

Success Story: Noman Siddiqi



Noman Siddiqi
Senior Lab Director
Immunology and Infectious Diseases

Background

Noman Siddiqi started working at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health as a Postdoc Fellow in 2002. In 2006, he was thinking about leaving Academia to start his career within the industry. During his search, he was approached by his mentor who had asked him if he would consider assisting them with converting the lab into a service center. Noman really enjoyed research and was not familiar with the administrative end of the lab setting but decided to give it a try for at least a year. While he was in this role, some of Noman's responsibilities included: compliance for the high containment lab, permits to operate the lab and regulations. He worked with a very supportive and talented team that he learned a great deal from especially with the administrative responsibilities.

After being in this role for about two years, Noman approached his mentor to seek advice on whether he should stay within his existing role or to restart his search for a role within the industry. Noman was surprised how much he enjoyed the administrative tasks but still wondered if he was making the right decision for his career. Noman continued to impress his department with all of his accomplishments and in return, they continued expanding his responsibilities that were more complex and critical to the operations of the lab. Because his role expanded, Noman decided to stay in the role.

Noman has taken advantage of several training opportunities and resources within Harvard including the Sponsored Programs Administration documents found on Eureka, Webinars, Lynda.com and trainings through Center for Workplace Development (CWD). Most recently Noman has taken the management trainings offered by CWD. In addition to the many courses available internally, his department has also been very supportive with external trainings including safety and laboratory compliance courses, conferences and workshops. Outside of

education and coaching from his mentor, Noman believes he has been successful because of the team behind him and his family.

When asked about a risk he took during his career at the School, Noman stated that he took a chance staying in the Administrator role. He had little experience in this area and it took him further away from the bench work that he really enjoyed and was familiar with. As a Research Scientist, Noman never saw himself in an administrative position and was worried that he might not be successful. Through the years, he realized that he was still participating in the science that he really enjoyed but was also challenged with learning new things. Noman says that the balancing of both the science and the administration of the lab was difficult at times but having mentors and great support from the department really allowed him to succeed.

Noman's advice on career development to the community? Noman believes that you should challenge yourself and never say no to a new opportunity until you have really thought it through. In the beginning of his career, Noman had a focus on research only and did not consider other opportunities out there. If he did not challenge himself and think outside the box, he would not be where he is today. Noman says that there are many opportunities at Harvard and it's a wise idea to take advantage of the trainings, talk to the right people and not be afraid to try new things.

What does Noman enjoy most about the School? Noman enjoys the atmosphere and the people most at Harvard. Noman says he has had such a great experience working for the School of Public Health and interacting with staff, faculty and students. He enjoys everyone's passion for public health and finds it to be a very enriching environment.