

“Who Will Manage Your Academic Career if You Don’t?”

Bernie Erven

Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics

Ohio State University

Presented as Part of Organized Symposium:

Effectively Managing a Faculty (Professional) Career After 50

A. Introduction

1. You are in charge of your career
2. You have important choices to make
3. The key is to avoid being trapped by a rut, a job or another person
4. Career management is highly personal – what works well for another person may be highly unsatisfactory for you

B. The good news

1. Academia is one of the easiest places to manage the last stages of a career
2. Opportunities are numerous for reinventing our jobs, enriching our jobs, and freeing ourselves from many of the early career pressures

C. What is to be gained by excellent career management after 50?

1. Avoid bitterness
2. Increase self-esteem and self-satisfaction
3. Maintain and even increase colleague respect
4. Improve financial position before and after retirement
5. Gain flexibility in choice of retirement date
6. Create post-retirement professional opportunities

D. Selected guidelines

1. Take a proactive approach
2. Identify your professional strengths, the tasks best left to others and your new opportunities stemming from experience and wisdom
3. Set specific professional goals
4. Continue to learn, e.g., sabbatical leave, mini-sabbatical leave, short-courses, workshops, reading and study for professional improvement, and international assignments
5. Consider an administrative position or consider leaving an administrative position
6. Accept opportunities to do important things that others in your department, college or university do not want to do or cannot do
7. Seek candid feedback from a mentor
8. Surprise colleagues with your enthusiasm, good attitude and willingness to change
9. Choose to be a nonconformist
10. Refuse to act old or be thought of as old

E. In conclusion – We pass this way only one time!

Starting Undergraduate Teaching and Counseling After 50

**George F. Patrick
Purdue University**

Significant Career Change

- Not my first career change
- Had taught at graduate level years ago
- Offered as an opportunity to serve the Department, not something I was seeking
- Reorientation of about 25% of my time

Lessons and Observations

1. Not a new subject matter area, but involved a significant broadening and deepening of knowledge - positive
2. Very different motivation and interest
 - How is this useful to me?
 - What do I need to know to pass?
 - Continuing frustration

Lessons and Observations

3. Automatic respect from undergrads, but an expectation of entertainment

Information – some jokes are good

4. Counseling of undergrads is very different from one-on-one with producers

Lots of rules, need to force decisions

Educational process

Lessons and Observations

5. Both provide feeling of making a difference – personal satisfaction

Producer – informed decision

Student – period of great growth

6. Major time commitment – impacts your Extension activities significantly

Lessons and Observations

7. On-going learning process

Every semester is different

8. It is now much easier to explain what I do to friends and relatives.