

# Jagesh and Sangeeta

## A SUCCESSFUL “JOINT” HIRE AT NEIGHBORING UNIVERSITIES



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**S**angeeta Bhatia and Jagesh Shah met in graduate school. Ambitious and passionate about their work, they both envisioned successful careers as tenured faculty engaged in world-class medical and technology research. They also hoped to build a family together. Could they realize both goals? Only time would tell.

After graduate school, Jagesh supported Sangeeta's job offer at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) by accepting a postdoctoral position on the same campus rather than pursuing other positions to bolster his own career development. When Jagesh was ready for the job market, the couple did a national search and applied to a number of advertised positions. In addition, Sangeeta (by then a tenured professor at UCSD) let various mentors know that they were interested in finding two faculty positions together where they could pursue their research interests.

They “walked away from several bad offers” before securing a “joint” offer from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University. “The ‘bad offers’ were not materially bad,” Sangeeta clarifies, “but ones that did not consider that this was a dual recruitment where both of us needed to thrive and be valued.” The Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology (HST), where they had done their graduate work, succeeded in recruiting both professors—an administrative challenge that, in this case, required coordinating the hiring process at two separate institutions. Joint hires allow universities to hire strategically and, with careful planning, attract top talent. In this case, HST created a competitive solution by identifying departments at Harvard and MIT interested in each scholar. After job talks and interviews, Sangeeta and Jagesh said “yes” to faculty positions.

With their extended families located in the Boston area, the scales tipped in MIT/Harvard's favor (they turned down competitive counteroffers from UCSD). “Being a professor was just one part of the lives we wanted to have,” said Sangeeta. They now live and work in the Boston area, where they are raising their two young children.