



## Exploring the Industry Sector in Environmental Science and GeoSciences

College of the Environment | Postdoc Remote Panel Discussion | Thursday, November 19, 2020

### Tips, things to know and the Q&A!

#### When I was a postdoc I wish I knew how...

- hard it is to publish papers after you leave
- to code in different languages (especially Python, SQL)
- to work with a team on a shared set of code
- much of an impact I could have, to be able to influence big policy decisions
- quickly things move, especially the hiring process – often application to job in less than a month

#### Ways to expand your network beyond cold calling

- At networking events, professional meetings, ask “who should I talk to next?”
- Attend professional society meetings – people expect to meet new people and people looking for jobs

#### Prepare for your interview

- Begin practicing your interview skills 3-6 months prior to applying; do not wing it!
- Interviewers love oddball questions. Review examples posted on [Glassdoor](#) and [BioSpace](#).
- Applicants are often asked to use bad coding software. Prepare yourself for all types of platforms. If things aren't working out, be honest, say “if this were working, this is what I would do.”
- Channel the persona of a person giving a plenary at big conference – be confident
- Check all the basic interview boxes: come dressed professionally, review the [most common interview questions](#), come with questions for the employer
- Do your background research – of the company, of the position. Come with a reason for why you want this *specific* job, why you are *uniquely* qualified or a good fit.

#### Framing your postdoc as preparation for an industry job

- If most people go from PhD to postdoc, to academic job, explain why you're different
- Highlight types of skills from your PhD and postdoc that industry is looking for: managing projects, working independently, working in a research team, being a quick learner

#### Getting your foot in the door

- See if there is someone at the company willing to refer you
- Work with your advisor to secure an NSF or NIH-sponsored grant with industry, that underwrites you
- Get hired as a contractor (short, well-paid positions for 6 months)

#### Do people flip back and forth between industry and academia?

A: They can! In computer science, some professors spend most of their time in industry and keep their position at UW. At professional society meetings you can still keep up academic ties

**Are industry positions available to non-U.S. Nationals?**

A: Yes, all the time.

**What are the best things about a job in industry?**

A: Better work-life balance. The variety of projects: from health care to purchasing behavior. The ability to move around and work with different teams and different managers. The ability to do pro-bono work for important social and environmental projects tied to the industry's mission.

**Are there things you miss about academia?**

A: Working on your own. The ability to walk through the entire process from start to finish. Answering science questions. The time and justification to go to seminars just to learn something. Chasing questions down rabbit holes – now I need to assess “will this answer have any impact?” not “will this answer add to science?”

**Is there something the College could do or should be doing?**

A: Give postdocs a foothold and encourage them to learn new techniques – like Git. Postdocs – do not feel forced to follow in the footsteps of your PI and use the same tools (e.g., Matlab). Let Postdocs know if it okay to decide to go into a career outside of academia.