



Sloane Wiktorowicz, The Aerospace Corporation

An instrumentalist's perspective

- Past
 - *Separate from mentor's shadow (find your own investigation and become the expert)*
 - *Don't shy away from high risk / high reward projects*
 - *Perform all parts of the project (science driver, optical design, control software, lab calibration, on-sky commissioning / calibration, data reduction / analysis pipeline, telescope / grant proposal writing, publications; this is atypical)*
 - *Write as many grant proposals as possible as early in career as possible*
 - *Apply to positions even if you only meet part of requirements*
- Present
 - *Commission instrument at large telescope*
 - *Observe new science cases (develop new fields)*
 - *Publish discoveries*
 - *Lead team to develop new instruments*
 - *Continue to write grant proposals*
- Future
 - *Assume leadership role of institutional capabilities*



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What is Aerospace?

- Non-profit that operates an FFRDC (Federally Funded Research and Development Center)
- Air Force's version of JPL
- Also contract work for NASA
 - *Independent TRL (Technology Readiness Level) assessment for HabEx / LUVOIR*
 - *Panels for SAT (Strategic Astrophysics Technology)*
- Most reliable Cubesat bus in operation
- Permanent positions



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Interviewing / negotiation

- You're interviewing institution as much as they're interviewing you
 - *Red flags during interview will almost certainly become larger problem later*
 - *Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know," but have an idea how to answer the question*
 - *Don't talk dollar figures until you receive an offer (say you're "flexible" if you must)*
 - *Things to think about: stability, pace, job activities, advancement, salary (when you receive an offer), location, family life, benefits, retirement*
- Always negotiate when you receive an offer
 - *No one rescinds an offer because you negotiate*
 - *Salary, sign-on bonus, entry ladder rank, teaching load all negotiable*
- Common for raises / advancement to require offers from other institutions