



Jobs behind the academic scenes

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Knowledge at noon, LS²

21 October 2026

Abstract

What I want you to take from this presentation

- **Consciousness** about diverse roles behind the academic scenes
- **Curiosity** to discover more about such careers
- **Concept** of how to approach your investigation
- **Confidence** in your broad skill set
- **Courage** for shaping your own future

Material

- 37 years old, from Dresden, Germany
- Live in village in Aargau with partner and 2 cats
- Enjoy being outdoors, gardening and cooking

→ I am sharing my personal opinion and am not representing any institution.



Methods

Curricular

Molecular Biotechnology (Drug Development)



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



UniversitätsKlinikum Heidelberg

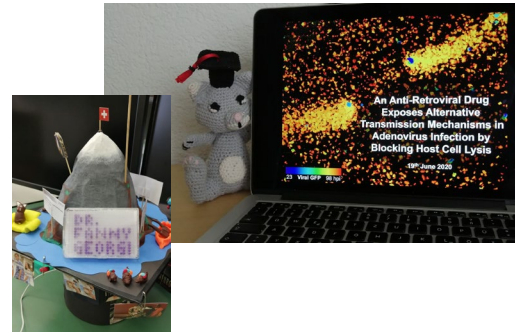


2008 — BSc — 2011 — MSc — 2014 2015 — PhD — PostDoc 2020–2021 — — — — —

Molecular Virology



University of
Zurich^{UZH}



Extra
Curricular

Fachschaft
MOLEKULARE
BIOTECHNOLOGIE



UT Health
San Antonio
Greehey Children's Cancer
Research Institute



MoBi
Alumni

swiss young
academy

life science zurich



MiM Microbiology
Immunology

scnat
akademie der naturwissenschaften
académie des sciences naturelles
swiss academy of sciences
accademia di scienze naturali

LS²
Life Sciences Switzerland

Swiss National
Science Foundation

swissuniversities actionuni

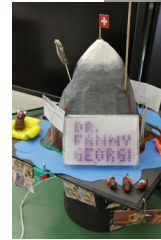
Fame Lab
TALKING SCIENCE



Methods

Curricular

Molecular Biotechnology (Drug Development)



Molecular Virology



University of
Zurich^{UZH}

?



2008 — BSc — 2011 — MSc — 2014 2015 — PhD — PostDoc 2020–2021 — — — —

PR
representation
networking
funding acquisition
budgeting
intersectional collaboration
strategic thinking
lateral leadership

strategic planning
mentoring
representation
event management
stakeholder management
policy making
knowledge management
lobbying
project management
science communication
public speaking

Hidden skills
+ network

Extra
Curricular

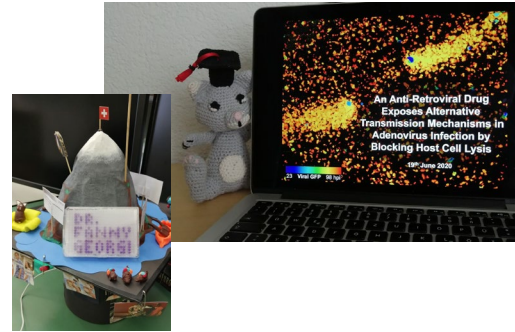
Methods

Molecular Biotechnology (Drug Development)

Curricular



Extra
Curricular



Molecular Virology



University of
Zurich^{UZH}



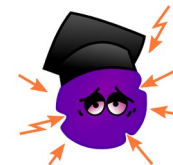
ETH zürich



swissuniversities



swissuniversities actionuni



Sidebar

Head Faculty and Professorial Affairs, Faculty of Science, UZH

- Permanent position at Dean's office
- Main responsibility for professorial appointments and promotions
- Across science – from anthropology to astrophysics
- Establishing and developing processes, regulations and infrastructure
- Ensuring governance, quality and schedule
- Fostering participation and cooperative decision-making
- Navigating complex dossiers
- Instilling strategic values



Sidebar

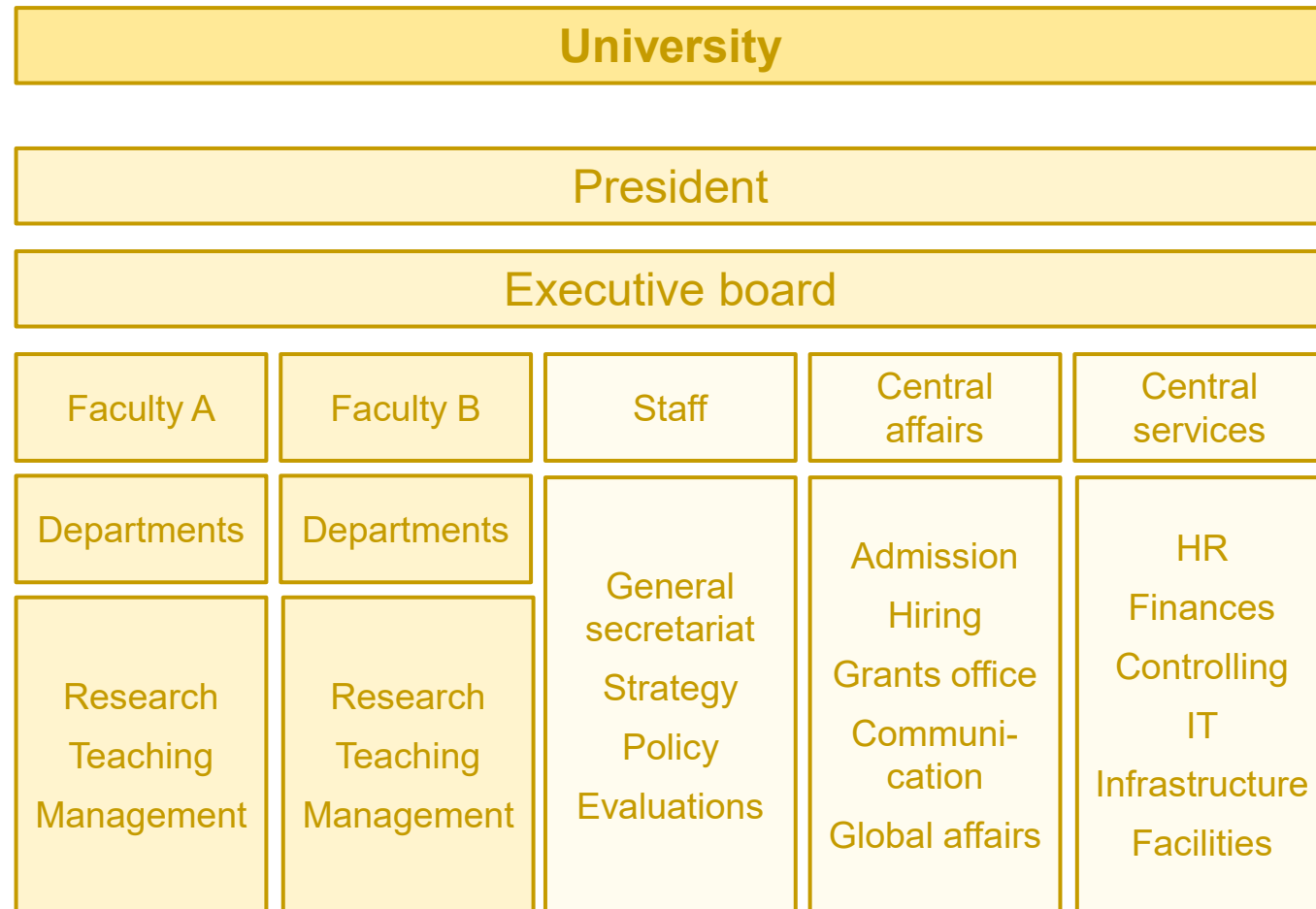
Scientific Officer, Strategy Processes Unit, SNSF

- Permanent staff position
- Main responsibility is strategy planning
 - Long-term strategic development
 - Short-term strategic and financial decisions
- Across all domains of research
- Establishing and developing roles and processes
- Ensuring governance, quality and schedule
- Fostering participation and cooperative decision-making
- Navigating complex dossiers
- Instilling strategic values



Results

Organigram of a public university



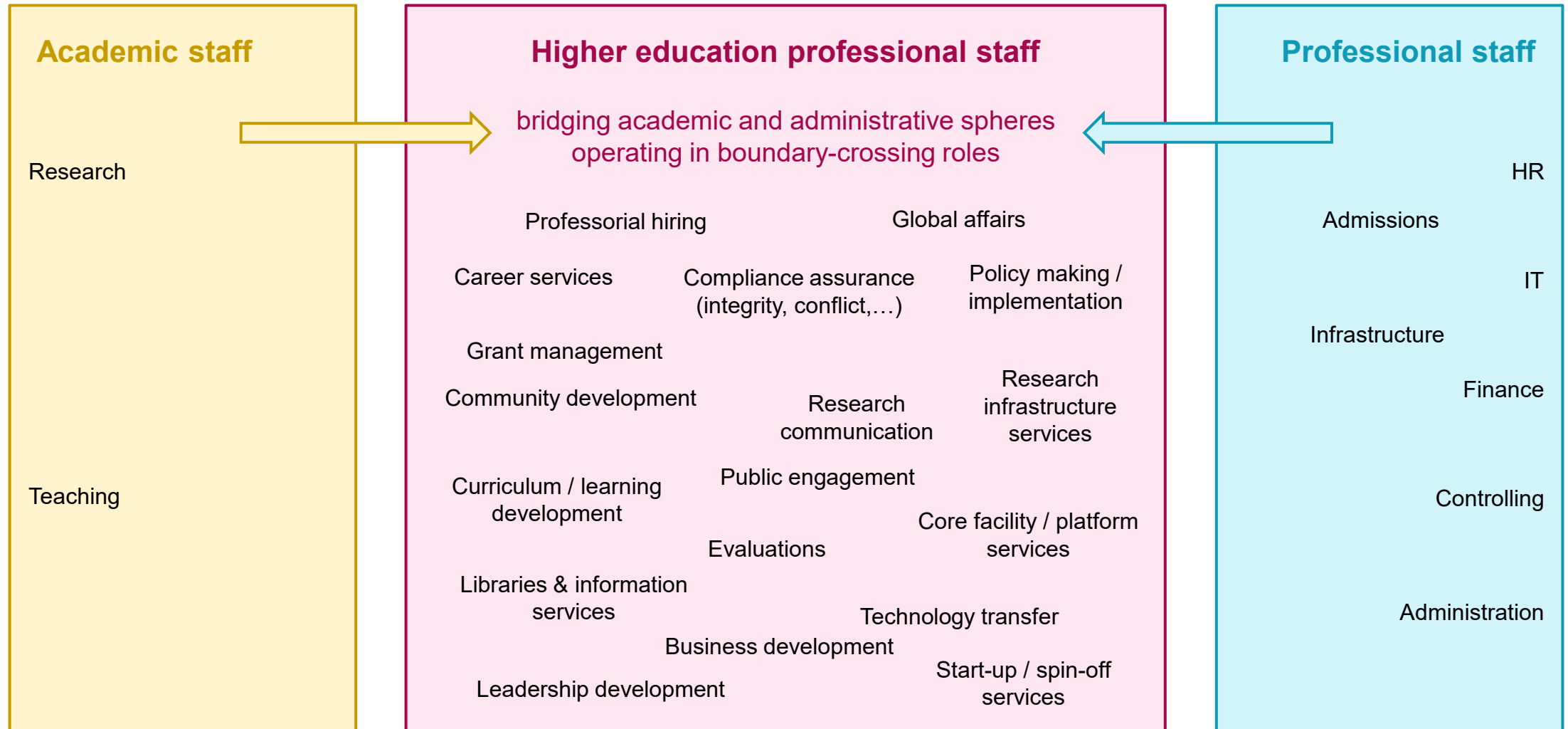
Oversight bodies

Parliament

Board of the University

Results

“Third space”



Conclusion

Roles in the “third space”



Conclusion

Skills and qualities of the “third space”

- ~~Applied scientific specialist skills~~
- Academic experience to understand sector
- Ability communicate and translate beyond the academic silo
- Collaborative and relation-building personality
- Service and community mind-set
- Operational skills and project management
- Openness to adapt and navigate ambiguity

→ **Skills and qualities you inherently have or picked up “along the way”**

Conclusion

Landscape

higher education sector



universities, universities
of applied science, ...

research sector



research institutes,
facilities, platforms, ...

non-profit sector



associations, networks,
foundations, agencies,
NGOs, museums, think
tanks, academies,
agencies, political parties,
libraries, journals ...

government sector



public administration,
departments, regulatory
agencies, offices, ..

Discussion

Considerations

Opportunities

- Work for a common good rather than a CEO
- Essential for function and success of institutions (but not exempt from financial pressures)
- More stable / long-term positions
- Less geographic mobility required
- Higher flexibility regarding institutions, departments, fields, ...
- **Super interesting!**

Challenges

- Less visible and credited
- Less appreciated and recognized
- Unclear / less formalistic job requirements
- **National / local languages often a must**
- Less clearly defined job profile (role, competences, responsibilities, ...)
- Lack of dedicated position types / salary classes
- Abundance and lack of training opportunities
- No obvious / uniform career ladder

Outlook

Your next steps

Be confident:

- Reflect on what drives **you**, what matters to **you**, and what **you** want to achieve
- Map out your “hidden skills and network”

Be curious:

- Discover roles at your institution
- Take advantage of courses on “transferrable skills”
- Get involved outside of the lab and build a network of great people (you secretly admire)
- Learn about their and other’s roles, career path and job titles (LinkedIn is a good start)
- Share where you want to get so others can help you find it
- Non-Swiss: Familiarize yourself with Swiss immigration and labour law
- **Be your authentic self**

«Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.»

Albert Einstein

