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***Degree: When, where, what,
and what in?***

In 2012, I was awarded my PhD in geological sciences from the University of Delaware.

Did you stay in academia at all, and if so, for how long?

No. While my office is on the Graduate School of Oceanography campus at the University of Rhode Island (URI), and I work with academicians and researchers, my postdoctoral fellowship at URI and subsequent full-time position with the Ocean Exploration Trust (OET) are not traditional academic positions.

How did you go about searching for a job outside of the university setting?

I was fortunate that I didn't have to do any job searching, and that my postdoc led to a permanent position.

Is this the only job (post-academia) that you've had? If not, what else did you do?

Yes, this is the only job I've had since graduating from the University of Delaware.

What is your current job? What path did you take to get there?

I am the Vice President of Exploration and Science Operations for the Ocean Exploration Trust. OET is a nonprofit organization that explores the deep sea and helps to inspire and educate the next generation of STEM professionals through internships and outreach programs. I was offered an internship while I was working on my PhD. I sailed for a month on *Nautilus* as a navigator and was hooked on scientific exploration of the ocean. I returned each summer to intern aboard the vessel and was offered a postdoc with Robert Ballard in my final year as a PhD student. I knew that

accepting this nontraditional postdoc position would be a detour from a traditional research path, but I love working to expand the science capabilities of the ship and helping to chart the path for growing the scientist involvement in the program. When I had to decide between going back into research or starting my career at OET, I felt I had a lot left to accomplish and stayed.

What did your oceanographic education (or academic career) give you that is useful in your current job?

Everything I learned is useful in some capacity of my job. Having a background in oceanography (my B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Maine and Rutgers University, respectively) and geological oceanography (PhD) gave me a broad base of knowledge that allows me to talk with scientists and researchers from varied backgrounds and put together expeditions that address all facets of oceanography. Exposure to various types of instruments and sensors and many field experiences, particularly during my PhD program, helped me understand the importance of marine technology in fully exploring the ocean and learn how to organize successful field operations.

Is there any course or other training you would have liked to have had as part of your graduate education to meet the demands of the job market?

I always recommend that students learn a skill that enhances their interests and abilities such as GIS, basic computer programming, boat operations, and familiarity with electronics/instruments. The more you can round out your knowledge with practical skills, the better your chances of landing a job or internship.



Is the job satisfying? What aspects of the job do you like best/least?

My job is incredibly satisfying. I love being able to plan an expedition season, help build teams to conduct the research, lead expeditions on *Nautilus*, and then see the vast amounts of knowledge we gained at the end of a six- to seven-month field season. I really enjoy working with students and seeing them learn and grow. I also love interacting with scientists and building teams of researchers who are excited to work with our data. My least favorite part of the job is the paperwork—signing off on hundreds of forms per cruise season—but the end result makes it worth it!

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

Never turn down an opportunity to try something new. Seek out professors whose research interests you and ask if they need help in the lab or field—or if they know someone who does. You never know what you're going to love doing. Academic research is one part of what is available to you with an oceanography degree, but there are government, private, and other organizations looking for educated, motivated people. Ask around and take the initiative to reach out if you find something interesting. 📍