

PfLA GS

Preparing for Life After Graduate School

A two-day workshop designed to inform chemistry graduate students and postdocs about their career options after graduate school and how to prepare for them.

A project of the ACS Office of Graduate Education and the Department of Career Management and Development



Are chemistry graduate students and postdocs prepared for entering the workforce?

"Although it is a prestigious university, the training ... really did not prepare us very well for life after graduate school." — a Ph.D. industrial chemist describing shortcomings in his graduate education

Well over half of Ph.D. chemists work in industry; however, in the words of one industrial employer, *"Most recent doctoral graduates ... do not have the foggiest idea of what industrial research is all about."*

Career Information/Guidance and Preparation for an Industrial Career are two major shortcomings in many otherwise excellent graduate programs, according to a recent ACS survey.

How did PflAGS get started?

Joel Shulman, as the Manager of Doctoral Recruiting and University Relations for Procter & Gamble, saw that most chemistry departments were missing an opportunity to prepare their doctoral graduates to make the transition from an academic environment to an industrial one. At the University of Cincinnati, he developed and has been giving a seminar course, Life After Graduate School, for third and fourth year graduate students.

Now Professor Shulman has partnered with the ACS Office of Graduate Education and Department of Career Services to create a two-day workshop called Preparing for Life After Graduate School (*PflAGS*) to help prepare doctoral students and post-doctoral scholars to enter the workforce.



What does the PflAGS Workshop Cover?

- ▶ **Defining careers for PhD chemists**
What does it mean to work in industry? How employees are evaluated, opportunities for promotion, the dual-ladder concept in industry, and other issues are discussed. A comparison of industrial jobs with academic (at both PhD-granting universities and four-year colleges) and government employment is included, as is a discussion of postdoctoral research as it relates to your career choice.
- ▶ **Nontechnical skills and knowledge**
Modules are included on writing persuasive memos; conducting or receiving performance reviews; patents and intellectual property; business economics and project selection; and ethics in research. Working together on case studies illustrates the team approach to problem solving.
- ▶ **Finding employment opportunities**
Modules focus on targeting the job market, the resume and cover letter, and interviewing skills. Also included are academic research proposals and the teaching philosophy statement needed in most academic job searches.
- ▶ **Mock Interview and Resume Review**
To help students prepare for the real experience, mock interviews and resume reviews are conducted following the workshop. Many participants find this to be the workshop's most valuable part.

Enthusiastic response from graduate students and postdocs who have participated in **PfLAGS!**

"I have now thought more about my future in these two days than I have in my whole graduate career."

"The broad range of topics is excellent."

"It was immensely useful. I was petrified about my future before this course because I knew I didn't want to teach, but I had no one to ask about industry."

Is your Chemistry Department interested in a **PfLAGS** workshop?

The two-day PfLAGS workshop (plus mock interviews and resume review) is available to chemistry departments at Ph.D.-granting universities through the ACS Office of Graduate Education and Department of Career Services. If your department is interested in finding out more about hosting a session of PfLAGS, contact the ACS Office of Graduate Education: GradEd@acs.org; 202-872-4588