

A DECADE OF CAREER PROFILES

Recommendations for Job-Hunting

After publishing 83 career profiles over the course of a little more than a decade (<https://tos.org/career-profiles>), *Oceanography's* profiles feature may be coming to a close. Keen readers of this December issue and the most recent September issue may have noticed the absence of any career profiles at the end of the magazine. I prefer not to fold a feature of the magazine that, at least according to web statistics, remains very popular. The problem is finding people to profile and who are willing to be profiled, which has become a time-consuming task. Without suggestions from *Oceanography* readers, I have to do the legwork, which for the most part means spending time scrolling through LinkedIn pages. I have found and profiled some excellent people this way, but over time this technique has become less useful as industry has become much better at shielding staff emails.

Five years ago, my Quarterdeck column reflected on how the career profiles published in *Oceanography* demonstrated that working toward a PhD in ocean sciences lets students hone a variety of marketable skills (<https://doi.org/10.5670/oceanog.2016.21>). That column included some of the best responses to the question we ask of each person we profile: What did your oceanographic education (or academic career) give you that is useful in your current job? As a decadal wrap-up to this column, here are some of the many excellent responses to the final question we ask:

Do you have any recommendations for new grads looking for jobs?

- *Don't wait for the perfect job to start applying. In this case, practice does make perfect. If you have already gone through the process, you will be ready when the perfect job does come up.*
- *Don't ignore the Internet. Get a profile on LinkedIn. Fill out your profile completely. Make a website. Employers do their homework, too.*
- *Don't be afraid to take risks. Sometimes a different path ends up being the most fruitful.*
- *Don't do this alone. Lean on your network inside and outside academia. And once you succeed, make sure to pay it forward.*
- *Don't underestimate yourself. You are all highly capable people. It just doesn't always feel that way when you are in a room full of other highly capable people.*

- *Don't give up. It takes work to find the job that's right for you. You may not immediately find the right job. But keep trying—you can do it!*

– Kim Martini, Senior Oceanographer, Sea-Bird Scientific

If you know for sure that you want to go into policy, don't do a PhD. It's not necessary—first-hand experience in the policy trenches is more valued. If you have done a PhD, there are still plenty of opportunities in policy, but you must be an excellent writer and communicator. Having a strong, supportive network is so important to getting you through the inevitable tough times and setbacks. And don't worry if you don't have a specific career plan—work on developing valuable skills, and the opportunities will follow.

– Miriam Goldstein, Director of Ocean Policy and Managing Director of Energy and Environment, Center for American Progress

Your science PhD or master's degree shouldn't be the bulk of your resume's work experience. You likely won't get a job because of your degree, though it may help you once you're in the position. You'll need to be able to show you have the skills for a specific job, regardless of your degree. Figure out what position titles mean—nonacademic jobs use words like “coordinator” or “specialist,” and these terms mean different things in different fields. You need to be able to describe your skills in nonacademic language.

– Marley Jarvis, Outreach and Education Specialist, Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences, University of Washington

My experience affirms that you never know who you are going to run into if you don't reach out. This includes both people at the university and in surrounding communities. Many universities are surrounded by a town or a city where there are endless opportunities to start dialogues with people you would never meet in class or the lab. People like to tell their stories and how they got where they are. So get outside your comfort zone and start inviting people for coffee and to have those conversations. Even if it helps you figure out what you don't want to do, no enlightening conversation is wasted, and you would be surprised how small policy and science circles really are.

– Aaron Goldner, Energy Policy Advisor, Office of Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

THE OCEANOGRAPHY SOCIETY'S HONORS PROGRAM

tos.org/honors

One of the most meaningful aspects of being a member of The Oceanography Society (TOS) is the opportunity to recognize and celebrate our colleagues' accomplishments.

Three medals are now open for nomination. Please take this opportunity to recognize a colleague for their exceptional achievements and contributions to the ocean sciences.

The **WALTER MUNK MEDAL** is given biennially to an individual ocean scientist for extraordinary accomplishments and novel insights in the areas of physical oceanography, ocean acoustics, or marine geophysics.

The **WALLACE S. BROECKER MEDAL** is given biennially to an individual ocean scientist for extraordinary accomplishments and novel insights in the areas of marine geoscience, chemical oceanography, or paleoceanography.

The **MARY SEARS MEDAL** is given biennially to an individual ocean scientist for extraordinary accomplishments and novel insights in the areas of biological oceanography, marine biology, or marine ecology.

**NOMINATION DEADLINE
SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**

Look for opportunities through your professional societies that you might not be able to access on your own from grad school. This could be serving on a policy or communication committee, participating in a congressional visits day, or taking a leadership position in the society itself. These posts can put you in the orbit of people from different backgrounds and in different places in their careers—great folks to tap as you explore your options.

– Katie Matthews, Deputy Chief Scientist, Oceana

(1) Put yourself out there. Let people know you are interested in positions outside of academia. (2) Conduct informational interviews and network. This will give you a sense for the types of positions you may want to pursue post-academia. (3) Update your LinkedIn profile and get business cards. These are currencies many sectors use for networking. (4) Practice your elevator speech. What are your skills and what excites you? (5) Think outside of the box and leave the “supposed to’s” behind. I have met hundreds of scientists since leaving academia who made a similar transition and hold positions in, for example, industry, finance, start-ups, and government. The career paths are endless.

– Sarah Bender, Program Officer, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

I have three recommendations. (1) Recognize that most scientists will not work in academia. Find the skills that you excel at as well as the elements that keep you excited, and find work that enables you to both employ your skills and enjoy your work. (2) Capitalize on the unbelievable skill set that you have attained in your education. In reality, an education in science (and especially a PhD) is light years beyond what most people will ever achieve, in both knowledge and experience. Use this confidently. (3) Network, network, network. The best jobs, the best opportunities, and the best future all lie in the people you know and what they can do for you. Ask your friends, colleagues and mentors for help...they will give it.

– Paul Bunje, Senior Director of Oceans, XPRIZE Foundation

Re-reading these smart and helpful answers makes me not quite ready to give a fond farewell to a feature that provides the few pages in each issue specifically dedicated students' career concerns. *Oceanography* can continue to publish additional career profiles of people who have left academia as the opportunities present themselves. But it can do so more often if you would please take five, ten, or even fifteen minutes of your time to come up with some names to send to me (ekappel@geo-prose.com). Your effort will be appreciated!



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