

Education Symposia

E-1

Build Your Written/Oral Skills, Advertise Yourself and Find That Perfect Job. KAREN EIPPERT. College of Charleston, School of Sciences and Mathematics, 6 Greenway, Charleston SC, 29424. Email: eippertk@cofc.edu

Professional networking is easily the most effective and powerful strategy for conducting a job search in any economy. In 2009, with the state of the current economy and the dismal employment outlook, it may be the only way to identify and locate available positions and help get a foot in the door. The primary responsibilities of the job seeker in this process are to be educated about their prospective audience, the current trends in their targeted field, and to make sure he/she is equipped with the best possible tools and have them readily available. After conducting some basic research on where the job pools may exist for graduates with a background in biology and research with this particular focus, there appears to be reason for optimism. The areas of health care research, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and genetically driven research are not occupational areas included in the current negative employment projections. There is every reason to believe that a well prepared candidate, with an effective job search plan, will be successful in securing a position in their chosen field.

E-2

A Government Scientist: How it Works With the Agricultural Research Service. DAVE ELLIS. USDA-ARS, National

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Like applying for any job, patience is a virtue when applying for government jobs. Also, there are many factors beyond your control, such as veteran preference and minimum experience needed for certain pay levels. The first place to start looking for opportunities for government employment is <http://www.usajobs.com> which lists all U.S. government job openings. This site is versatile and you can set up notification of jobs based on criteria you choose. The individualized job applications processes starts after finding a job announcement which interests you. With the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), application materials are sent to a centralized screening facility where applications are reviewed to ensure applicants meet minimum qualifications outlined in the announcement. Special care should be taken to address each KSA (Knowledge, Skill and Ability) component as well as the closing date for the announcement. Only if you pass this review process will the site or scientist hiring you see your application. For ARS scientist positions, 2 or more applicants are usually invited for an interview with an interview panel that then makes a recommendation to the hiring official. Once one gets a job as an ARS scientist, the minimum scientific requirement is to do impact research within the scope of your program and to get two peer reviewed journal publications per year. Being an ARS scientist is extremely rewarding, but like any government job, there are continual processes that one must adjust to and not lose focus on impact and publishing.