Science Careers at NIH/other govt positions

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Outline

• Why employers seek people with a PhD
• Jobs at NIH
• Jobs elsewhere
• Examples
Why employers seek people with a PhD

- Ability to complete complicated projects with minimal supervision
- Ability to master new subject matter with little guidance
- Accustomed to solving problems
- Ability to analyze complex data
- Ability to communicate clearly
- 24/7 Intellectual commitment; not expecting 9-5 work effort

Leadership Skills gained as a student are useful

http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/competencies#six%20core
Leadership skills and self awareness
Psychological type and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment, themes of self-awareness and self-management
--often presented with a professional development coach

Group Dynamics and Teamwork
Assertiveness training; communication, influencing others, conflict and feedback, team skills, diversity in a multicultural environment, management, staffing

Mentor Training

Some Examples of Jobs at NIH
• Postdocs and PIs (see next slide)
• Program Directors and Analysts
• Scientific Review Officers
• Policy Officers and Analysts
• Science Writers; Communications
• Clinical Trial Managers
• IT
Research-Intensive Jobs at NIH

http://www.jobs.nih.gov/vacancies/scientific/
Principal Investigator, Staff Scientist, Staff Clinician, students, fellows
In the Intramural Research Program; “tenure track”

Applicants should submit a curriculum vitae, bibliography, copies of three major publications, a summary of research accomplishments, a brief statement of future research goals, and arrange for three letters of reference

Jobs @ NIH
http://searchjobs.nih.gov/jobs/

Example: Staff Scientist. Candidates must hold a Ph.D., demonstrate expertise in XX, have experience with preclinical animal studies, and a track record in scientific project leadership as well as in training. Applicants should send a brief cover letter, curriculum vitae, bibliography, a 1-2 page statement describing current research activities, copies of up to five recent, relevant publications, and names of three recommenders

Jobs “Elsewhere”

- PIs, Lab Heads
- Postdocs
- Analysts
- Communicators
- Editors
- Fund raisers
- Managers of scientific portfolios
- Policy makers
- Lobbyists
Where is “Elsewhere”?

- Academia, Industry, Biotech (not the focus of this talk today)
- Federal agencies: NSF, VA, DOD, FDA, CDC
- Foundations: Bill & Melinda Gates, Howard Hughes, Disease Foundations
- Non-govt orgs (NGO’s): National Academy of Science, AAAS, Foundation for Biomedical Research
- Publishers

* Note, this list is FAR from complete.

How do you identify these jobs at NIH and “elsewhere” and position yourself to get one?

- The NIH BEST program is intended to provide this information
How to find NIH (or other federal) jobs

- Specific ads (USA Jobs)
- Government Contractors (Especially for non-US Citizens!)
- Government and agency-wide programs
  - AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowships
  - Presidential Management Fellowships
Networking

• Important to develop (and maintain) professional contacts: meaningful ones
• Impressions: every talk or poster you give you can think of as a job interview
• Meet people: talk to vendors at meetings, people in the publication industry, etc.

Our two paths to NIH

• Trish Labosky: PhD, postdoc (4.5 yrs.), Faculty (15 yrs.) with tenure and excellent grant/publication record.
• Nancy Desmond: PhD, postdoc (4 yrs), Staff Scientist (4 yrs), Research Faculty (16 yrs) with federal grant funding.
**Bethany Brookshire: PhD, postdoc (3 yrs).**

- Began an award-winning science blog under the moniker “Sciurious” while in graduate school at Wake Forest University, continued writing through a post-doctoral position at U Penn.
- Developed expertise on Twitter and Facebook while building a network of science writing mentors.
- Became a freelance writer in 2013 and a staff journalist at Science News 6 months later.
- Currently the Science Education Writer for Science News for Students
- Moved to science journalism to share the wonder and complexity of science with a broad audience.
- Began appearing at conferences to train scientists in communicating with the public.

**Bethany.brookshire@gmail.com, Twitter: @scicurious**

**Liza Bundesen, PhD, No postdoc**

- Science and Technology Policy Fellow (6 months)
  - Sponsored by the Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Fellowship Program, the National Academies
  - Fellowship placement at PNAS
  - Freelance science writer for PNAS for 1.5 years
- AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow (2 years)
  - Placement at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): Office of Science Policy, Planning, & Communications; Science Policy & Evaluation Branch
- Health Science Policy Analyst, NIMH (2 years, 4 months)
- Acting Chief, Science Policy & Evaluation Branch, NIMH (3 years, 8 months)
- Chief, Science Policy & Evaluation Branch, NIMH (1 year, 11 months)
- Science Policy Advisor to the NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research (1.5 years)
- Using communication skills to inform policy decisions
No matter what, you have to be “GOOD”

- Track record of success—both scientifically and programatically
- Excellent communication skills—present yourself well
- Ability to work independently and in a team
- Initiative
- Understand your abilities—be honest, but do not undersell yourself

Links for more information

- Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship program at the National Academies [http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/policyfellows/index.htm](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/policyfellows/index.htm)
- IDA Science and Technology Policy Institute Science Policy Fellowship Program [https://www.ida.org/en/STPI/STPIResearchStaff/FellowshipProgram.aspx](https://www.ida.org/en/STPI/STPIResearchStaff/FellowshipProgram.aspx)
- AAAS Mass Media Science & Engineering Fellowship Program [http://www.aaas.org/program/aaas-mass-media-science-engineering-fellows-program](http://www.aaas.org/program/aaas-mass-media-science-engineering-fellows-program)
- A helpful resource compiled by the Congressional Research Service in 2012 titled “Internships, Fellowships, and Other Work Experience Opportunities in the Federal Government”: [http://www.senate.gov/CRSReports/crs-publish.cfm?pid=%26%23038%23C40%23D%3F%0A](http://www.senate.gov/CRSReports/crs-publish.cfm?pid=%26%23038%23C40%23D%3F%0A)
- Potomac Institute [http://www.potomacinstitute.org/contact-us/internships](http://www.potomacinstitute.org/contact-us/internships)
- White House OSTP [http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/about/student](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/about/student)