JESSICA FALCON

ASSOCIATE MANAGER IN RESEARCH PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AT REGENERON PHARMACEUTICALS

"I LOVE CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE BUT ALSO CONNECTING PEOPLE TO EACH OTHER."

Jessica loves her role at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals because it allows her to use her scientific background in combination with her connecting and networking skills.

WHAT IS YOUR UNIQUE GENIUS?

"My unique genius is using my deep knowledge of biomedical engineering, combined with my people skills to mobilize our scientists to solve the unsolvable."

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN THIS CAREER?

"I became interested in my career at a very early age. I was always curious about the body and how medicines help treat people. I've always had a very scientific and engineering mindset, and that led me to go to college originally for biology."

"When I ask my parents to tell me stories about myself when I was a child, I've always been drawn to medicine and to science."

IN WHAT WAYS IS YOUR CAREER A PERFECT FIT FOR YOU?

"My job as an associate manager in research program management at Regeneron is absolutely perfect for me because I get to flex two different skills. I get to flex my scientific skills and be immersed in the science. But then I also get to flex my soft skills and my people skills, problem solving and cultivating relationships."

WHAT DOES A DAY IN THE LIFE LOOK LIKE?

"A day in the life starts with a team meeting and we talk about what is happening that week, that month, that quarter and that year, and what our goals are. My days can often look different, one day may be filled with scientist meetings while other days may be more business oriented. For example, one day is science focused while the next day I might be working with our finance department on budgets and forecasting. Other times I can also be working with our communications team and prepping our scientists before they go off to a conference. It's a very cross-functional role.

I'm the liaison between our scientific teams and our nonscientific teams. A part of my role is to break down the complicated science that the teams are working on on a day to day basis and turn that into a digestible message that can be understood broadly."

WHAT SKILLS DOES IT TAKE TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR JOB?

"The skills that you need to do my job are certainly scientific curiosity. There are technical skills, like the scientific training, that are helpful, but mainly being willing to learn and ask questions and not really just accept an answer because it's given to you, but making sure that you always understand why. It's really important in my role to be flexible and adaptable because science is what drives all of our decision making. You have to follow the science in whatever direction it takes you."

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER?

"I wish that I hadn't waited to do certain things until I was completely done with school. I wish I had made time to go on spring break with my friends or say yes to that weekend away. My twenties certainly looked very different than my friends who were not in school. I don't regret it at all, but it didn't quite register with me in my early twenties how quickly time goes by."

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ON YOUR JOURNEY?

"I'm very proud that when I joined Regeneron, my background did not align at all with the projects that I started supporting. But over the past two years, I've learned so much about completely different fields from what my background is in. Now I have a much broader scientific portfolio."

WHAT IS THE COOLEST PART OF YOUR JOB? WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF YOUR JOB?

"The coolest part of my job is that we make our medicines from end to end. That we means that not only do we discover the medicine, but we also manufacture and commercialize it.

[The most challenging part of my job is] imposter syndrome. I am luckily in an environment where questions are encouraged. Saying 'I don't know,' is totally acceptable."

WHAT IS THE ONE THING THAT PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOUR FIELD/JOB?

"One [thing people don't understand] is that a scientist or an engineer can take many forms. So although my role is in program management, I still consider myself to be a scientist and an engineer."

"I approach my day to day tasks with that scientific outlook and I'm constantly engaging in scientific conversations."

WHAT WAS A DEFINING MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE?

"I was a biology major [during my freshman year at Drexel University]. A friend of mine was a biomedical engineering major. I had never heard of biomedical engineering until that very moment. He asked if I wanted to shadow one of his classes, and I did. The class was tissue engineering — I was completely fascinated. I decided that I should be a biomedical engineering major. I went right down to the dean's office and asked to change majors.

I connected with the professor who was lecturing that day and asked if I could join his lab to do undergraduate research. Then I [met] Ph.D. students and they took me on as a mentee. Because of them, I decided I wanted to get a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering. It was that one course that had me pivot my undergraduate degree from biology to biomedical engineering, and put me on the path to where I am now."