**New Faculty Institute 2016**

**Panelists: Matthew Desmond, Karine A. Gibbs, Anupam Bapu Jena**

ELIZABETH ANCARANA: Hi. I'm Elizabeth Ancarana, assistant provost for faculty development and diversity. And I echo Drew and Judy's comments in welcoming you here today. It's so wonderful to see you all. And we're looking forward to hearing what your colleagues have to say in terms of advice on navigating your scholarly life and other parts of your life while you're here at Harvard.

So let's turn to our panelists, associate professors at Harvard. And so we have Anupam Bapu Jena from the medical school. We have Karine Gibbs from the faculty of Arts and Sciences. And we have Matthew Desmond, also from the faculty of Arts and Sciences.

I'm going to give just a very brief introduction. More detailed biographies are also in your packets. I'll start with Bapu.

Bapu Jena is the Ruth L. Newhouse associate professor of health care policy at the Harvard Medical School, and also a physician in the Department of Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. He's also a faculty research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research. As an economist and a physician, Bapu's research involves several areas of health economics and policy, including the economics of physician behavior and the physician workforce, health care productivity, medical malpractice, and the economics of medical innovation.

Bapu is going to focus his remarks on helpful hints for setting priorities, pleasures of your faculty position at Harvard, and disseminating research findings publicly. But before his remarks, I'll just introduce each of you. And then we'll get started.

Karine Gibbs is an associate professor in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Her research examines the interface of two emerging fields-- sociomicrobiology and bacterial cell biology. Karine's group is uncovering how the molecular mechanisms that underlie the ability of cells to discriminate self from non-self lead to emergent group behaviors such as social motility.

Karine is going to talk about getting settled at Harvard and getting settled in the Cambridge area and navigating one's department, as well as Harvard as a larger university.

Matthew Desmond, also in the FAS, is the John L. Lobe associate professor of the social sciences and co-founder of the Justice and Poverty Project. Matt has written extensively on race and severe deprivation in America. His latest work draws on years of embedded field work to document the depth and ramification of the affordable housing crisis.

Matt will talk about finding and obtaining research funding, advice on publishing your work, and navigating dual career and work life matters.

So each of our panelists will talk for about 10 minutes. And then we'll have time for questions at the end. Bapu.

ANUPAM BAPU JENA: OK. Thank you for having me. I appreciate it. I'll start by saying that I was here not that long ago. I joined the faculty in 2009. So it's little bit awkward for me to be sharing advice. But that's never stopped me before.

So you know, I think what I do is pretty interesting. But when I'm listening with everybody else, it's like, man. Why didn't I study economics and biology? This is the wrong way.

So I made a note actually that the coolest occupation or area of interest was earthquakes and ground motion. I mean, ground motion. That sounds very different than health care policy.

So just to give you a quick bio of myself. I grew up in Richmond, Virginia. I went to MIT for college. It's only because I didn't get into Harvard.

I studied economics and biology. And I knew I wanted to go to medical school. And at that time, I thought, well, anybody who wants to go to medical school can't just study biology. You must study humanities. So there's a humanities that people call economics. It's not really humanities. But it was at MIT.

And so I studied it. And I was always planning to do a Ph.D. in basic science and go to medical school. And when I went to University of Chicago to interview for their MD Ph.D. program, the person who I met with said, well, I saw you studied economics. Maybe you'd be interested in doing a Ph.D. in economics instead.

And that was a decision I made basically in the winter of 2000 almost, and started my training there. And I finished up in 2009. So I took a year off to work at the Rand Corporation between, and then came to Mass General Hospital where I did a residency in internal medicine.

And that was three years. And I joined the faculty in health care policy in 2012. I spent most of my time doing health economics research. And I'll give you a flavor of what I do just to inform my comments, I think.

And I teach in Harvard College a class on health care quality in America and the global health and health policy track. And I also work about six to eight weeks at Mass General Hospital as an internist. I used to work on Thursday nights. And so I would have told you if you have any problems on Thursday nights, don't come to the hospital, because you'll have a guy like me who doesn't work that much in the hospital taking care of you.

But I'm better now. No. So I was asked to talk to you about priority-setting, public dissemination of research, and the pleasures of being on the faculty here. Let me just start with the pleasures of being on the faculty here.

This is an amazing place to be. I mean, I literally have no complaints. And if you were to ask me in a non-public setting, I would tell you the exact same thing.

It's probably very institution-dependent, very department-dependent, very chair-dependent, very cofaculty-dependent. But I sit in a department where we have economists, physician researchers, sociologists, biostatisticians. And I look forward to going to work every day.

And we have a two-year-old daughter. And that's not why I look forward to going to work every day, because you know, about 7:00, 7:30 diaper has to get changed. So normally I try to leave around 7:00.

And it's because in our department we have lunch almost three or four times a week. So there's a few familiar faces, like Mark Sheppard, who's joined us for lunch in our department. And I think that sense of community within the department, at least in health care policy where I sit, is really something else, because we all love going to work. We like working on lab benches, writing papers, giving talks, all that stuff. That's kind of standard across all the disciplines.

But what isn't standard is the community that you're able develop in your own department. And so I would say as young faculty or junior faculty, most of you are, starting in your department, sometimes that sense of community isn't always there, because people are doing their own thing and living their own lives. And it takes a fresh face to come in there and bring people together to do what they normally would like to do, which is hang out and have lunch together. But they don't do it because there's no one there to kind of be that glue.

So for some of you, that will be a natural role. And I would encourage it. For me, that was my role. And I relish it, because it's the thing that I look forward to most every day.

And by the way, I'm happy to talk to you offline about any of these things as well, and any questions you might have in particular. My wife works at Brigham and Women's Hospital. So she's also on the faculty. But she's a non-quad based faculty.

We live in Brookline. So I can talk to you about any of those related issues.

And in terms of priority setting, that's a difficult question to answer. And I think it's going to differ, obviously, across the broad disciplines that you're working in. So my comments won't really be basic science-focused. Though I would say I'm basically a scientist. But they won't be lab science-focused.

But to give you a flavor of the kind of work I do, so I'm an economist and a physician. I study health economics. Most of the questions that I study are related to things that I see in clinical practice, but not all.

So we had a paper about a year and a half ago that looked at what happens to patients who are hospitalized when cardiologists are attending major cardiology conferences, like the American Heart Association or American College of Cardiology meetings. It turns out these patients actually get better care. Or better outcomes.

They get different care. But they have better outcomes. Which is kind of paradoxical, but was in a sense based on some of the things that I had seen when I was a resident and MGH is seeing how the care patterns change when some of the more senior cardiologists were out of town.

Now I bring up that example because it highlights what's important to me when it comes to priority-setting for ideas and papers. So I kind of have a few criteria.

So one is it has to be as general interest as possible. And I know that's very difficult to do, depending on what discipline you're in, because what is general interest may not be general interest to the lay public. But would be general interest, obviously, to the scholars that you're trying to target. But no matter what, that should always be on your mind. It certainly is always on my mind.

And it's the question of if I talk to someone on the street, are they going to understand what I'm saying? Are they going to be interested in what I'm saying? Are they going to care about it?

So for example, I heard something about bacteria living on the body and microbiomes. That's something that everybody would understand. Now I'm sure that what you do is more detail than that. But it's something that someone can grab onto.

And so when you're thinking about priority-setting and disseminating your research, I think it's always important to keep in mind what will be of most interest. The second thing is-- and these are all things that you would have learned in your training-- is pick things that are aspirational, but also doable. And know when to quit.

For me in my discipline-- and those of you who are economists or social scientists-- you know that you can often figure out pretty quickly whether something's going to work or not. And when it's not working, it might be a terrific idea. Just quit. So that's important, I think, for priority-setting.

And the other thing, and the last thing is it goes along the lines of picking things that are general interest. I think it's important to pick things that are creative and innovative. So I don't want to comment too much on my own field. But I sit in a field where a lot of the analyses are basically-- or a lot of the papers and studies are designed to try to understand what is the impact of policy x on outcome y.

So what is the effect of an accountable care organization, which is a certain way that hospitals are now structured in the US. What's the effect of a certain type of hospital structure on patient outcomes. That's interesting. That's clearly relevant for policy.

But it's not science in the same way that most of you are doing science, which is kind of coming up with ideas that are creative and pushing the envelope. And so I would say for all of you, when you're thinking about your priorities, make that a priority. Make what you do not only be of interest to others-- that's a key thing. But also as much as possible, make it be creative. So that people look at you, say, wow. I wish that I had that idea.

So for example, when Mark gave his job market paper a few years ago, I thought to myself, wow. First I wish I understood what he was doing. But I wish I had that idea. So that's my comments about priority-setting.

And the last thing I want to talk about is how to disseminate your work. I think this is really difficult. But a lot of you are going to do work that the public will be interested in. it'll be in the New York Times and things like that.

But the question is, how do you get to the point where you're writing a paper and publishing it in, let's say if you're lucky, PNAS or something like that, and then getting someone to cover it. What I have found useful is developing a network of journalist contacts. I think that's for me, at least, the way that I've operated.

There's things like Twitter, which a lot of junior faculty and senior faculty are on. And I think that can be a terrific way to kind of broaden your reach and broaden your appeal. But there are some obviously things you have to be careful about when doing that.

But when it comes to doing research and trying to disseminate in a public way, the typical things I think we would all understand-- going and giving talks. But the nonstandard things, the things that kind of elevate people to a different level is, is their work appearing in major news outlets and things like that.

And so what I would say is the first time something that you write gets picked up, keep the name of that reporter, that journalist. And keep a list. And continue to e-mail those people any time you think that you have something that's of relevance. That's the first thing.

Second thing is, if you ever see this journalist writing on something that relates to something that you have some content expertise in, shoot them an email and say, hi. This is a terrific article. If you have any other further questions on this issue and need clarification, please shoot me an email, because I know x, y, and z. And what you'll find is that they will increasingly reach out to you, because these reporters generally have a set of contacts that they like to rely on for kind of broad questions to get a handle on what's going on in the particular space that they're writing about.

Third is, it's not a bad idea for you to reach out to people who you've never had any interaction with. So for example, suppose someone writes an article in the New York Times that has some direct relevance to your work. It wouldn't be unreasonable to send that journalist and email and say, look. I'm working in similar areas. This is a really interesting article. Happy to chat further, if you like.

And what you will find is that like where I sit, I used to think-- and I still do think-- that journalists are this prized possession. That they're not interested in talking to me. They're not interested in talking to you.

Turns out it's the complete opposite. They are highly interested in talking to you. And in fact, when they email you, it's almost like they're trying to get an appointment with the President of the United States. They're like, oh, are you available at any time? What they don't realize is that I would stop changing the diaper right there and pick up the phone to make--

So you know, there's a lot of deference that you have being in your position. So take advantage of it. So I'll stop there. But happy to answer any questions related to that.

KARINE GIBBS: Hi. I'm Karine Gibbs. As Elizabeth said, I'm an associate professor in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology. And I'm a microbiologist. And so specifically I'm interested in bacteria, how do bacteria populations grow, how do they interact with each other.

So today I said I'd talk about navigating Harvard and Boston and Cambridge after living on the West Coast for 10 years, which is a bit of a change. And then I can also tell you a bit about navigating your department. And I can answer any questions afterwards.

So the easy one is navigating Boston. Judy's office is wonderful. I think that was probably the best thing I ever did was getting to know people in the office of development and faculty development and diversity. They were very helpful for both child care issues, as well as just general getting to know university. And the handbook is actually really, really helpful, which came out when I was a junior faculty just starting.

The other thing that really helpful is I learned to bike. And I didn't learn to bike as a seven-year-old. I learned to bike as a 20-year-old. And now I bike a lot.

I live over in Brookline. And it is a great way that if you work in Cambridge and live elsewhere, or you have go to medical school, I have a lot of appointments over there. The M2 is going to make you mad. The bus is going make you mad. The T's gonna drive you crazy.

Take out a bicycle. Get a helmet. It's worth it. It's really worth getting a nice bicycle. Let me put it that way.

Things I wish I had done when I first came to Harvard is that I wish I'd paid more attention to what the opportunities are for faculty in terms of housing. Cause I think that can make a huge difference in your quality of life. We are very happy with our apartment, our condo, in Brookline.

But I do know I have colleagues who had a harder time settling into their place. So that's worth taking some time and thinking about your living situation. Because more than likely, you'll be in there for the entire junior faculty position. And your home is really your escape from lab.

I run the lab. So I have 6 people who work with me full-time. So when I come to the office, it's like having 6 children who are constantly talking to you. And then you go home. And I have two kids. And they constantly talk to you. So there is no quiet.

The other thing I wish I'd done with navigating to Boston is that I'd been here as an undergrad. And then I was on the West Coast for 10 years. And actually it's taken me about six years to get used to all of the cultural differences between the West Coast and the East Coast.

And there are subtle things. For example, sometimes people don't smile to you on the street. While on the West Coast, they constantly smile at you. It's OK to smile back. And it's OK to be the one to first smile and say hello.

And I've actually-- by doing that-- I've actually gotten to know a lot of people both in my local community in Brookline, but also just here around Harvard. And it's amazing how the support staff at Harvard-- so not just the administrators in your department-- but I'm also talking about the custodians and the security guards and all of those other people who are part of the support. They can be very, very helpful.

For example, when a pipe breaks in your lab, you have to call someone. They usually come up more quickly if they know who you are. And so those kind of relationships do matter. And I think it's really worth putting time and effort into that.

In terms of navigating your department. The number one thing I could say is get to know the senior faculty better. And more importantly, make sure that there are one or two senior faculty who really know your research and who can talk to you about your group.

And so they can talk to you about group dynamics. They can talk to you about your research. You can go to them for questions about talking to journalists or other things. They can be basically new mentors.

I found that to be very useful and helpful. And especially when I myself have a hard time advocating for things that I need or that I have questions about, they will often advocate on my behalf. And that's really important as a junior person.

I don't really have any other prepared comments. But I'm happy taking questions at the end.

MATTHEW DESMOND: I can't believe you're smiling at people. That's mind-blowing. My name's Matt Desmond. I teach in sociology and social studies here.

It's wonderful to see my colleagues [INAUDIBLE] and [INAUDIBLE]. And I'm so excited to meet many of you as the years go forward. I study poverty in America. I use statistics to study that. I use ethnography to study that. And I just published a book this year called "Evicted," which is about the affordable housing crisis and families getting thrown from their homes.

I've been asked to talk about funding and publication. And then, I got the work-life balance question. I don't know how I got this one. But I got the work-life balance question.

All right. So funding. A few things. One is when you're looking for funding, look here too. I don't know if you heard, but like Harvard has some resources.

And a lot of times there's wonderful ways to kick start a research project that's here. Apply for the Milton grant now. And then as you're thinking about ideas, start having conversations. And sometimes those conversations lead to resources that you can acquire in-house. And so just kind of keep your eye out for that.

ELIZABETH ANCARANA: [INAUDIBLE]

MATTHEW DESMOND: Oh, the Milton grant-- at least when I was a young assistant professor-- was a grant for about $40,000. And you apply based on a two-page application. So it's a very little sunk costs. And most folks that I know applied get it. And it's there to really help jump-start your research platform here.

So I think that the advice about cultivating relationships with journalists, also apply at the foundations, in my experience. And I think that starting to think about the foundation world and who's in it that you'd really like to talk to is something that I have learned a lot from. Not only because foundations can be inspired and support your research, but also because there are some truly brilliant and amazing people working in foundations today.

And so reaching out to people in NSF or NIH or the Ford Foundation or MacArthur has been something that I have learned a lot from. And sometimes just small conversations have led to fairly significant research grants based on those relationships. So I think the cultivating relationships his interesting and important.

And also asking them questions, not just like pitching to them. Like, what do you guys think we need to learn about microbiology in the next 15 years? What do you think are the most pressing policy questions facing the nation? And I would encourage you to go in like that as well.

Don't under ask. I got a grant last year, a million bucks from NSF. And I thought that was enough. And it's not. It wasn't.

And I think I under asked. And for me, moving from a grad student to a faculty member meant asking for a lot bigger things than I was used to. And I think that just be very clear about what you need to do the work, and ask for that. And don't negotiate with yourself, I guess.

And I think ask for big things and innovative things. I think that's great advice. And I think in the foundation world, anyways, there's a lot of resources out there looking for great ideas. And I think going in and pitching a bold vision is something that a lot of foundations are keen on right now. And that goes from the Ford Foundation's big push on narrative change to MacArthur's Million Dollar Grant competition right now.

I also think that this sounds really weird. I don't know if you guys agree with this. But money's not as hard as time. Time's hard.

And so I think that sometimes we can get a lot of resources. But the thing we really need is time. And I think that kind of leads into the second thing, which is about publishing your work or advance on working.

And many of you are established scholars. And I feel that we should be switching seats here on this one. But just a few reflections for me, the first one is just do the work, which sounds really trite and easy. But it's not sometimes. It's not.

And there's a lot of noise, especially when you're in a place like this, when you do have journalists calling often, and you have invitations coming often. And you have opportunities that many of our colleagues in other places would love to have, you will have in abundance.

And I think that that's exciting. But it also encroaches on time to just put on the pith helmet and go down into the trench and do the work. And I think that so doing the work means saying no to really cool opportunities sometimes. And doing the work means when, for me anyways, when other schools have come asking questions, I've said no, because I think that's taking me away from the work.

And so I think that you're the only one that cares about your time in a way. You know. And so I think finding ways to protect that time and focus is really important.

The students here are really awesome and amazing. And so I think working with students has been a joy and a pleasure for me. When I came here as an assistant professor, I wondered, would any students work with me? Why would they work with me? There's all these famous people here.

But they did. They did. And I started here with a lab of six graduate students. And we got some stuff done. And in my experience, incorporating students into the broader vision of your academic work matters more than paying them a certain way or in hours or publications.

I think they want to work on work that matters and work that's meaningful. And I think that we're here because we burn for a certain question. And I think that the more that we can bring our students into those passions, we can see a payoff in coin for pushing research agendas forward.

I published a book earlier this year that's gotten some public attention. And I've been fielding some questions about writing for the public. And I think that I cringe a little bit about the distinction between public works and academic works.

I think a lot of us here write really rigorous things that also reach broad audiences. But I also think that for those of us just starting off, it might be advantageous to take care of home first, to dig deep down into your research, both for professional reasons, and because when you engage in that public conversation, it's kind of like another job.

And so I think that taking care of home first, establishing a deep-rooted research agenda, and then thinking about ways to reach out and engage in the public conversation is the track that I've followed.

OK. Work-life balance. Anyone want to cover this? Anyone?

So I've been married for 12 years. My wife also works at Harvard. We have two young kids-- 6 and 2. Both of my kids have gone to the Harvard child care daycare centers, which are wonderful resources here.

And so if any of you have been thinking about that, or if any of you are family planning, maybe don't hesitate to bring that up early. Like, I might want have a kid in five years. Like, you should talk to someone about the childcare centers, because they're in demand. They're in high demand.

But they're wonderful. And I think that that's just one resource that Harvard has for those of us that have families. So Harvard will pay for your kids to go to conferences with you sometimes.

I had to do research projects in London and in Nigeria and in Brazil this summer. And I took my family to London with me. And Harvard helped with that a little bit.

And so if you have this kind of thought-- and I think this goes for work-life balance-- but it also is like a general point. Where it's like, I really have this problem, or I have this thing I'd like to solve.

A lot of resources here that have-- like, we've probably already thought of that. Like someone at Harvard's thought of that already. And sometimes there's resources for that. So I think incorporating partners and kids into the work-- not only what we do, but actually going places with us-- is something that this university and I'm really grateful for has made a priority.

I also think that when we talk about work-life balance, we often focus on the family side of things. But there's also work balance things that I think are also important. And those are like cultivate relationships with people outside of your department. So a lot of my closest friends here are folks that I met at this very orientation. And we still hang out and have drinks and have each other over for dinner.

I have wonderful friends in archeology and English and other places all over the university. And I think that's really important, because cultivating relationships with folks in your department is obviously important. You see those folks a lot.

And I think that cultivating relationships with friends outside the department is really healthy. I also think that I've benefited from folks that have been around here for a long time. And there's these amazing minds that are around Harvard, around Cambridge.

So one of my favorite people at Harvard was a man named Dan Aaron, who just passed away this summer. And I think Dan lived to be 104. And he studied American civilization, American literature. And he had these amazing stories about meeting Rob Ellison and all these incredible people, and had this amazing perspective on changes at this university in American life.

So sometimes I would just pop by Dan's office and sit down and like walk out two hours later. And I think that cultivating those just purely intellectual relationships are equally as important than cultivating relationships with senior colleagues or other folks in your field.

I also ask senior colleagues about how they do it, how they balance work-family life. I just had a conversation about this the other day.

So this is the thing I kind of fell into. This is my last point. Which is like, when I started here, it was kind of like work, kids, work, kids.

And like the kids-- I think I fell into a habit of prioritizing kids and work. And I wasn't there at all. Right. Like I had no self-care really.

So I would exercise and stuff. But that was just kind of like another thing to tick off the list. And some senior colleague-- [INAUDIBLE] actually-- pulled me aside and was like, I did that too. And this is what it cost me.

And I really listened to that advice. And so now I'm trying to do things like run more, or carve out time that's not just work and kids, but also for me. And I think that having young kids and having a demanding career, that's kind of hard to do sometimes. But I'm giving it a go. I'm giving it a go, anyways.

All right. Is that OK? OK. Thanks for listening.