Professionalization 10/27/2012: Giving Talks: Thesis Committee Meetings

What role does a thesis committee play in my future?
- Assist in creating and executing an original, publishable research project
- Help prepare an acceptable dissertation
- Administer the final oral exam
- Administer Part 2 Qualifying exam
- An outside party who can provide unbiased opinions on data, experimental directions or student/mentor relationships

What is the purpose of a thesis committee meeting?
- To document a student’s progress on their thesis
- Discussion of the interpretation of data/ experimental approaches
- Time to set reasonable goals

What is an ideal thesis committee meeting?
- Scientific conversation among colleagues
- Focused and Goal Oriented
- Addresses specific questions (these questions change with progress through thesis)

What is NOT an ideal thesis committee meeting?
- An exam
- “Look how hard I work”

How do committee meetings change as I progress through my PhD?
- Begin: Plan and Approaches for the thesis
- Middle: Interpretation of data, how does data make a story
- End: Wrapping up-submitting later papers, writing and defending the thesis

How do I prepare for a thesis committee meeting?
- Brief Summary of highlighted accomplishments since last meeting
  - Includes: professional accomplishments, necessary background, experimental results, questions or discussion about data, goals
- PowerPoint of data for discussion

What’s a potential format of a thesis committee meeting?
- Review your summary
- Go over PowerPoint
- **Discussion- interpretation, questions, approaches**
- Next steps/paper
- Goals

How do I document the meeting?
BCDB Form
- Signed by committee
- Summary - written by student, approved by mentor and sent to committee
  - Summarize the meeting and set reasonable goals

Doodle Poll:

When do you hold a thesis committee meeting?
  A) Every few years
  B) When my PI reminds me to
  C) Every six months up to year six and every four months after year six
  D) Once a year

What documents do you send you thesis committee prior to the meeting?
  A) Brief summary
  B) NIH-style Biosketch
  C) Your recently published papers
  D) Agenda for the meeting
  E) A & B only
  F) A & D only
  G) All are required
  H) A & B Required, potentially C & D

What do you do at a thesis committee meeting?
  A) Show your committee every piece of data that you've accumulated to prove to them that you've been working hard.
  B) Address specific questions about data, discuss progress needed towards publishing
  C) Introduce your project and then have your mentor and you committee have an hour long conversation
  D) I have no idea

How might a thesis committee help you progress though your Ph. D? (Select all that apply)
  A) I don't know, the guidelines just tell me I have to have one.
  B) Provide experimental advice and interpret data
  C) They're a constant source of exams: Qual II, committee meetings are exams, and then the dissertation - 6 years of torture!
  D) They serve as scientific colleagues who may write me letters of recommendation in the future
  E) They're faculty who fall asleep in my meetings, but tell me I'm a great baker!