

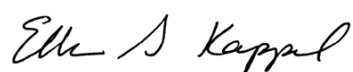
IN PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT

CAREERS OUTSIDE OF ACADEMIA

By all accounts, ocean sciences graduate students are very interested in learning about jobs options outside of academia—jobs that are frequently but unfortunately called “alternate careers.” Students often lack access to information about such jobs in their current academic surroundings, but their curiosity about them was evident in the standing-room-only crowds at the 2024 Ocean Sciences Meeting career panels and CV writing workshops. It is also notable in the popularity of *Oceanography*’s career profiles column (<https://tos.org/career-profiles>), now in its fifteenth year. These profiles display the breadth of job opportunities for ocean scientists in government, industry, and the nonprofit sector. The number of career profiles published online and in hard copies of *Oceanography* quietly passed the 100 mark in late 2023. Recognizing students’ need for career information, professional societies—and many university departments—have been organizing activities to help fill this knowledge gap and enable students to make connections with scientists who have pursued careers outside of academia.

For those who are interested in learning about how to use an ocean science degree to make a difference, I recommend the articles in this special issue of *Oceanography* on “Sea Grant: Science Serving America’s Coastlines and People.” They demonstrate the many ways in which people with ocean science degrees can use their skills to enhance the well-being of coastal communities and their local environments. Among their many roles, Sea Grant staff act as facilitators and communicators to increase environmental literacy and make science more accessible. They work with students, community leaders, local businesses, and others to devise ways to help coastal communities mitigate the adverse effects of problems ranging from plastic pollution, sea level rise, and harmful algal blooms to groundwater pumping and invasive species. Establishing trust with stakeholders is a large part of the mission as Sea Grant staff institute community science projects on topics such as green infrastructure and coastal conservation, aquaculture practices, and ocean acidification. They develop and publish important and widely used and adapted handbooks on important topics such as natural hazard preparedness. And they work to grow the ocean workforce through a variety of training programs. It’s uplifting reading.

The *Oceanography* career profiles column and articles in this special issue highlight the many valuable and satisfying jobs that require the skills trained ocean scientists possess. As younger scientists migrate to those jobs, perhaps we can finally bury the term “alternate career.”



Ellen S. Kappel, Editor