

Career Development Panel Overview: Science Diplomacy and International Science

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December's career development panel featured Careers in Science Diplomacy and International Science. The invited panelists discussed how they translated their scientific expertise and work experiences to work for the United States government and international organizations.

Dr. Lindsay Parish is an Infectious Disease and Vaccine Advisor for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) where she manages livestock infectious disease, zoonotic disease, and vaccine research programs. Along with writing technical reports, providing talking points for chief scientists, reviewing and editing annual work plans, she has also trained and increased education in developing countries, participated in scoping trips in Jordan and Malawi to increase agriculture and crop education, and has hosted symposiums about food security. Dr. Parish emphasized that although she was an AAAS fellow, there was no job guarantee after completion of the fellowship. However, the advantage of a fellowship is that it exposes you to experiences that make you more competitive for the job you are going to be applying for. Some skills and experiences she suggested one acquire included foreign language capabilities, project management experience, leadership positions, and field research (if possible). She also suggested looking at other policy fellowships (e.g. Christine Mirzayan Science & Technology Policy Fellowship, Research!America Science Policy Fellowship, ASBMB Science Policy Fellowship, numerous professional societies may have fellowships for varying visa/green card statuses).

Dr. Genya Dana is a Senior Science Policy Advisor in the Office of the Science and Technology Advisor to the Secretary of State at the US Department of State. She also manages the AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowships and the Jefferson Science Fellows Program for the Department; and, covers Africa science and technology issues, merging biotechnologies, sustainable development initiatives. One of the things she loves about her job is the incredible variety it allows. She provides scientific and technical advice, handles random questions because she is "the scientist" (she received a call once from a foreign dignitary asking what information she could provide about an incoming asteroid that could potentially hit their country which required her to quickly locate and contact the appropriate individuals at NASA), finds the experts who are needed to complete a mission,

and performs UN negotiating. Dr. Dana emphasized that you need to know what makes you excited and suggested reading the book, *What Color is Your Parachute*. She also stated that she learned about positions and was selected for them by constant networking. She actively searched for and contacted individuals who she thought could help her learn and proceed to the next step in her career.

Dr. Samuel Howerton works at the intersection of science, foreign policy, and economic development with the interagency and the White House. He has held a number of positions in his career and has found that how science is approached and utilized is dependent on the agency you are with and their mission. When working at the Department and Defense (DOD) he said that science there is performed through a national security lens and focuses on tool development (i.e. how science can influence foreign/economic development). Furthermore, you need to be able to think broadly and fast. He described how his team received over \$60 million at one point to develop medical response to nerve agents that would be used against the military and civilians.

Dr. Lieven Huybregts is a research fellow in the Poverty Health and Nutrition Division at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). He not only conducts bench research, but also manages a team of research assistants. Dr. Huybregts suggested that you become more marketable when you expand your research line and work in different environments. His career move to IFPRI was aided by numerous publications, practical experience in the field, leadership (mentoring junior colleagues), and being a successful collaborator. Importantly, someone inside of the organization knew his skills and was able to recruit him to IFPRI.

Practical Tips:

- Dr. Dana uses Excel spreadsheets to organize her network. She writes down who she wants to meet with, their information, and if she should follow up. She emphasized that you should know why you want to meet or have a phone conversation with that person. This allows you to become more articulate about yourself.
- When networking, always ask the person you are talking to if there is anyone that he/she could connect you with.
- Develop your LinkedIn profile. People can find you this way and quickly learn your credentials.
- Read more globally (e.g. economics, politics). You should be able to relate your work in a more global context.
- Always read about science and how it aligns with foreign policy issues (e.g. what are the technological developments that align with the mission?).
- Find people at Fogarty International Center or other agencies that do policy work where you can start to volunteer and build your credentials.
- Apply for fellowships or contracting positions. It is difficult to obtain a government position in policy through USAJOBS, particularly if you have little experience.
- Go to events, even if they are not in your field. You never know who may lead you to your next connection!

Major takeaways:

- Develop your brand. What is it about your skills and experiences that make you marketable and unique? Think about your skill sets and understand how all of your experiences fit into the brand you are trying to build. This will allow you to be more articulate about yourself when you are networking and interviewing.
- People who are most successful in this field are ones who are flexible, listen and are not wrapped up in their own expertise, always networking, and finding knowledge from anyone.