

APPAM Professional Development Workshop: Beyond the Degree: Brining Career Options into Focus

November 5, 2014 | 12:00 – 4:00 pm
Albuquerque Convention Center | Ballroom A

Welcome Remarks

12:00 – 12:10 pm

The Career Search: Behind the Scenes

12:10 – 1:30 pm

Panelists:

Melissa Kovacs - Research Director, Maricopa County

John Hutchins - Communications Director, Development and External Affairs, MDRC

David Schachter - Assistant Dean and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Public Administration, NYU Wagner

What really goes on behind the scenes with prospective employers? Distinguished panelists explore and explain the mysteries every job seeker meets traveling the road to employment. What are the unforeseen obstacles and traps? How do you recover from missteps? How does one prepare for the unknown? This panel session will cover topics critical to the new and experienced job seeker, including:

- important elements of the curriculum vitae/resume
- the power of the cover letter
- fundamentals of a successful interview
- insights into winning "job talk"

The panel will also provide information to Ph.D. students from the perspective of an employer and various successful job candidates.

Dr. Melissa Kovacs will highlight the differences between academic and practitioner careers with an emphasis on matching a job to your personality and goals. She will challenge workshop participants to consider the balance between your day-to-day work life and your influence to effectively change the world. In addition, Dr. Kovacs will provide insights into the importance of cover letters and the active role candidates should play in the interview process.

John Hutchins will describe what it is like to work at a nonprofit research organization such as MDRC including the hiring process and the key things organizations like MDRC seek when they hire. Also, he will explain the importance of a candidate's background research on perspective organizations, the power of a good cover letter and the value of informational interviews.

David Schachter will lay out a framework that maximizes a student's time at school to be better poised for successful career upon graduation. In addition, he will illustrate strategies for a successful marriage between what you want do and what the employers wants you to do including getting behind the scenes on hiring decisions.

Tenured Faculty and the Fellowship Career Path

1:45 – 2:45 pm

Panelists:

Uday Desai - Professor, University of New Mexico

Eric Schwartz – Dean and Professor, University of Minnesota, The Humphrey School

Maureen Pirog - Rudy Professor and Past *JPAM* Editor, Indiana University

"Is academia the place for me?" What should students and new job hires be doing to secure a tenure track position down the line? Is a fellowship beneficial? Panelists in this session offer the opportunity for participants to engage associate and full professors in discussions about the tenure and fellowship career tracks. The panel will also share their thoughts on "publish or perish," appropriate work-life balance, and the importance of a research agenda.

Uday Desai will address the challenges and opportunities of starting his academic career as a visiting professor; his experience as a Fulbright Scholar; and the importance of having a research agenda, specifically one that allows for travel.

Eric Schwartz will discuss the differences between the academic and the non-academic world; and provide insights, based on his experience as dean, on how departments weigh academic and non-academic work experience.

Maureen Pirog will address the importance of publishing, and the culture of 'publish or perish' in academia; how to weigh writing grants and manuscripts for publication and how each are viewed by tenure committee; and, the value of publishing pre-graduation.

Non-Academic Career Path

3:00 – 4:00 pm

Panelists:

Rebekah Selekman - Researcher, Mathematica Policy Research

Todd Grindal - Associate, Abt Associates

Misty Heggeness - Labor Economist, National Institutes of Health

In this session, panelists will discuss five broad employer categories: government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research institutions, private sector companies, and political offices. Attendees will hear what institutions look for in prospective employees, as well as provide tips on how to prepare for job hunting and working within these categories. Panelists will be a combination of human resource professionals, program officers, and politicians. Topics to be covered include internships, how to apply for the right position, number and types of employers, and establishing career contacts.

Rebekah Selekman will talk about her my trajectory and what kind of research assistant experiences one needs to help to offset a lack of real-world experience, and that can set you up to be attractive to a place like Mathematica. She will also share her own job search experiences, having not applied to any academic positions as well as the work environment of a place like Mathematica, and what key qualities research institutions look for in employees.

Todd Grindal will focus on the types of work one does at a for-profit research firm. He will also share with students his experiences and qualities that such firms look for in new hires.

Misty Heggeness will talk about her own experience as an economist (policy analyst) within the U.S. federal government – including her stints in 3 different federal agencies. She will also talk about the process when applying for federal jobs with an advanced degree. What to think about, what to focus on. How to engage with potential federal employers, what they are looking for – what skills they need – how best to take advantage of some of the federal “early career entrance” programs and/or how to make the most of a federal internship. Of course, these will all be my own perspective and not any official voice of the federal government.