

Yes! Yes, but... NO!

Christopher R. Bilder

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Department of Statistics

www.chrisbilder.com
bilder@unl.edu
@Chris_Bilder

June 17, 2014



They Might Be Giants (TMBG)





NO!

No is no

No is always no

If they say no

It means a thousand times no

No plus no equals no

All no's lead to no, no, no

- Academia is full of choices!
 - It's o.k. to say "no"
 - It's o.k. to be somewhat "selfish"
- Purpose
 - When to say "Yes!"
 - When to say "Yes, but..."
 - When to say "NO!"

for those **beginning a career in academia**

- Ultimate goal: Promotion and tenure
- Assistant Professor in a Department of Statistics at a United States research university

- Presentation available at www.chrisbilder.com/wnar
 - Recording
 - References
 - Web links
 - More suggestions!
- “The Awesomest 7-year Postdoc or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Tenure-Track Faculty Life” by Radhika Nagpal in a *Scientific American* guest blog on July 21, 2013



- Easiest to say!
 - We want to say it!
 - Takes **time** to fulfill it
- Why are we in academia?
 - Outlet for creativity
 - Say “Yes!” to items that allows one to express creativity

- Say “Yes!” to your OWN research
- Publish papers from dissertation as quickly as possible
 - Use “Chapter = Paper” model when writing dissertation
- Paper competitions for students and new Assistant Professors
 - WNAR and ENAR
 - Many ASA section paper competitions and travel awards
 - David P. Byar Young Investigator Award sponsored by the Biometrics Section of the ASA

- Principal investigator for grants
 - Bundle a group of research ideas (maybe future research ideas from dissertation)
 - University seed grants
 - NSF
 - Directorate for Mathematical & Physical Sciences: Statistics program of the Division of Mathematical Sciences
 - Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Economic Statistics: Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics (MMS) program in the Division of Social and Economics Sciences
 - Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program
 - NIH
 - Taylor (*Amstat News*, 2013) and Ryan (*Amstat News*, 2002)
 - Biostatistical Methods and Research Design (BMRD) Study Section
 - Tips available on my website

- Go to statistical conferences regularly to present, to learn, and to make contacts
- Workshops to help improve skills
 - ENAR Junior Researchers Workshop and/or lunch roundtable discussions
 - JSM
 - IMS New Researchers Conference (prior to)
 - NISS/ASA/IMS Writing Workshop for Junior Researchers
 - ASA's Personal Skills Development program
 - Grantsmanship workshops

- Take care of two things by doing one
 - Look to combine activities
 - Example: Need to understand a new area for research? Teach it.
- Items that can be quantitatively measured
 - Non-statisticians will be reviewing your promotion and tenure files
 - Papers, grants, ...
 - Quantity
 - Quality (see Theoharakis, V. and Skordia, M., 2003, for an old set of journal rankings)
 - Construct research and teaching websites to disseminate work and record web page hits
 - GStat or PStat accreditation from ASA and A.Stat and P.Stat from SSC

- Ask for comments from peers
 - Teaching evaluations
 - Testimonials from people using research or teaching resources
- Use new teaching techniques to save time
 - Record classes
 - Blended learning
 - Flipped classrooms
- Take maternity or paternity leave
 - Stop promotion/tenure clock

- Saying “Yes!” outright may jeopardize your ability to get other work completed
 - Your time is VERY important!
 - Trade one item for another
- Compromise between Yes! and NO!

- Teaching new courses
 - Ask for
 - Teaching release to prepare
 - TA
 - Relief from work elsewhere
 - Delay teaching it a year to help you prepare
 - Limit the variety of courses
- Try to teach classes you REALLY want to teach
 - Take initiative by proposing special topic classes
 - Easiest to teach classes are often those related to your research
- Obtain guarantee that you can teach a class at least twice

- Consulting
 - “Can” lead to statistics research topics
 - Do you have consulting in your job appointment?
 - If yes, then do not go over allotted time
 - If no, then ...
 - Is it DIRECTLY in your research area?
 - Compensation
 - If there is a grant involved, ask for money
 - Co-author on paper

- Departmental/university service
 - New departmental committee or chair a committee
 - Can be VERY time consuming with little reward
 - Ask for a reduction elsewhere
- Professional society service
 - Good for developing relationships
 - Limit the amount



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

- Don't want to tell people "No"
- Be nice about it
 - Be prepared to explain
 - Always give logical reasons

- “How to Say No (and Get Away With It)” by David Perlmutter in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on September 26, 2008

But to survive the tenure track, your first loyalty has to be to your career. I realize that sounds Machiavellian, and I understand that some people will want to engage in certain tasks purely out of a sense of altruism.

But at the end of the day, you provide no service to anyone if you fail to get tenure. Your highest duty is to become a productive member of the faculty. Being a doormat for all and sundry requests will sabotage that goal. Don't become like the proverbial pastor who spends so much time helping his flock that his own family falls apart.

- Research
 - Need to deeply develop 1-2 areas
 - Be careful with taking on research outside these areas unless you have a **STRONG** interest
- Teaching
 - Avoid overload
 - Avoid summer when have 9-month appointment (unless you need the money)
- Advising graduate students
 - Depending on student, this can take a lot of time!
 - Student may not be as driven as you
 - Advice: Wait to take on PhD students until tenure/promotion

- Interruptions
 - Close office door at times
 - Work from home at times
 - Turn off e-mail notifications or even Internet access if needed
- Don't take rejection personally!
- Don't procrastinate!
 - Saying "NO!" to things you don't want to do can help
 - Remind yourself why you WANT to do something

- Yes! Yes, but... NO!
- Think of the “NO!” song when faced with a decision

- My research presentation
 - Contributed 10 session, CC 307/308
 - Wednesday 10:30 session; my talk is at 10:50
 - Title: Multi-stage group testing with heterogeneous probabilities of disease positivity
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Statistics will be hiring in 2015!
 - Emerging statistical areas
 - Biology applications

GO BIG RED

Yes! Yes, but... NO!

Christopher R. Bilder

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Department of Statistics

`www.chrisbilder.com`
`bilder@unl.edu`
`@Chris_Bilder`

June 17, 2014