



AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellowship: A path forward

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My career path

- Undergraduate
 - Psychology, B.A.; Philosophy Minor
 - Considered medical school, but pursued Clinical Psychology career
- Graduate
 - Neuroscience Ph.D.; Psychology, M.S.
 - Changed degree track after 2 yrs.
 - Research: Functional and structural MRI to map working memory systems in healthy adults and those with dementia.
- Post-Doc
 - Vanderbilt University Institute of Imaging Science (VUIIS); 3 yrs.
 - Research: Functional MRI blood flow and oxygenation mapping in patients with intracranial stenosis (i.e., at risk for stroke) and Parkinson's disease
- Present
 - Voluntarily unemployed for 4.5 months and counting!
- Future – Beginning Sept. 1
 - AAAS Fellow at National Institute of Justice Office of Investigative and Forensic Science



The Job Hunt / Purgatory / Seriously...why is this taking so long?!

- June/July 2015
 - Firmly decided to pursue career options outside of traditional university setting
 - Current academic environment was too stressful
 - Desire to be involved in work that could have large scale impact on public health
 - NIH Program Specialist position
 - Interviewed in November, 2015; approx. 5 months after initial contact
 - The application and interview process can become extremely complicated and frustrating
- August – December 2015
 - Applied to various govt. positions of interest within NIH, CDC, & FDA
 - E.g., Health science policy analyst, Public health advisor, Public health analyst, Social science analyst
 - All through USA Jobs website. Not fruitful!



The light

- Vanderbilt Federal STEM Policy in Washington
 - 2-day event filled with career panel sessions
 - Speakers were current employees at federal agencies, private organizations, or staffers on the Hill.
- Quest for Science and Public Health Policy jobs
 - Applied for AAAS S&T Policy Fellowship following STEM Policy event
 - Volunteered with Life Science TN
 - Day on the Nashville Hill
 - Pursued other opportunities involving public health policy, e.g.:
 - OHSU – Center for Evidenced-based Policy
 - UW – Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation



AAAS S&T Policy Fellowships

- Designed to give scientists and engineers:
 - Opportunities to learn first-hand about policymaking
 - An understanding of government and policymaking, thereby preparing them to address key societal challenges
 - Opportunities to develop a large, collaborative network between current fellows, alumni, and other members within the federal system



Fellowship areas

- Big Data & Analytics
- Congressional Science & Engineering (work on the hill)
- Diplomacy, Security, and Development
- Energy, Environment, & Agriculture
- Health, Education, and Human Services

- Requiring 3 years professional post-doctoral experience
 - Judicial Branch (J.D. preferred)
 - Roger Revelle Global Stewardship



Choosing a program area

- You can choose two program areas during application
- While areas are distinct, there is some overlap between agencies
- What to think about:
 - Degree of involvement in actual policy work
 - Potential for real-world impact
 - Independence to choose projects of interest
 - Ability to interact with other agencies or outside groups of interest

Application Materials



Candidate Data:

- *Areas of scientific specialty (key words)*
- *Areas of policy interest*
- *Brief bio (200 words max)*

Candidate Statement:

- *Reasons for applying for a AAAS Fellowship*
- *Summary of background & expertise*
- *Areas of Interest*
- *Role as a fellow*
- *Career Goals*
- *1,000 words max*

Curriculum Vitae:

- *Education, expertise, achievements, honors & publications*
- *5 pgs.*

Extracurricular activities:

- *Brief examples of activities beyond the lab or classroom*
- *500 words max*

References:

- *Three recommendation letters are required*



Qualities of a successful candidate

- Involvement with extracurricular activities
 - Preferably demonstrating leadership or initiative
- Knowledge of key policy issues in area of interest
- Ability to **CONCISELY** and **EFFECTIVELY** communicate
 - Critical for briefing memo
- Passionate, or at least highly motivated, to engage in policy work
 - Need to be more than just motivated to leave traditional academic setting
- Ability to think creatively and analytically

Application and interview process

Nov. 1st

- Application Deadline:
 - *Candidate Statement*
 - CV/Resume
 - Extracurricular Activities
 - 3 Letters of Recommendation

Nov. 14th

- Eligibility verified

Early Feb.

- Notification of semi-finalist interview
 - Asked to write briefing memo; due in ~10 days

Late Feb. - Early Mar.

- Semi-finalists interviewed by Selection Committees

Mid April

- Finalists participate in Placement Week interviews

Late May – Early June

- Placement offers made from Host Agencies

September 1

- Fellowship begins

Application statistics

2012-13 SELECTION STATISTICS

PROGRAM	APPS	APPS TO SCs	SEMI FINALISTS	INTERVIEWS (incl alts)	FINALISTS*
Congressional	83	25	10	9	2
DSD	247	167	96	95	64
EEA	173	140	96	93	69
HEHS	230	124	72	72	49
Revelle	8	8	7	6	1
5	741	464	281	275	185

*** Includes dual finalists**



Q & A

If you have further questions about the fellowship or application process, please email me:

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