16| Professional Development: INS Leadership and Research Productivity – With Dr. Keith Yeates

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This is an audio transcription of an episode on the Navigating Neuropsychology podcast. Visit www.NavNeuro.com for the show notes or to listen to the audio. It is also available on the following platforms:

Speakers: Keith Yeates, Ryan Van Patten, John Bellone

🔊 **Intro Music** 00:00

Ryan Van Patten 00:17
Welcome, everyone, to Navigating Neuropsychology: A voyage into the depths of the brain and behavior. I'm Ryan Van Patten...

John Bellone 00:24

...and I'm John Bellone. Today we have a special episode of NavNeuro. Ryan and I recorded this conversation at the International Neuropsychological Society conference in New York City. We were lucky enough to snag a few minutes from today's guest, Dr. Keith Yeates, as well as Dr. Karen Postal whose episode will be airing on April 1.

Ryan Van Patten 00:45

Because we were in New York City, it was absolutely impossible to find a quiet and peaceful place for a podcast episode, as you might expect. So you'll probably notice some car horns and ambulance sirens in the background. I know that this absolutely kills John when there's so much as a mouse click or a sniffle which makes its way into the final version of the NavNeuro audio. [laughs]

John Bellone 01:07

[laughs]

Ryan Van Patten 01:08

But I'm reframing these sounds as the pleasant ambience of the Big Apple. So take it as a sign of the authenticity of our on-site recording, and let's all hope that John doesn't develop a full blown ulcer in response to a bit of background noise. [laughs]

John Bellone 01:22

[laughs] Yeah, well, only one of us has to spend hours editing out all of your mouse clicks, Ryan.

Ryan Van Patten 01:27

[laughs]

John Bellone 01:27

I can send you my medical bill for the ulcers. [laughs]

Today's guest, Dr. Keith Yates is a neuropsychologist. He's Head of the Department of Psychology, and Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics and Clinical Neurosciences at the University of Calgary, in Alberta, Canada. He has a 30 year track record of funded research and is incredibly prolific. According to SCOPUS, he is the most highly published investigator of pediatric TBI in the world over the last 10 years. We talked with him about his editorial experience and some of his other endeavors.

Keith has served as President of the Society for Clinical Neuropsychology of the APA. He's also the sitting President of the International Neuropsychological Society, INS. We thought that it would be especially timely and pertinent to have a conversation with Keith at INS about leadership and professional development and the scientific process. Keith is also an expert in pediatric concussion, and we made arrangements to talk to him about this topic in the near future. But Ryan and I both found our conversation to be incredibly engaging and educational, and we hope that you do as well.

I just want to give a quick thank you to the INS staff, in particular Stephanie Card, but also Chantal Marcks, and the executive directors. Everyone else at INS was just so incredibly supportive of NavNeuro at the recent meeting. We really, really appreciate it. And now we give you Keith Yeates.

🔊 **Transition Music** 03:04

John Bellone 03:15
So, Keith, welcome to NavNeuro. We are so excited to have you.

Keith Yeates 03:17
Thank you.

John Bellone 03:19
We thought it would be great to start off by asking you about your INS presidency. You're the sitting President right now, we're actually at your presidential meeting.

Keith Yeates 03:28
It's almost over. [laughs]

John Bellone 03:29
Yeah, yeah, right, INS 2019. So, it's all the more impressive because you've made the time to talk to us and you've got so many responsibilities. We're so appreciative. Although we are upset you didn't let us use your Presidential Suite to record this. [laughs]

Keith Yeates 03:44

We don't have a Presidential Suite, unfortunately. [laughs] I asked INS to comp me next year, but they didn't seem to want to do that, for some reason.

John Bellone 03:50

You know, get the perks. [laughs] So tell us a bit about how you came to be the INS President - your experiences so far in this position, what you've gotten done, what you hope to get done, those kinds of things.

Keith Yeates 04:03

Well, I mean, I was actually quite surprised, one, to be nominated, and then to be elected. I had told Erin Bigler, who I've worked with for a number of years, and I knew Erin was going to be the Chair of the Nomination Committee because the last duty a President has after they are done being President is to be the Chair of the Nomination Committee. So, I had told Erin - you know, I stepped away from the organizational stuff for a few years after my personal life went through a bit of tumult - I let him know, you know, "I feel like before I retire I should be on the board of INS." I hadn't yet. I've served in a lot of other organizations and I assumed I would get nominated for Member At Large. Then I got a phone call from Gordon Chelune, the Executive Director, saying I'd been nominated for President. Which, on the one hand, I was quite honored by, of course, but then I also knew that Glenn Smith was going to be the other nominee and I thought, "Well, okay, that's great, because I don't have to worry about winning."

Ryan Van Patten 05:01

[laughs]

Keith Yeates 05:02

So, I was actually really quite surprised - obviously, pleasantly surprised. Glenn's a terrific guy and I've known him for years and he would have made a great president as well. So, yeah, it was a bit of a surprise. Then you serve a three year term - you're President-Elect and then you're Incoming President. They kind of get you used to the Board and you're part of the officer's calls that happen roughly monthly.

You know, there were a couple things I wanted to accomplish or I hope to accomplish. You don't do any of this by yourself, obviously. I mean, the President can kind of push the ship in a slightly different direction, but you need the support of the rest of the Board, you need the support of the Executive Director. But the couple of things that I thought were important to try to do, one had to do with trying

to just continue to make the International Neuropsychological Society more truly international. You know, our membership is still 85 to 90% from North America. We don't want to lose any of those members, but we really need to do more, continue to do more, to reach out. I think we've done that in a number of ways in the last three years by establishing memorandums of understanding with other international organizations. Now we're in discussions with a lot of those organizations about a global congress of neuropsychology that wouldn't be led by INS, but we would be a partner with them. I think, historically, INS was "the" organization for a long time. But, unfortunately, because of that, they sometimes are a little heavy handed with nascent organizations in other parts of the world. I think we've really been working to really truly make the relationships more reciprocal, more partnerships. I think we've come a long way in that respect and that's perhaps most reflected most recently in our relationships to the major organizations in South America, where there had been actually a lot of hard feelings for a number of years. It's really nice to be seeing those relationships improving. And with the meeting coming up in Rio, I think that'll help.

The other thing that I'm excited about is I really felt like we weren't doing enough to really get people involved in INS from right from the beginning. We've established the Student Liaison Committee, which has done great things, but we sort of let people drop off at that point. So we're now going to establish an Early Career Professional Development Committee to try to make sure we bridge people into the organization. For a long time, and when I started out and was more junior, there was always a sense that you didn't have any place to get involved in INS because it was quite a sort of centralized management. There weren't a lot of committees. It was like, either you were on the Board or you didn't have any way to engage. I think we've now fleshed out the committee structure in a lot of ways because of the strategic plan. But I think we're beginning to realize we really need to bring in junior faculty, early career folks, onto committees early on. Get them into being part of the organization and wanting to contribute because they have great ideas. I mean, a lot of us are old Fuddy Duddies. Even with this podcast - I mean, what the heck is a podcast?

Ryan Van Patten 07:58
[laughs]

Keith Yeates 07:59
I think I've listened to half of one in my life. I don't have a Twitter account. I don't have a Facebook account. I'm one of those dinosaurs. I thought I was really cool

when I was younger because I knew how to tweak the system on a Mac. Back in the day, that was cool. But, we get behind in technology, we get behind on ideas. So it's really great to get younger, early career folks involved. So those are two of the things that I feel like we've made some progress on. There are a few others, but it's really an ongoing saga of implementing the new strategic plan that got rolled out about five years ago.

Ryan Van Patten 08:28

That's all great. I'm very much on board - both with the international piece and with getting students more involved. We've even come in contact with many since we've been working with the Student Liaison Committee at INS. So it's very clear how junior faculty, early career professionals, and students are more welcome in INS.

Keith Yeates 08:46

That's good. I hope that's the impression we've been giving because I think it's actually what we want to communicate.

John Bellone 08:52

The student presence has gone up quite a bit over the last year or so.

Keith Yeates 08:54

It seems like it. I think the big effort now is in parallel, to make that not exclusively North American.

Ryan Van Patten 09:01

Yeah.

Keith Yeates 09:01

And for students that are in the organization to realize that the training models in other countries are quite different in many cases from what they are in the US and Canada. So, again, it's a parallel challenge to get students because now there are major organizations in all these countries and then overarching organizations like FESN. So students have a choice, right, in what they're going to participate in. If we can find ways to really engage with students around the world, as best we can, I think that'll really, again, make the Society more likely to live up to his name.

Ryan Van Patten   09:34

Agreed. I'd like to come back to students in a moment. But, first, to round out the INS Presidency, you referenced steering the ship, I think that's a good analogy. It helps give me an idea as to exactly what the President does. But, maybe for our listeners, can you talk a little bit more about the responsibilities of the President of INS, specifically, and what your day-to-day looks like as the President?

Keith Yeates   09:58

If I had ever figured it out, I might be able to tell you.

Ryan Van Patten   10:00

[laughs]

Keith Yeates   10:02

I mean, a lot of it is kind of continuing ongoing efforts. So, we have a committee structure where there are four, or five now, standing committees that really initiate task forces coming out of the strategic plan. Each of them has certain responsibilities, or tasks, that were essentially given to them through the strategic plan. So part of the job is to monitor, to see, for example, "Is the Science Committee doing the things that we wanted it to do?" Like establishing the SIG, the Special Interest Groups. That was actually something I started because - I initially was the Head of the Science Task Force. I then identified a more junior person to hand that to, Holly Miskey, who is now the chair of the Science Committee. A big thing that they're trying to do is set up the SIGs and get them going. We now have three, we're hoping to have a lot more. She's also the - they're establishing travel grants for students or early career researchers from low and middle income countries to encourage more participation in each committee. There's an Education Committee, there's a Membership Committee. I think the other one was called Operations. So part of the job is that.

Another part of the job is around the treasury and the financial responsibilities. INS has over a million dollars on deposit in the bank. And, for many years, they were very conservative about management. They essentially had all that money in CDs, which means basically, we lost money over the years in some respects. So we've shifted that to, still stay conservative because we have a fiscal responsibility to the membership, but we have begun to take a portion of that and invest it in. Not risky investments, but somewhat more aggressive equity investments because the strategic plan is ambitious and it's associated with certain increased costs that we can't keep pulling out of our reserves. So that's a piece of it.

There's also just keeping track of the meetings. We make contracts with these meetings for five, six years in advance. And the planning for them starts roughly around two years - a real detailed plan starts about two years in advance. So every call we have - we would have a monthly officer's call with the three Presidents, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Executive Director - we always review the meetings. What is the status? We get reports on that. Like, we'll find out - I'll find out eventually, I won't be on the calls anymore. But, I'll get a report on how New York did, financially. What was the final tally in terms of attendees? How did we do cost-expense wise? The North American meetings are profit generators for the Society. It's actually one of the, aside from dues, a most major source of income. So, we depend on them a lot. We want them to be really good. I mean, of course I'm biased - I think this was a fabulous meeting. And, of course, it doesn't hurt that it's New York City, and that's why we got a record attendance. But I think we're continuing a trend in terms of trying to get speakers, for example, who aren't the usual INS folks. People from other areas, neuroscientists and others that stretch us a bit instead of just hearing the same old, same old.

Ryan Van Patten 12:57
I love that.

Keith Yeates 12:58
So there's a part of that. The President does usually shape two or three initiatives that they just personally value. So, the early career thing was something I thought was important. I didn't mention, we were also looking into childcare. Because it's a big deal now for parents, especially mothers but dads too, who have young children. It can be hard to come to a meeting - even if you can get there, then you have a young child. There's a lot of interest right now in trying to make it easier for parents to bring kids to the meetings. We had already had rooms set aside for breastfeeding mothers, but we've looked into what childcare options there are and we're going to be, I think, rolling out that possibility, at least at the North American meeting. So there's certain pet initiatives that the President takes on. But a lot of it is just to monitor that things are progressing. When I took over officially as President, I had a list of things that came out of the Prague meeting, and the previous meeting, and I would just go back to them each time and make sure that we were keeping things going.

And then the other thing are things that happen just every now and then. Some of them are crises. Some of them are just things that have to be dealt with that the

Executive Director gets in touch, like, "Oh, we've been asked to get a memorandum of understanding with this organization. What do you think? Is it appropriate? Do we bring it to the Board?" So they're sort of sitting things that are standard, and then there's just stuff that comes up on a day-by-day basis.

Ryan Van Patten 14:21
That's really helpful. For our listeners, can you talk briefly about the strategic plan?

Keith Yeates 14:26
Yeah, that was developed - I'm trying to remember exactly which meeting, I think it was Sydney. There was a sense that INS really needed to reinvent itself a bit. And, I and many others, while we are very loyal to INS felt that it had become a bit stultified and needed to move into the 21st century. We now compete with a lot more organizations and often for less money because people don't get the kind of academic support or monies they used to. We really wanted to try to make the organization more international, more responsive to the members in terms of providing them with benefits, more visible, hopefully internationally, both in terms of promoting science but just raising the recognition of neuropsychology as a legitimate area of scientific inquiry. So they hammered it out - and I say "they" because I wasn't involved in the original development of the plan - a set of goals in terms of education and membership and science and so forth. That really was a cascading effect where I think we've seen a lot of changes in INS for the good in the last five years. People have taken that idea seriously - whether it's increasing our international representation in partnership with other organizations, whether it's beginning to develop new educational opportunities, like the videos that they've done of the senior old fogies like me, whether it be creating the SIGs. We're really trying to find ways that the members - and hopefully it's not just us off the top of our head. I mean, we're trying to listen to the membership when they say they want certain things from the Society. Because for too long, INS was really defined by the meetings and the journal, right? It's no small thing. I mean, they're great. The meetings are terrific. I've always loved coming - I see all my friends, I get to present my science. And the journal, I think, has been a high quality journal all along. But you just can't rest on those laurels anymore. It's not enough. So that's really what the strategic plan was meant to do - was keep this Society alive, make it more functional for members, make people want to keep coming back and keep their membership for years and years.

John Bellone 16:27

You said at the beginning that you were just nominated for this position, and you were surprised, pleasantly surprised, that you were elected. Was there anything that you did that led you to that position? And along that vein, what advice would you give trainees and early career professionals who are interested in leadership positions in the field?

Keith Yeates 16:49

I mean, I had done a lot of organizational stuff by the time I got to take a leadership role for INS. So I'd been President of Division 40, or what's now called the Society for Clinical Neuropsychology. I'd been the Secretary for ABCN. I'd been the President of APPCN. I like leadership. I enjoy at least the illusion of control and the feeling that you're making a difference. But a lot of it just comes from putting yourself out there. I mean, I think I started with Division 40, I offered to be on a program committee. I started there. I wound up being Program Chair. I don't say "no" very often, and I probably need to. I keep telling all my trainees to develop that habit, I'm not modeling it very well.

John Bellone 17:32

[laughs]

Keith Yeates 17:34

But, when things came along - I'm a big believer in serendipity. When I look at my career, a lot of the best things that happened to me were not planned. Even neuropsychology was not planned. I got to Boston for internship and ran into Jane Bernstein and went, "Oh, this is really cool." There was no neuropsychology at Chapel Hill. We just had Geri Dawson join the faculty right as I was leaving. Geri is a neuropsychologist who does autism work so I never really had an exposure to her. I'd had some really good psychobiology with Gilbert Gottlieb, who's famous for his stuff. But, you know, there was no true neuropsychology. So even, you know, just even starting that and I can give multiple examples. I always tell people to be open to opportunities. Not be so focused on your plan that you don't see this thing over here that might take your plan off in a little bit different direction but a tremendous chance to do something really cool.

I think a lot of leadership is wanting to be involved and willing to spend the time to do it. Put in some work and build a bit of a reputation as somebody who does what they say they're going to do and follows through when they get the chance. And, some of it, too - I also tell younger or early career folks - is to cultivate contacts. I

mean neuropsychology is still a very small field, though less small than it used to be. So, who you know, and your ability to use contacts - your mentors and your advisors - to connect you to other people is another big way of doing that. Because that's how they find out about you, right? "I got this great student who wants to be involved. Will you put them on the Program Committee?" Sometimes it's a little bit too much insider stuff in neuropsychology and we all know that. But, like any part of life, it's partly who you know and it's partly what you know. And if you can put those together, that's really, I think, the way to begin to get involved at the ground level.

Ryan Van Patten 19:18
It's a great way to think about it. Specifically for INS, any advice? Say there's a grad student who wants to get involved in INS leadership, do you have any particular recommended path for that? Would that be the Student Liaison Committee as a stepping stone or any other path?

Keith Yeates 19:32
I think at a graduate student level, it certainly would be the SLC as the place to start. One of the challenges for the SLC is that their leadership is only really around for a couple of years and then they're off to postdoc or faculty position or a job. I think that that's actually an opportunity though, because the leadership of SLC is turning over all the time. There are lots of opportunities to get involved there. And, you know, you earn a bit of a name doing that and that makes it more likely that people are going to think of you for other things as you move further along in the career path. But again, I think that the Early Career Development Committee will give people another chance to move from SLC into other leadership roles. There's a lot we can do in early career, we're actually a bit behind other organizations in terms of developing that. Because if you look at APA and NAN and some other organizations, they've had EC stuff going for a long time. One of the things you see if you look at these organizations is their numbers have been dwindling over the years, and it's partly because your generation aren't joiners in the way that our generation was. It was just, "Oh, yeah, of course, you'll join APA. Of course, you'll join INS." And it's not as automatic [now] partly because you have so many choices. The big drop off is the transition from student to early career. And other organizations realized that very early and created these early career committees. One of my former interns was the head of the Early Career Committee for Division 40. They're really trying to engage early career folks to say, "Yes, there's still a role." We've reduced the dues, and we've now made the dues lower for people in their first three years afterwards, which is one way of doing this. It's a big shock when you go from student dues to full dues. But, yeah, I think all of those are sort of

the natural stepping stones. I wouldn't let it stop somebody if they don't get involved at the graduate level. They shouldn't think, "Oh, I can't get involved anymore."

Ryan Van Patten 21:22
Right. Could there be another stepping stone after the SLC? Is that what you're thinking of early career? You know, right now it's SLC and then, sort of a...

Keith Yeates 21:30
A void. [laughs]

Ryan Van Patten 21:31
A void. Yeah. But there could be another step on the path before someone is seasoned enough to be president or chair.

Keith Yeates 21:38
We're even talking about whether we ought to - and this isn't decided yet - but find a way to get early career people on the board. We really need to have a voice. The Student Liaison Committee representatives do come to our board meetings. They're not members of the board. But there is a lot of sentiment that we are - we're actually rewriting the bylaws. The bylaws are way overdue to be rehashed and put to a vote. But, one idea is to potentially take one of the Member at Large positions and make them an Early Career member. Again, to get voice and representation there. And, of course, it would only be one, but it still is symbolic of the fact that we want to find ways to get people involved in INS. There's a lot more committee opportunities now than there ever were, and those are always great ways for more junior folks to get involved.

Ryan Van Patten 22:23
That's great.

John Bellone 22:24
Sticking along the line of leadership for a little bit. You were the Associate Editor for JINS for several years. You were on the editorial board for TCN, and many, many others. You're now the incoming editor for APA's journal, Neuropsychology, right? When do you start that?

Keith Yeates 22:41
I actually started on January 1.

John Bellone 22:43

Oh, great. So tell us about the role of journal editor. I really don't know much about it. How do you go about getting that position? I guess it's not saying "no", again. [laughs]

Keith Yeates 22:52

Yeah.

John Bellone 22:54

What are the benefits? What are the challenges? Can you just talk us through that?

Keith Yeates 22:57

I really, I've always enjoyed this. I got asked by Kathy Holland to be an Associate Editor for JINS when she took over as editor from Igor Grant. I had been Consulting Editor and I also had actually been the original editor of the abstracts issues back in the days when they were done a little differently. So I've been connected to JINS for a while. When Kathy asked me to be an AE, I said, "Sure. I think that'd be interesting to learn more about what it's like to be an editor and how you go about making decisions." So it was really a great experience to do that before becoming the editor of a journal because it sort of gave you exposure to: how are decisions made, how do you get reviewers, what are good reviews and bad reviews? And so, for APA, for Neuropsychology, I had actually been nominated the last time when Greg Brown was selected, and didn't get chosen. Steve Rao, who is of course the JINS editor, also happens to chair the Publication's Committee for APA. When they put out the call because Greg's reign as editor was coming to an end, I was asked, among a number of people, to see if I was interested in applying and I put in my application. I think Steve had something to do with it because Steve had asked me to stay on as Associate Editor on JINS when he took over from Kathy, to keep doing the pediatric work. He had always told me that if there was any time I wanted a reference, he liked my work. And, of course, I couldn't have him be a reference in this case because it was a conflict. I didn't really realize it until later, but the committee that made the choice included any number of people I've collaborated with - Erin Bigler was on the committee, Steve Rao was on the committee, I forget who else. And, you know, again, I mean, I've been around a long time. I think sometimes that's just how - you just fall into things because you live long enough. But, they made a choice for a variety of reasons and I wasn't privy to all of it. Again, I was a bit surprised and honored.

You know, to be a journal editor is a big responsibility to the field to try to promote good science. Neuropsychology is an interesting journal because, of course, it's everything. It's normal, it's abnormal, it's lifespan. I mean, an editor can shape it, but they also have a responsibility to reflect that breadth. When I look at who have been the editors of Neuropsychology, it's actually quite intimidating. I mean, I knew Nelson Butters. I knew Greg. I mean, I've known Steve. I mean, I've known the editors of Neuropsychology. And, to me, I still think of myself as not being on the same planet as them. So it's a bit intimidating.

It's an interesting job being an editor. The thing that's the biggest difference is that you get the first look at a paper and you have to make these decisions fairly early about, are you even going to send it out for review? That's been the biggest thing that has been interesting this first month. Like, I've bench-rejected a number of papers. Sometimes they just don't fit the journal. Sometimes they're just, you know, it's a sample size of 10, and it's just not going to fly. But other times, they're sort of subtle judgments to be made. I sat with Greg Brown today to talk a little bit about how it's been going. And we talked a bit about how his decision point for how to do that evolved, I'm sure mine will as well. So, yeah, it's interesting.

I have a real hope to promote interdisciplinary submissions, because I think of neuropsychology as being a nexus type of science. These days to do good neuropsychology, you sort of have to know everything from genetics to sociocultural stuff, at least the way I think. I'm hoping to promote papers that do that. I'm hoping to promote international submissions, so we get a sense of the fact that not every brain in the world is necessarily a North American brain. So those are the things - and that's sort of fun. I mean, that's the fun of being an editor. It's a sense that maybe you can shape the journal a little bit, shape the science a bit. But it's also incredibly competitive now. There's so many journals that trying to get good science when people can send to specialized journals that have just as good or even better impact factors. I mean, we're way too guided by impact factors, but it is what it is. It's an interesting time to be an editor because the journals are feeling quite pressured because of the changes in publishing and open access journals and the like. The whole field is changing pretty dramatically. So it'll be an interesting six years to see sort of how that all shapes up.

Ryan Van Patten 22:58

Those are great, great insights. Really helpful. I'm wondering if you could help us out and for our listeners. Again, imagine we have a grad student who's really interested in ultimately being very involved as an editor of a journal. There's a lot of steps we can take from, you know, zero publications to journal editor in terms of

being involved behind the scenes for a journal. I'm thinking of, I know I started in grad school by doing peer reviews under the supervision of a faculty member, then you can move forward to get publications. Even before I had my degree, I was doing some of my own peer reviews in journals I published in. So those are a few of the first early steps. And then, of course, you can be reviewer on a number of journals, eventually associate editor. So I'll stop there, but can you kind of walk us through it?

Keith Yeates 27:21
I think you've answered the question. [laughs]

Ryan Van Patten 27:38
[laughs]

Keith Yeates 27:43
Those are all the things that I would recommend. I really think it's great that journals now formally invite students to review with their mentors and to be recognized that way because that is how you learn. It's sort of like doing a journal club. You learn how to take an article apart and decide where it's good and where it's not. You can learn from more senior mentors. My experience is that junior folks tend to get caught up in the weeds and get picky about methodological stuff - I've seen this in grant reviews as well - whereas somebody like me is more concerned with the big picture and the "so what?" of a journal article. Like, "What's it adding to the science?" and not so much like, "You picked that measure versus this measure". You can always quibble about that sort of stuff. So I think that's a great first step.

You know, frankly, you get exposure and you get asked to be on editorial boards because you publish. I mean, the best way, in some ways, to get to be an editor is to publish a lot because you get visibility that way. You begin to see the things that annoy you in reviews that are not good. Like, I can remember an early review I got in my career. It was very ad hominem and there were some remarks made sort of personally and I was just furious. I'm very careful as an editor, if I see anything like that in a review, I just take it out. I do not feel a responsibility as an editor to give everybody word for word what a reviewer has said. If I think it's inappropriate, I'm not sending it to somebody because there's no reason to. It's my responsibility, it's not the reviewers responsibility. And if they don't like it, great, don't review for me anymore. I flat out tell them.

Ryan Van Patten 29:32

Especially a personal attack or some really subject remarks.

Keith Yeates 29:35

You know, I don't see quite as much of that anymore as I used to. Neuropsychology's early days had people with really strong personalities who would make things personal. But you know…

So, it's getting visibility. It's saying "yes". I mean, a lot of it too, actually, and this is one of the things that irritates editors, is - one, there are a surprising number of junior and senior people who, although they expect good reviews, will say "no" to every paper they are sent to review, and that's really annoying. To me, it's a professional responsibility that you have to take seriously. If you want good reviews, then take part in the process. But, the way you get asked to be on editorial boards is you say "yes" when you're asked, you get the review done on time, and you write a good review. If you do those three things, you're going to get swamped. I've told my students you don't have to say "yes" to every paper you're asked to review because the reason I go back to a well on certain reviewers is I know they'll do the job. And you sort of pay for it. [laughs] It's like, "Oh, you're really good." So they're going to ask you to do more. That's true of all your professional career, but certainly for reviewing. And then I actually do tell junior faculty, if you've done four or more reviews for a particular journal in a given year, do not be shy about asking the editor if they'd consider you for the Consulting Editor position.

Ryan Van Patten 30:49

That's really helpful. Yeah.

Keith Yeates 30:49

Because, I mean, those are the people you want on your editorial board. The folks who do lots of reviews, do them well, and do them on time.

Ryan Van Patten 30:55

Yeah.

Keith Yeates 30:55

I got on some of my editorial boards by asking an editor. "Look, I've been doing this for a couple years for you. I can't keep doing as many if I'm not going to be on the editorial board, because I got other journals that will put me there." And most

editors will say, "Yeah, sure." Yeah, it's not that hard. You just tell the Editorial Assistant, they're on the board.

Ryan Van Patten 31:16
Right.

Keith Yeates 31:17
AE is a little different because often there's contractual obligations. But, you know, you don't get paid anything for being on the editorial board. So, yeah, that's sort of all the things, in addition to some of the things you mentioned, that I think are the ways to get there.

Ryan Van Patten 31:31
I can ask you a million questions about the publishing process and journals. There's a lot of initiatives, like open science and pre-registration reports, that I find really interesting, just improving science in general and that, of course, applies to neuropsychology. But I'll try to be respectful and not take up four hours of your time.

So one thing that comes to mind is I've heard different arguments with respect to blinded review, I've heard some people - actually, my personal bias is that I really value the reviewer being blinded and the authors being blinded to reduce bias. I've heard arguments for transparency, where both parties are visible and I think the argument for that is so that reviewers can get credit. So that their name is sort of seen out there. Again, I worry about, you know - I submit, you know me, you don't like me for some reason, and then even if you're trying to be objective, then subjectivity can get in the way. I'm curious what your thoughts are about that issue.

Keith Yeates 32:31
I'm a bit of a skeptic about blind review, because at least the stuff I review, I can tell who's done it.

Ryan Van Patten 32:35
Gotcha.

Keith Yeates 32:35
I mean, I know the science and the area well enough that I know who's doing what. I laugh when I get certain blinded ones or [if] they've even tried to cut out other stuff. Like, I still know who it is.

Ryan Van Patten 32:45

[laughs]

Keith Yeates 32:46

The issue of conflict is one that is going to be there no matter what you do. Because if you don't like somebody, you often don't like them because you don't like the way they do science, I mean, in this area. So just because you don't have your name on it, I think, doesn't necessarily protect anybody. Now, I'm an empiricist, though, and I actually don't know that there's any data that actually addresses this in a systematic way. Because you could test it right? There are a variety of ways you could figure out if it really protects people. You know, if we go to the American jurisprudence system, you're entitled to a jury of your peers and to know who your accusers are. While blind review allows you to perhaps avoid bias, it also allows reviewers to say things they might not say if their name was public. So there's a real balance. I think a lot of journals initially put in blind reviews, and then got rid of them because they didn't feel like they were necessarily serving the purpose. I don't have real strong feelings about it. I don't care if something's blinded when I get a journal article and I am asked to review it because usually I actually have a pretty good idea of who it is. You could look at the reference list most of the time and figure that out.

Ryan Van Patten 33:55

They cited themselves.

Keith Yeates 33:57

Oh, yeah. Everybody cites themselves more than they cite other people. It's just a reality.

Ryan Van Patten 34:00

[laughs]

Keith Yeates 34:01

You know your own science best and most of us think we do better science than most people. I mean, it's like the Lake Wobegon effect of being an academic. And then, also, I don't know, I like to believe I am brutally honest with my friends, as brutally honest with my friends as I am with my non-friends. If anything, maybe more so. So, for me, I don't ever feel like - I won't take articles that are clearly by collaborators and stuff. I mean, I won't do that. But I don't feel so negatively about

any one person that I would feel like I necessarily - I hope I'm unbiased in reviews. So I think there are pros and cons to both and personally I don't have really strong feelings about it.

Ryan Van Patten 34:41
Yeah, that's really helpful. I'm familiar with a little bit of data on sexism.

Keith Yeates 34:48
Yeah, there it could make a difference.

Ryan Van Patten 34:50
Right, like how women are less likely to have papers published and so the data that I'm thinking of are around female names attached to submissions, those submissions being less likely to be accepted relative to male names, which is interesting. Not surprising, but unfortunate, of course.

Keith Yeates 35:06
It's very unfortunate. And, yeah, I mean, if we have data that shows that sort of stuff, then you have a more compelling reason. I mean, I've certainly seen it. I took a workshop, or heard about a workshop I should say, and I saw some of it about letter writing and how they're really subtle and amazing differences that creep into letter writing. Even by women, they fall prey to the same biases - you know, using the first name for women but more often calling a man by the last name, using different adjectives to mean the same thing, but has subtle implications. And it's amazing, you know, that human beings can fall prey to those sorts of biases and not be aware of them.

Ryan Van Patten 35:23
Right.

John Bellone 35:40
So just talking about all of your research experience and publications, and now everything that led to you getting this position, your editorial positions - we asked you to give us your CV just so we could prepare for this interview and it was 80 pages long [laughs]. I lost count of the number of your publications, something like 250 articles, 50 books and book chapters, dozens and dozens of grants. Any productivity tips for us or our audience? How is that humanly possible in a lifetime?

Keith Yeates 36:11

If you look at my CV, what you begin to notice pretty quickly is that I do a lot of collaborative work. I don't think of myself as this, like, scientist who's out here all by himself doing stuff. I've had the good fortune to work with a lot of really good people and I think that makes a difference. I mean, in the last couple of years, I've had a gazinda number of papers published and almost all of them are collaborative in one form or another. I hardly ever write any paper on my own anymore. I'll write two papers a year, maybe, that I'm the lead author on. But I'm [the] senior author on a bunch because my students and my collaborators are writing papers. And then I'm, you know, something else - second or otherwise - in a lot of other papers because of the number of collaborations I do now.

It helps to be efficient. It helps to be a good planner. To really give yourself - you have to decide what your own style is. I know people who can write, you know, literally if they get a half an hour, they can write a page of paper. I can't do that. I need three hour blocks to get anything appreciable done. I do a lot of work on the plane now. I didn't used to, but now I found, "Oh God, I have three hours." I can't write my own stuff, but I can edit papers. I do a lot of that sort of stuff on the plane. So it's sort of a matter of time management. I've always been just somebody who's lucky. I don't know what it is, I just can get a lot done in a short period of time. And I have a weird ability to know exactly how late I can leave something and still get it done and do it well. Maybe that's just because it has happened enough often that I have a sense of, "Okay, I can leave it till now. And now I've got to get started." Yeah, I think it's working with good people, making sure you're disciplined about your time. Set aside time for writing, that's one of the hardest things to do, I find. Because certainly as you get busy, that's the easiest thing to let slip, and it's the most important thing not to let slip in some ways. So I got in the habit early in my career, of blocking off two mornings and trying to keep them inviolate, and was happy if I could keep one. So I always blocked more than I probably knew I'd ever get. But, at least that way, I had blocks of time that I could get writing done. I'm very bad about getting distracted by email and I've tried to learn ways to put that stuff aside while I'm trying to work. But if I'm really excited about something, I forget about email - I'm just zoned. And I also am somebody - I literally can have a war going on behind me, and if I'm focused, I won't hear it. I'm just that kind of person. So it depends a bit. Everybody has to learn their own style.

A lot of it's just hard work. I'm not sure, frankly, sometimes, you know, you end up questioning whether you made the right decisions about where you spend all your time. I've told people since I moved up to Calgary and went through a divorce and all that, "You know, sometimes I do realize that my kids are not going to care if I

have five more publications. They'll care if I spent a weekend with them or doing some things." So I've tried to honor that. I'm not always good at it because I like what I do. That's the danger of liking what you do as a job, you want to spend more time doing it. But productivity is actually enhanced - we have data for this now - enhanced if you get away from things and you don't work all the time. So if you're feeling good about life and you're happy about your personal life, you're going to be more productive. I think it's having some life balance. It's working your ass off at times. Oops, probably shouldn't say that on a podcast.

John Bellone 39:21
That's fine.

Ryan Van Patten 39:23
We're PG-13.

Keith Yeates 39:23
[laughs] Yeah. You know, and managing your time. The other thing I think is prioritization. The biggest question I get from junior faculty is how do you decide what to put your time into? And there's no formula. There's no magic answer to that. It changes sometimes from week to week. But you have to get good at it in one way or another or else you're not going to be productive.

Ryan Van Patten 39:47
Yeah, that's all great advice. Really helpful insights. One thing you said reminded me of a thought that I've had. Sometimes early career folks like me, I'm a fellow, frequently compare ourselves to well-established people who've been around a long time on this metric of number of publications, which is, you know, very important. But it can be easy for an early career person to compare, you know, 5, 10, 20 publications to 100, 200, 300 and think, like, "That's just unattainable, I'll never get there." But what I've seen is this trajectory where, through our careers, it's a bit of an exponential curve in terms of the number of publications you get, right? Like, in grad school, postdoc, a lot of our work we're shouldering all the writing maybe more first author papers. But then, if you get through that, work through that, get your own lab, develop more collaborative relationships, as you said, and then you're putting the spirit of your work - your lab is there, but you don't have to shoulder all of the load for every paper. Some of your collaborators are writing and your publication number is sort of swelling.

Keith Yeates 40:54

Yeah, I mean, I think that's the typical path if you're successful. I often joke, but it's not totally a joke, that I'm more of a rainmaker now than I am a scientist. Because you get to a point where you're not doing the bulk of the science in your lab anymore - you're finding funding and pulling people. I'm pretty good at, or seem to have been pretty successful [at], putting teams together of really good scientists who were often more junior than me - or even sometimes are just as senior as I am, like Gerry Taylor and Erin Bigler who are actually more senior than me. Just put the right teams together, we're just really productive. And I sort of oversee it. I don't think of myself as being terribly original from a scientist perspective. What I think I am good at is bringing ideas that haven't been combined before and putting them together.

When I think back [to] when I started, I was happy if I got two pubs a year, right? I mean, that was pretty damn good at first. Then you start raising it to four a year because you tried to get a grant, and you are writing most of your own papers - you're first author on more than 50% of what you're doing. But then, gradually, over time, your lab gets bigger, you start to collaborate with people because they're approaching you and you've approached them, you start doing multisite types of studies. I published, I think it was 30 papers last year, or something in that ballpark, 25 to 30. And, I mean, I couldn't even imagine that back in graduate school. But that's again, you know, I'm first on two or three, or maybe even two. I'm senior on maybe 35 or 40%. And then I'm doing a lot of mentoring. A lot of the projects I'm involved in, I'm the old guy they ask questions of, and I give them my supposed wisdom. And then I get my name on papers, because I'm pretty good at writing and they asked for my input. It just shifts over time. You become an organizer and a rainmaker and a mentor. You sort of have to be comfortable with that. I've talked with a lot of people who aren't, and they miss being in the lab.

The other day, I was on a flight, I can't remember where I was going, and I had to get a talk finished up and I wanted to use some new data. I spent the whole flight analyzing data, which I never get to do anymore, which I love. I am a data nut. Suddenly they announced the plane was going down. I was like, "When the hell did that happen?" It was four hours, or three and a half hours, I would think I was flying to Toronto. I was like, "This was so much fun." I forgot how much I like doing that. But you just don't have time for it anymore. I hardly ever do my own analyses anymore and that was part of what I really liked. So, yeah, the trajectory is - never compare yourself, aspire to do that big stuff, but never compare yourself to that. Because there is a natural progression of success and not everybody follows that

exact pathway, but it is pretty common of all the people I know that have had really successful careers.

Ryan Van Patten 43:44
So trainees shouldn't be intimidated by these very large numbers and think that they can't attain it?

Keith Yeates 43:49
The other advice I would give is, it's not always that that's the goal. You have to decide for yourself what you want out of your career. We encourage students and we try to tell them that's the path. Well, it's not the path for everybody. I mean, frankly, most graduate students aren't going into an academic career. They're going to go do clinical work, right? Because that's part of the reason they got into it - they like working with people, they want to help patients. I started as a clinician. I didn't have a tenure track position when I started. I had a lot of serendipity. Gerry Taylor gets introduced to me by Bob Bornstein, and goes "Hey, Keith, I got this subcontract in Akron and they aren't doing anything. They haven't even spent any money. Would you be willing to take that on and maybe do it in Columbus?" "Oh yeah, sure." That's literally how this stuff - really my research on TBI got started. So, you know, you think you're going to do one thing, you sort of reevaluate. Not everybody needs to publish 300 papers in their career. I mean, it's just isn't a realistic goal or even a necessary goal for most people. So that's the other thing I think, is we have to encourage our trainees to decide for themselves what their careers are going to be like and what's important to them. And, for everybody, it isn't publishing 250 papers or 300 papers or whatever.

Ryan Van Patten 45:00
Yeah.

John Bellone 45:02
So Keith, you jokingly mentioned your age a few times throughout this conversation. [laughs] And your career spans over three decades.

Keith Yeates 45:09
Yeah, it's scary as hell. I started when I was 15.

John Bellone 45:12

Wow. So I'm curious how you've seen the field change over your career? What's the direction you think that we're heading in?

Keith Yeates 45:21

Yeah, I don't know if I have a great crystal ball. But, I mean, certainly, we all talk, the senior folks, on just how competitive it's become. The quality of the students that are coming in, applying at every level - whether it's folks I get applying to graduate school or who I used to see applying for internship and postdoc - just amazing what people are coming in with by way of accomplishment. I mean, one of my most recent graduate school applicants had nine publications as an undergraduate. [laughs] What? I only got nine publications until I was, like, second year in a faculty position. So the level and the quality and the competitiveness just keeps increasing. That's good for the profession on the whole, we get amazing people in the profession, amazingly bright people. But, it does make it harder. Everybody's competing, you know, playing that sort of treadmill.

Certainly the field has become more specialized. I think it's a good and bad thing. We've developed a lot of standards like the Houston Conference and board certification and become much more standard now. The upside of that is that we can be more sure that people are getting a certain kind of training and a certain level of competence. The downside is that neuropsychology had a whole lot of richness to it in terms of people coming into it from all sorts of pathways in the past - neuroscience, psychology, you could come up with a really long list - and that did contribute to the evolution of the field. I think we're losing that, probably inevitably, because as it gets bigger, you have to have more standardization. But there is now more homogeneity to the field than there probably was in the past. I think that has both positives and negatives.

The competitiveness thing is also seen at the career level, because most of us were sort of enamored of the clinician-scientist model, or the scientist-practitioner model, both because that's what we lived in graduate school and also because that's what we saw the people we really admire doing. "Oh, they were good with patients, and they did research, and they taught, and when they got old enough, they did administration." That was the model. The triple threat is just about dead now, in part because if you're only doing research 50% of the time, and if somebody's doing 100% of the time, there's tons of data now to show that the 50% one just isn't as likely to be successful. On the flip side, the pressures, in particular the American medical system, is such that you're going to make your salary. And if you're not doing it through research, you're going to do it through clinical practice.

So the pressures have pushed people to either be full-time clinicians or full-time scientists. And [for] the folks who tried to sit in the middle, I think it's gotten harder and harder. Yet our students are often taught that's the desirable thing - to be the person who's the 50/50, or 30/30/30, or whatever. I know certainly, as a Division Chief in Columbus, before I went to Canada, that was really one of the things I struggled hardest with. Finding ways to find little bits of time for my clinical faculty to do research so they could feel like they could maintain the academic side of their lives. And for my full time research faculty to be able to maintain protected time, because unlike the Canadian system where your salary is hard money, that isn't the case in many ways in the U.S. system. So I think those are some of the things that really, for better or worse, had an effect on the field.

In the future, I mean, a lot of people have forecasted the death of neuropsychology for years. "Oh, it's going to be replaced by imaging". "Oh, we don't prove our value enough, so the medical system is going to get rid of it." The fact of the matter is that imaging can't supply what we do because our primary role really isn't actually to decide if somebody has brain damage or not. It's to decide what the functional impact of that is, at least according to my philosophy. And that's not to be replaced by imaging. There's just no way to replace it by imaging. So the existence of the field, I don't think, is actually threatened. But there are outside forces, like changes in billing codes and other things that have made life more difficult. I think we actually have taken seriously the notion of beginning to show our value and there's lots of papers now we can cite that says, "Yeah, we actually can predict meaningful things and have a meaningful impact in what we do." I think that's important moving forward.

I'd love to see neuropsychology figure out a way to stop using tests that are 90 years old. Just seems to me that our technology still lags behind. We're fairly conservative - like most of medicine, actually. We don't change easily. There are still people doing the old WAIS. I mean, the original WAIS, which is like, "What? What are we doing?" So I've got to believe there are going to be some interesting technological changes that even go beyond the use of Q-Interactive and other things that are computer-based. I think we're going to see virtual reality eventually come into testing - where we can really do some stuff with ecological validity that's much better than what most of our tests do. We may get to the point where imaging and testing become more integrated, which would really be interesting. We started to do it with fMRI and epilepsy surgery now, but I think we're going to see an evolution that way where we don't have to guess if our tests are actually measuring what we think they're measuring. We'll actually be able to get a better sense of that. That would actually be really informative at a neurologic level. It won't necessarily

tell us anything about function, but I think, in that sense, also, I think we're going see a clearer sense of what tests we use for neurological validity and which we use for ecological validity, because the two are often very different and we've sort of tended to kind of mash them together as neuropsychologists. So, I don't know - those are some of the some of the things I think might happen. But, you know, the accuracy of any crystal ball gets a lot murkier as time goes by.

Ryan Van Patten 50:46

That's great. I want to focus on one thing you said around this idea that maybe there are pressures out there in the system pushing people in neuropsychology, it's maybe more broad than neuropsychology, to either become a full-time clinician or a full-time researcher, which, you know, that definitely sounds like it's the case. I know, for myself, I've always wanted to do both. You mentioned a lot of early career folks want to do both. Would you advise trainees to really lean one way or the other due to these structural constraints? Or is it still sometimes possible to do both well?

Keith Yeates 51:20

I tell people [to] follow their passion. I mean, you gotta do what you love. If you love both, you try to find a way to do both. I did both for 25 years, roughly. The problem is, if you're successful at either one, you start to get pressures that are internal, because I just didn't have any time anymore. I had to give up seeing patients in order to pursue research, but I kept my hand in through supervision. Sometimes it's not a matter of either/or, but where are you going to put your time. But I did tell students that you're going to have that pressure and you need to think seriously about what it is that you're passionate about.

I don't think everybody is cut out to be a full-time academic. You have to have the "fire in the belly" sort of thing. We talked about that. The rewards are so few and far between sometimes in academics, you really got to love what you're doing. You don't get that immediate reward you can from patients, a sense of changing things for them and helping them. Although, as neuropsychologists, even there, we do often one-shot consultations and we don't always hear the outcome. I always remember when patients would call me like 10 years later, or 15 years later, after I'd seen them, and it was amazing to get these stories of what an impact we'd had on them. But you don't know if that's just a one-off and maybe you only did that with one patient in, you know, in 10 years. So you really have to decide what you love, and what you're going to really want to do.

I think there are opportunities to do both in jobs still, but it often isn't the 50/50 split anymore. It might be 70% clinical with a little bit of research on the side. What I did for my faculty was trying to find ways that they could be a collaborator or a co-investigator. I established investigators grants because they're not going to necessarily write their own R01. But neuropsychology has a specific skill set that a lot of medical researchers find incredibly helpful because they don't know how to phenotype things. They don't know how to measure behavior and that's our expertise. So we - particularly as patient-oriented research and outcomes research has become a bigger focus for medicine, and partly because they came to the realization rather late that their patients don't care about some of the outcomes they think are important and vice versa - we have a particular role to play and we can capitalize on that. You don't have to be a full-time researcher to do that. So it's sort of trying to find a niche that allows you to do the balance of what you want to do. Similarly, I know a lot of people that are pretty much full-time academics, but, like I did, they keep some small percentage engagement in clinical work of one type or another. So I think it's not impossible. I think there aren't as many jobs out there anymore that sort of are structured that way, so that makes it a little bit harder. But, you know, they're usually ways to find a way to do what you want to do.

Ryan Van Patten 54:02
Yeah, definitely.

John Bellone 54:04
So, Keith, you know, you've given us a lot of advice already and we've talked about the field in general. One of our bonus questions that we ask everyone we interview with is: if there was one thing that they could pick, that they feel like is the priority to improve the field overall, what would be your number one right now?

Keith Yeates 54:25
Wow...

Ryan Van Patten 54:26
He's making faces. I know people can't see him. [laughs]

Keith Yeates 54:29
It's a really hard thing to do. You know, are we thinking clinically or research? I guess one of my pet peeves about what's happened with the homogeneity that's crept into neuropsychology that I mentioned before, I think, has had an impact

actually in a way that is potentially problematic in research and clinical practice. Because we began to see students who were incredibly well-trained in neuropsychology and couldn't think their way out of a clinical bag. And likewise, in research, today is all about big data and big science and connecting disciplines and doing stuff that's transdisciplinary. If you get too focused in what you do, you can't do that. I think our training programs might have gone too far in the direction of sacrificing breadth for depth and that has a cascading effect on our interactions as scientists and our interactions as clinicians.

Maybe that comes out of a pediatric background where you can be the best damn neuro person in the world, but you're going to be useless in terms of helping families if you can't think at a broader level. But I came out of a very multidisciplinary, systems theory-oriented way of thinking about development - and not systems theory in the Minuchin family systems theory, but systems theory as a way of understanding levels of analysis and how they interact. I think that has always enriched my clinical work and enriched my research. So when I see people that can only think at one level, I feel like it really restricts what we do scientifically and what we do clinically as well. I think the programs have to think about, "Okay, now we have the set of criteria, these things that we expect our students to do." But if you look at what those are - and I was at the Houston Conference, I was part of that movement - we may have taken a little bit too much away in terms of, "Okay, every neuropsychologist should be a good clinical psychologist."

But, even beyond that, that means they have to have appreciation for sociocultural differences and diversity. I mean, we're starting to see that more in neuropsychology, but it's still not probably as much as it should be. At the same level, I mean, I think about what I learned about genetics in graduate school - it was Mendelian genetics, that's all you had. I can't even - I listen to some of my colleagues now talk about genetics, and I don't have any idea what they're talking about. I really think, actually, that sort of breadth is important scientifically and clinically. So I guess my pet peeve would be like, let's get a little bit more breadth than our educational expectations are, hopefully without making it 10 years to go from, you know, B.A. to Ph.D. That's one of the problems we face for clinical neuropsych students, in particular. It's like, "Okay, you gotta do all the clinical psych work, and oh, yeah, now you're gonna have about a year's worth of additional coursework and practicum to learn all the neuro stuff." So we're asking a lot. And probably my idea would ask even more, but I don't know any way around that.

John Bellone 57:22

Yeah, we've heard a few people say exactly what you did - that the field is clearly moving more towards that sacrificing breadth for depth. Neil Pliskin gave us a similar topic that he would improve and improve that about the field, that we should be more generalists.

Keith Yeates 57:40

It's easy to say that when there's only five journals you have to read. You saw if you went to my presidential address - and I could do the same curve for virtually all areas - it's like we went from 100 papers a year in concussion to 1000 papers a year. I can't even keep up with literature in my focused area. I used to read really broadly, I used to love that. I wish I still had the time. I would just pick articles. I would review, like, what was it? I think they were psych abstracts. I just said, "Oh, that sounds like a really neat article, big picture thing." You know, and I pull it in, I read it. I don't have the time to do that anymore. But the reason I read it is because I came out of a tradition where you're expected to do that. I think it's just become harder and harder for students to have that breadth. Because how do you do it?

John Bellone 58:24

Right. So for the students who are listening, who are thinking, "Oh my gosh, I'm gonna be competing against a colleague for an internship", let's say, "Or a postdoc who has 30 publications already", because they've really gone in depth into a research program.

Keith Yeates 58:42

The reality is that internships and postdocs often don't care that much. I mean, I had people apply for internship at Nationwide who had great academic track records, but the faculty were like, "They don't have enough clinical experience." And when we interview them, if we get that far, [it] doesn't sound like they're ready to come into a full-time clinical internship. So, again, there's a balance, right? I actually know lots of internships, if you look too academic they think you don't care. I actually have a postdoc right now who would tell me, "I didn't really care about internship. I needed to get it done because I want the clinical degree, but I want to be able to do clinical research and call myself a neuropsychologist." She has no interest in doing clinical work and really didn't enjoy internship all that much for that reason. So you can shoot yourself in the foot actually, if you look too academically focused because these training programs are meant to be both.

But it is hard to compete. You know, the hardest thing I think for students in the internship level, the postdoc level, or in graduate school level is what do you do to make yourself stand out? I mean, every student we had, I think, I forget how many, I think we had 80 students apply to our clinical program this year. Virtually all of them have good grades. Virtually all of them have decent GREs. Virtually all of them have good letters - because if you can't get three people to write you a positive letter after undergrad then you have a different problem. So what makes you stand out? It might be academic, it might be clinical. One of my students developed an entire course on traumatic brain injury as an undergrad and taught the course and led it, and it was like "Okay, somebody with real initiative." You know, you have to do something to make yourself stand out, but it doesn't necessarily have to be the number of publications.

John Bellone 1:00:21
It's good to know that supervisors are looking for that kind of breadth. That's nice.

Ryan Van Patten 1:00:26
Those extracurriculars, right? We all share so many things on our CV or on our internship application - hours, courses, right? We all have that just as part of our training. We want to have something that makes us look special - catches the eye.

Keith Yeates 1:00:41
You know, neuropsychology is still small enough that who you know matters. And, frankly, I'll trust a letter of recommendation from somebody I know better than somebody I don't know, right? I actually know whose letters I can't trust based on past experience. [laughs] Or I shouldn't assume that it's necessarily entirely accurate, because we all want our students to succeed. So we're always inclined to write a positive letter, although I like to hope there are at least shades of gray to use a bad pun in my letters. You can read between the lines in letters and figure out when somebody is less than 100% enthusiastic. But, yeah, I think that's what I tell my students. When people come to undergrad now - because I'm in a traditional academic department - come and talk to me, like, "What does it take to get into graduate school?" I'll say, you have to figure out some things that are going to make you stand out because everybody that applies is going to have grades and GREs. That's just not enough anymore. This is this whole level of competition. When I applied, I got into Chapel Hill and I think it was entirely because I had an outstanding GPA and really strong GRE scores and good letters from my academic advisors. But I hadn't published anything. I mean, it's hard to get into graduate school these days without having a publication or at least something that is heading

in that direction. I did an honors thesis. So it's getting harder and harder and it's kind of too bad in a way because I think we're cutting a lot of what could be potentially some really good neuropsychologists both clinically and research out of the field because we stopped them right at the entry level.

Ryan Van Patten 1:02:11
It really is an arms race for everyone and a lot of pressure.

Keith Yeates 1:02:15
We started laughing after a while [about] the number of hours that students said they had at practicum. I was like, "You didn't get that in five years. Come on. There's no way." But, I mean, there is like this whole thing about hours. I mean, the APPIC application has actually made it worse in a respect. Standardizing was good, but now that number of hours has gotten to be so big, for some internship sites anyways, that it's sort of like numbers of publications.

Ryan Van Patten 1:02:41
Right.

Keith Yeates 1:02:41
Let's talk about quality. At least we have impact factors and citations and other things. You know, 10 nature papers would be worth 100 publications in other journals, but we really can't do that in practicum. I mean, how do you know that 100 more hours was actually any good at all?

Ryan Van Patten 1:02:56
Were they doing a good job? Were they quality clinical hours? I can give the Trail Making Test, you know, 5000 times, but am I actually improving my clinical skill by doing that?

Keith Yeates 1:03:04
Yeah, I never actually paid much attention to hours. I paid attention to how many full batteries somebody had taken and written a report on. I don't care if you've given Trail Making 100,000 times, if you can't write a report.

Ryan Van Patten 1:03:17
So along the lines of advice for trainees we'd like to ask all of our guests for one particular bit of advice that you wish someone had told you while you were training,

or that someone actually did tell you that really made a difference. So we're looking for an actionable step that trainees can take that they may not have thought of that could really improve their training and performance.

Keith Yeates 1:03:37
Yeah, my own would have been telling me about neuropsychology earlier in my career but that's not really what you're looking for. [laughs] What would I tell students or what do I think is the one piece of advice? Yeah, I think it always, for me, comes back to: follow your passion. Don't do stuff because your advisor thinks it's cool, because your peer thinks it's cool, or your husband or wife thinks it's cool. I mean, decide what you really value and do that. Throw yourself into it, and commit to being successful or good or wherever you define for yourself. You know, a lot of us were essentially raised to meet other people's standards and while that can motivate you to do some really great things, you're usually not going to wind up very happy or at least not as happy as you could be.

And, you know, my passion changed. That's the other thing, I suppose. Don't assume your passion now is going to be the same passion you have 10 years from now. Because I went whipsawing back and forth, like many students do, about like, "Am I gonna be a researcher?" And then I'd fall in love with the research. But then I go do something clinical, and, "Oh, I really like this and I want to do it." And, you know, so it's that back and forth. Some of that was who your charismatic mentors or supervisors we're. You sort of have to eventually start figuring out for yourself what it is you really want to do. I think that, you know, more than any concrete thing, it's sort of like I am a fairly big believer in following your gut. Now we know it actually means something when you say that because of the whole gut-brain access, but, it's like, trust your instincts as to what really turns you on. I mean, what is it that you get excited about?

Ryan Van Patten 1:05:13
Intrinsic motivation.

Keith Yeates 1:05:14
Yep.

Ryan Van Patten 1:05:15
Yeah, it's super important. It's great advice for trainees. Now to finish up our conversation today, I'd like to ask for advice for early career professionals, which sort of circles back around to what we talked about with respect to INS and your

initiate as President. Specifically, we know the healthcare landscape is changing quickly and that we want neuropsychology to remain relevant and useful and not die off. So once we are established as neuropsychologists, what steps can we take to ensure that we're providing cutting edge scientific and clinical services for the next 10, 20, 30 years?

Keith Yeates 1:05:47
Yeah, I mean, I think it comes down to staying active in things like INS and others. Not cutting yourself off from where the science is going. Trying to stay active with reading and continuing education. Trying new things out. I can remember - and everybody still does this, you know neuropsychologist's are so fond of their tests - we'd get into these long conversations about changing one test in our battery. Be willing to take a little bit of risk sometimes and try some things because, you know, our technology is still amazingly crude and old. There may be some really valuable ways of changing what we do that either give us more insight into neural substrates of our patients' difficulties, or that actually make a bigger difference in what we actually offer to patients. I don't think the model of "Yep, you got a brain injury and yep, you're brain damaged" does anybody any good whatsoever. The patients aren't looking to us for that, really. So, on the clinical side, being able to stay up with things is hard because you're busy seeing patients and the thing that you need to get done is get reports written and meet with patients. But you've got to find the time to keep up with the literature as much as you can, at least at a broad level. Then be willing to try to push the discipline of it, because we are, I think, inherently conservative.

On the research side, I think, actually, it goes back to what I said before for early career faculty - what are you passionate about? You really have to believe in your ideas. I got some of the best advice I ever got from Jack Fletcher, who was one of my early mentors. I had put in an R01 and got slammed and I was very depressed. I was like, "I'm never gonna succeed at this." And he said, "Stop it. It's mostly persistence. It's 95% persistence, and 5% a good idea. You have to just keep hammering at NIH to believe in what your ideas are." And that really sort of bucked me up. My first R01 I think was on its fifth version when it got funded. I learned through experience what got funded and what didn't, and what you had to write and what you couldn't write and all that. It's a learning experience, just like leadership is. I mean, leadership is a learnable skill. Grantsmanship is a learnable skill. Publication is a learnable skill. Getting good advice about how to do that is really, I think, important. Just believing in what you do, particularly for academics, is pretty important, because that's what it is. It's about your ideas competing against others.

John Bellone 1:08:15
Yeah, I like that. I like that "95% persistence, 5% good idea". I think that's definitely the case.

Ryan Van Patten 1:08:20
Yeah.

John Bellone 1:08:20
Yeah. Well, Keith, thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy presidential meeting to talk with us.

Keith Yeates 1:08:26
You're welcome. I enjoyed it.

Ryan Van Patten 1:08:27
Thanks so much.

Well, that does it for our conversation with Keith. John and I would like to pay a special thanks to Leslie Gaynor and Charles Moreno from the University of Florida for their help with this and other episodes. They've both been a huge help with the behind-the-scenes operations of NavNeuro since they joined the team. We're thrilled to have them. If you found today's episode interesting and engaging, feel free to share your thoughts and/or questions on our website at navneuro.com. And, as always, join us next time as we continue to navigate the brain and behavior.

🔊 **Exit Music** 1:09:07

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