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nature jobs

Having it all

Grad students and postdocs know about career opportunities in sectors beyond academia. But they are uncertain about how to pursue them, and are wary about leaving academia and getting stuck in a sector that, they think, offers no return to academic science. A group of young scientists attending a career seminar at a meeting sponsored by Nature Biotechnology and the University of Miami voiced those common concerns earlier this month.

The students were encouraged by one panellist's career path. Jeremy Paul, director of the Frontiers of Science Program at the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS), has worked in academic, industrial and non-profit sectors, both on and off the bench. After a postdoc at the University of Chicago, Illinois, where he studied the structure and function of recombinant human insulin receptors, he helped, with a group of academic scientists, to found Progenics Pharmaceuticals in Tarrytown, New York. From there, Paul moved on to Cadus, another biotech company in upstate New York. There, he learned how to manage interactions both with big pharma and non-profits, as the company had alliances with each. Next, he took his growing

project-management experience to OSI Pharmaceuticals, based in Farmingdale, New York, and expanded his expertise in intellectual property, before moving on to Aton Pharma, another upstate New York biotech, where intellectual property became his sole focus. When he joined NYAS last year, Paul applied his project-management skills in a different sector. He also drew on his experience in communicating across different sectors to help the NYAS build up its educational offerings.

Paul's path shows that one can start off in academia, work in industry, get involved in non-profit work, and remain engaged in academic science — as long as you stay in contact with people from earlier in your career, build up skill sets and learn how to apply existing ones in new environments.



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