by the Director. James was happy to be informed that Chris will be a part of the group. Chris is known to be a very hard worker based on previous performance results. Therefore, Chris was handed priority work events and location planning.

However, soon after, Chris started arriving late and unprepared for meetings, which placed a hold on the team's progress. James overheard two other group members commenting on Chris's behavior. Racheal, who oversaw advertising, was perplexed regarding his non-dismissal from the group at this point. In contrast, Jack, who oversaw entertainment and is a close friend of Chris, speculated that Chris was dealing with some personal issues. Jack suggested that everyone cut Chris some slack.

James held a private emergency meeting with Chris one hour before the group meeting. James requested an update from Chris but realized he was still behind on the work. James decided to remove Chris from event planning and only left him with location planning. Chris was currently finalizing location plans and awaiting feedback from multiple venues.

At the group meeting, James pooled other members who completed their tasks to work on event planning collectively. He divided event planning into subsections such as event infrastructure, audience, attendees, and media. James also hired assistance for each section to fast-track the process, implemented a new deadline, and promised to provide incentives for completing tasks in a timely manner.

1. Did James deal with the situation in an appropriate manner, was it strategic?
2. Should Chris have been more outspoken regarding his complication and how?

## **Negotiation**

*Todd's Dilemma* by Harrison Meekins – Todd is a Ph.D. student in his final semester and he is planning to find an industry job. Todd had a good idea of where he wanted to go and what he wanted to do coming into his program. As a result, he was able to develop the necessary skills and network to be interviewed at several high-level companies. During Todd's first scheduled interview (with his top choice of employers), Todd is asked how much he expects to be compensated. The job position could be in California, or it could be in Florida where he currently lives. Todd also has two other interviews set up with different companies for similar positions. However, Todd has never been in this situation before and he is worried he might lose his chance to work at his dream job.

1. What should Todd do to get himself the best compensation package, without overstepping or burning bridges with the people who got him the other interviews?
2. What should Todd be prepared to do before and after each interview to ensure his desired outcome?

## Networking

*Digital Networks* by Givanna Roper – The transition from college living to the workforce comes with many challenges. One of the biggest challenges I had to face was keeping up with my networking skills. Networking was a breeze for me while in school. The countless hours in various programs and meetings made networking simple. Usually, all the individuals were like-minded.

It was not until I made the transition into the workforce that I realized how uncommon it was to keep up with people from meetings or common places. The new challenges I faced seemed almost impossible to me. However, I was able to use new technologies, such as social media and social networking, to my advantage. I was surprised how many people participate in social media despite the lack of face-to-face interaction. I was able to have conversations with working professionals about important topics. This opened the door for more conversations about my goals. I was so apprehensive at first about social media, but it is more helpful than I thought. I often wonder if this type of networking will be more common in the future.

1. What do you think?
2. How can you leverage social media in a professional way to enhance your networking?

*Burning Your Bridges* by Maria Rose-Voge – Alejandra was a paid intern at a large, high-profile company that required two years of internship to be considered for a permanent position. She had been quite successful throughout her internship and was poised to be offered a position with the company upon completion of the program. The caveat is that there are several departments and areas of expertise one can be hired for. The potential candidate is not made aware of which team is eyeing them for a position (based on the areas in which they excelled), until the offer is made.

Alejandra was particularly astute and could sense that she was not going to be offered a position with her preferred team. She did, however, accept the offer to work in a different area than was her preference. Meanwhile she had identified Tomás, who was a leader in the department she coveted. Alejandra made a point to not only introduce herself, but also to briefly discuss relevant issues for that team and keep in regular social contact at the office. Alejandra specifically went out of her way to keep that relationship alive and invited Tomás for lunch and coffee over the next several months.

Alejandra was in the same position a year later. But, Tomás had moved to a different and much more desirable company in the same field. Alejandra was privy to Tomás's job change because they are connected on LinkedIn. She could also see that there was an opening on his team, which was her dream job.

Tomás was happy to help since he knew Alejandra for a couple of years at this point. However, he knew from his decades in the industry, that while Alejandra was very competent and professional, she was not actually suited to the position she desired. However, there was another opening for which he knew she would be ideal. Tomás explained this to her then offered to set up meetings for her to connect with relevant people. Tomás also encouraged them to give Alejandra an interview.

Alejandra initially agreed, but then without notice, bailed on the interview. As a result, she destroyed two years of networking she had successfully created for herself. Alejandra also

demonstrated a lack of maturity and professionalism by refusing to consider that she was not ready for her dream role just yet. Tomás did not hear from her again. Alejandra disappeared into relative obscurity in the very close-knit industry.

1. How could Alejandra have kept the relationship intact while declining the interview offer?
2. Should she have accepted the interview at all?
3. Should Alejandra have re-examined her career goals, and taken Tomás' advice to consider a different role?

*Dave's Decision to Network* by Andy Shuang Zhou – Dave is a M.S. student, majoring in agronomy, and who likes to work with plants and soils. However, he is fascinated with ornamental plants and turfgrass. Dave wants to pursue Ph.D. in horticulture science. He knows there are many similarities between agronomy and horticulture. For example, both require knowledge about plants and soils. Dave knows about plant breeding. However, he lacks knowledge about plant physiology and soil science. He is concerned that a change from agronomy to horticulture would be risky. Also, he is not sure if he can maintain his passion for horticulture. Therefore, he wanted to build a network with some professionals.

Dave decides to send emails to professors from the horticulture department in his university. He asks questions about the difference in required knowledge between agronomy and horticulture. He also asks questions about the horticulture industry job market. Dave made sure to discuss what kind of knowledge he has.

Dave now knows that he needs to gain more knowledge about plant physiology and soil science because of these conversations. Therefore, he reaches out to plant physiology and soil sciences professors. He asks them questions like he is conducting an interview. Dave also visited a professor who studied agronomy then changed his focus to horticulture. He asked the professor to explain why he changed his focus and if he felt it was a good change.

1. How else can Dave enhance his network?
2. What questions should he ask potential mentors?

## **Performing Under Pressure**

*Unexpected Changes* by Andrew Egesa – James is a team leader of a new project at a research institute. Initially, the project did not have all the funds required and James had to enlist some trial chemicals for use in developing protocols. However, in the middle of the year, James was informed that they could use their initial materials to begin working on the project. There would be no significant change since their trial chemicals could be approved before the end of the project. The year is ending, and every team member is looking forward to a holiday.

The project manager informed James, during the end-of-year project review meeting, that there were new changes to the project. The changes involved replacement of some initial chemicals they were still using in the experiment. Additionally, these changes were the standard ones acceptable in their work and that would also help the project to comply with the regulatory body requirements.

James understands that the new changes invalidate most of the data they had obtained throughout the year. Moreover, James recognizes all the hard work and long hours his team put in during the year. James is planning to communicate these new developments to the team

members. He is afraid that if they work daily, from now on, they will not meet the set project plans before breaking for the holidays.

1. How should James approach the situation?
2. What should James do to avoid too much pressure on other team members?
3. How should James handle his fears to avoid being stressed out?

*A Master of Handling Pressure* by Nathalia Tello – You are a M.S. student in your second, and last year, of your degree. You have been working on an experiment for the last couple of months but, due to an issue out of your control, the experiment failed. Your advisor mentioned that it is necessary to re-do the experiment, as it is an important part of the grant you are working on and of your master's thesis. You feel a lot of pressure to get the experiment done perfectly and as fast as possible since you are in your second year, and there's not a lot of time before your thesis is due. You also fear that the experiment may fail again and that you won't be able to get it done on time.

1. What tools you can use to relieve some of the pressure in this situation?
2. How can you establish realistic goals for the project?
3. What are some steps you can take to ensure the experiment will not fail again?
4. What can you do if it does?

*Getting Pulled in Different Directions* by Gasselle Cordova – Amanda thought she would be feeling more comfortable with her workload in her second year as a M.S. student. But lately she has been feeling a lot of stress and has not been able to handle all her tasks.

In the next month she needs to attend a conference in a different state, but around the same time she needs to collect data from one of her experiments. In addition, she needs to study because after she comes back from the conference, she needs to submit two midterms. Amanda needs to obtain good grades because she could not study that much for her quizzes and received average grades.

Amanda has been trying to organize herself and stay on track. But she has been having a few hours of sleep every day trying to accomplish everything. Now Amanda does not have energy to make time for herself during the weekend. She is not sure if she will be able to sustain this much longer.

1. What should Amanda do with her upcoming tasks? Should she ask for help?
2. Should Amanda talk to her advisor about the difficulties she has been having?
3. How can Amanda avoid feeling stressed in the future?

*Patents, Publications and Panic* by Carlos Montoya – Diego works for a prestigious R1 university in the department of Horticulture. He will be working with plant biotechnology and gene-editing methodologies in under-studied species. He was hired 3 months ago as a research assistant. The department has high expectations due to his long research trajectory and publications in peer-reviewed journals.

The PI asked the team, in the first meeting of the year, to brainstorm about projects for the current year. The PI looked dissatisfied with ideas the group generated. The PI thought the team was not ambitious enough. He said:

“Diego your curriculum vitae and professional references are awesome. So, I want you submit at least six papers and publish a minimum four paper in high-impact journals. Also, you need to concentrate on developing new techniques and patentable products. My goal this year is one patent. We need to be very productive to keep or improve our ranking as one of the best research institutions in our field in the country”.

Diego smiled. But he felt nervous because he knew he first needed to standardize most methodologies currently applied in the laboratory. This is because the plant species the team was working on were understudied. Furthermore, there are few peers in that field that could help.

Diego was so worried when he arrived home that he could not sleep well that night. The following day Diego remembered strategies for performing under pressure situations. So he made a plan that included a timeframe, likely outcomes, available resources, and stakeholders. Diego presented the written plan to his PI a week later. The PI replied to Diego by email: “Come to my office to discuss”.

1. Do you think Diego did wrong not accepting the challenge or goal of the PI for the year?
2. What do you think will happen in the meeting between Diego and the PI?
3. What could Diego do to perform well under this pressure situation?

## **Setting Team Goals**

Use SMART to Start by Orrie Feitsma – You work at a company that has several important projects due by the end of the year. Your boss, Sarah, has told you to assemble a small team of 5-6 people to work on these projects. However, she has not given you any specific goals, timelines, or instructions to finish each project. Sarah only tells you that she expects that all projects must be done by the end of the year. Your boss is extremely busy and has trusted you to get the work done on time with very little of her input.

1. As a leader of this group how would you set SMART goals and delegate work to ensure that all projects are completed in a timely fashion and not crammed at the end of the year?
2. How could you set stretch goals and reward people for meeting these goals?
3. If one of your team members gets behind on one of the goals, how should you handle this situation to create a positive outcome for both the team member and the project?

Keeping the Momentum Going by Taehoon Kim –You are the principal investigator running a laboratory working on crop genetics. You are also the academic advisor of three Ph.D. students in your lab. Field trials are only available once a year throughout the growing season due to the nature of crop plant research. Additionally, maintaining plants in the experimental field requires labor of all three Ph.D. students.

Recently, one of the Ph.D. students obtained an experimental result that severely diminishes the experimental hypothesis. The student tried three times to remove any possibility of experimental error. However, the results were the same. The student asks you if they can have a month off to refresh their mind and restart the project since they are so depressed. You know how frustrated the student must be and understand they would be better if they had the time off. Nonetheless, the next growing season is coming soon. You have no choice but to persuade the student to

continue working because the other two students' labor will not be enough to manage all plants in the experimental field. Likewise, if you give the student time off, that will affect the progress of the other two students.

1. How would you approach the student to persuade them to continue working on his project?
2. How would you remind the student about team goals while you keep empathetically listening to them?
3. How would you motivate the student in this case?