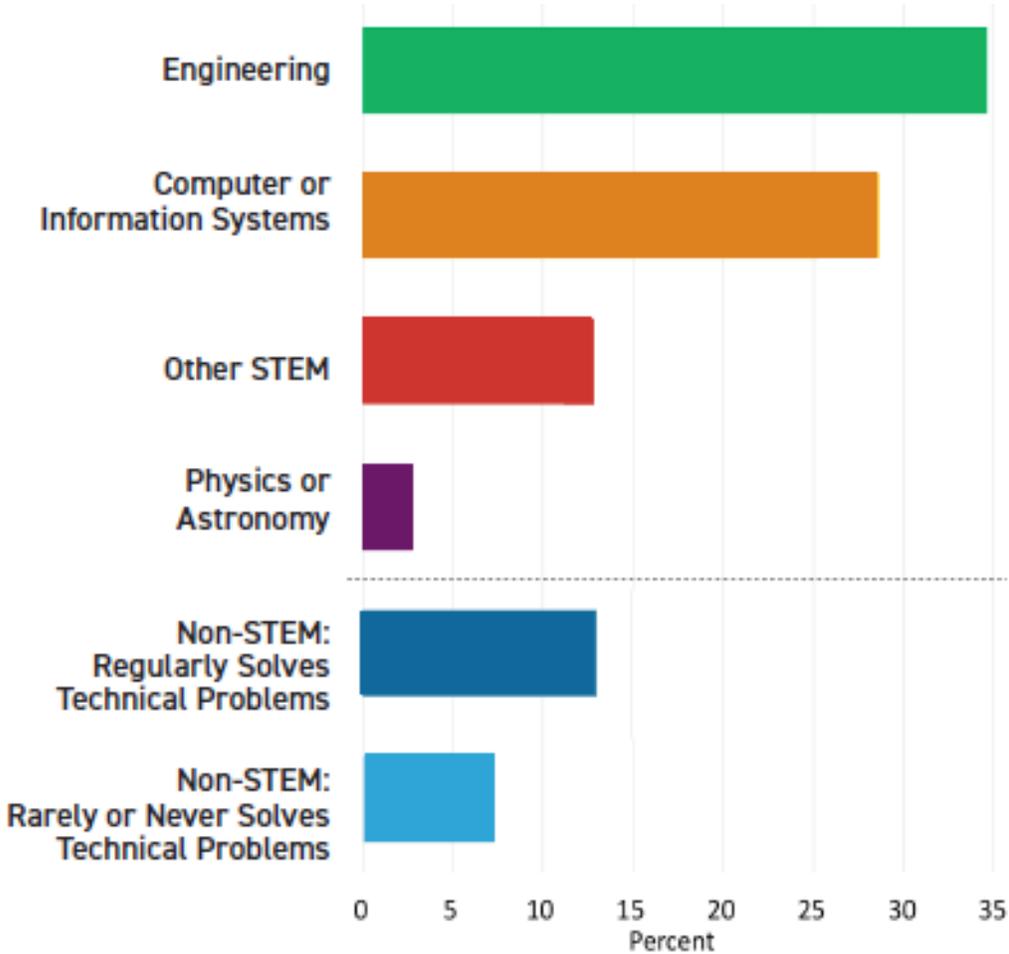# Physics & Astronomy Career Workshop #2

Making connections:

Informational interviewing and networking

5 November 2024
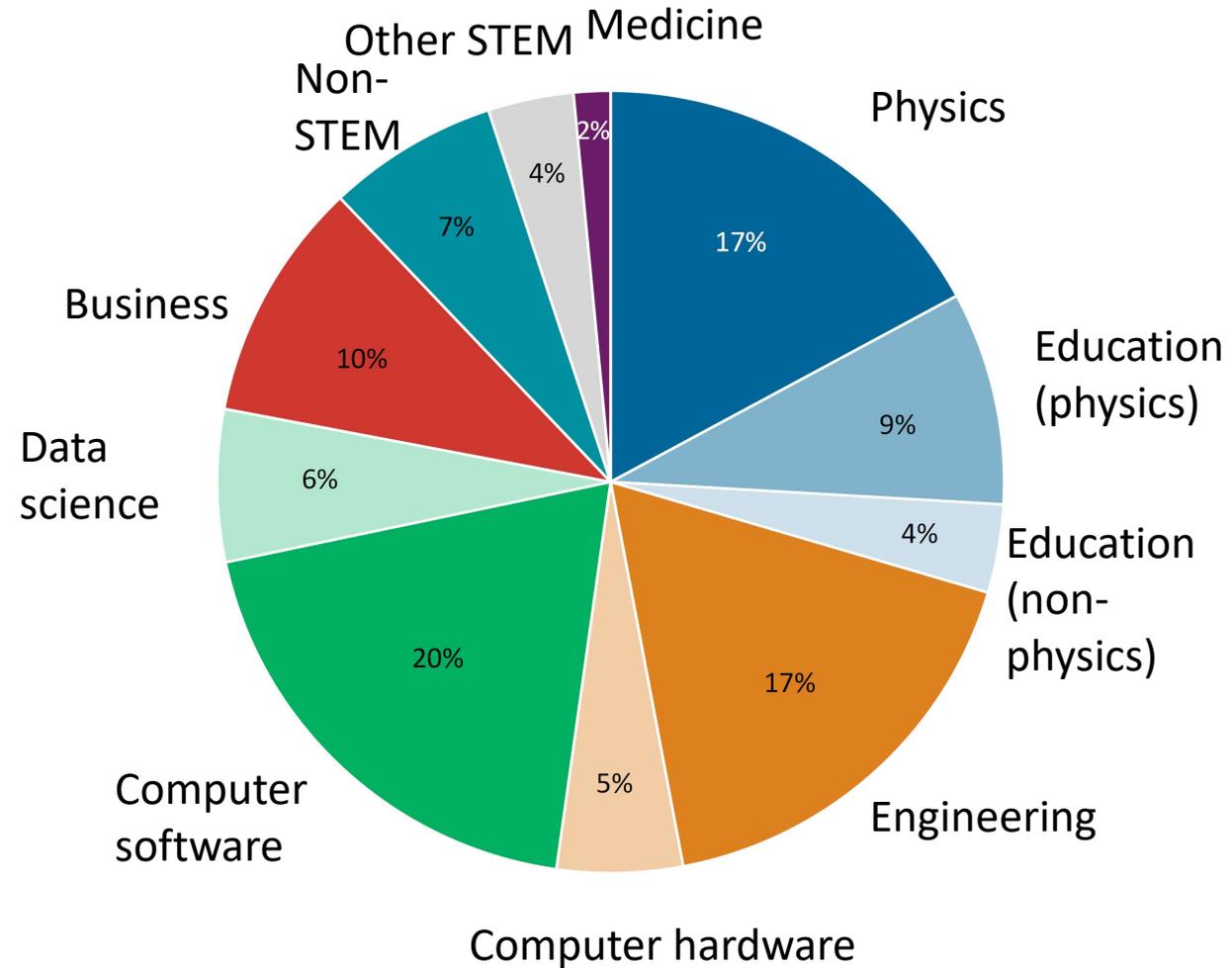
Employment fields of new graduates

Bachelor's (private sector)

Engineering

Computer or Information Systems

Other STEM

Physics or Astronomy

Non-STEM: Regularly Solves Technical Problems

Non-STEM: Rarely or Never Solves Technical Problems

Percent

AIP Statistical Research Center

PhD (potentially-permanent)

Other STEM — Medicine 2%

Non-STEM — Physics 17%

Business 10%

Education (physics) 9%

Data science 6%

Education (non-physics) 4%

Other STEM 4%

Non-STEM 7%

Computer software 20%

Computer hardware 5%

Engineering 17%

Homework from workshop #1

Career journal
- Goals/interests/strengths (self-knowledge)
  - Why did you become a scientist?
  - What do you do that makes you happy?
- Skills inventory (self-assessment)
  - What is your "superpower?"

What did you add to your goals/interests/strengths or your skills inventory?

Exploration
- Watch an APS webinar
- Identify an employment area of interest

What webinar did you watch, and what is one thing you learned from it?
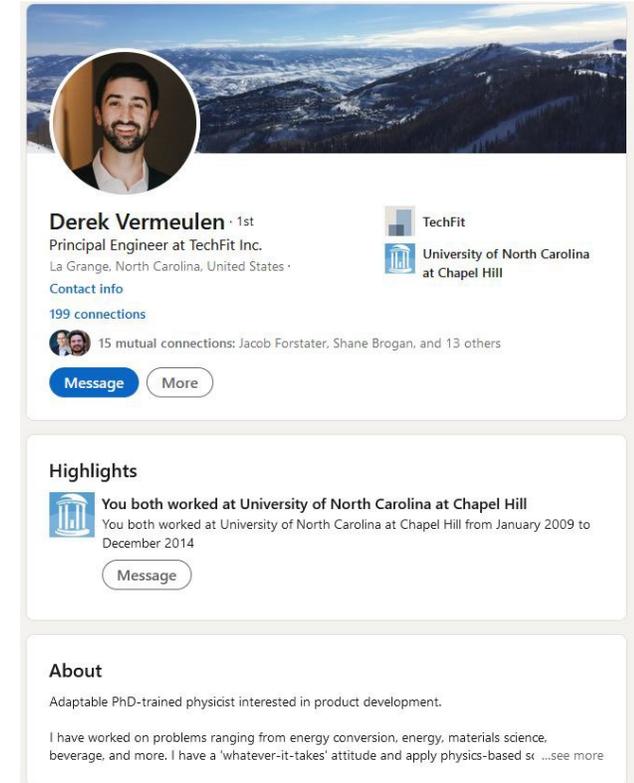
What is an employment area that interests you?

Your LinkedIn profile   https://www.linkedin.com/

- Use a good photo—people remember faces better than names!
- Companies often use employment search firms ("headhunters")
  - Professionals are typically on LinkedIn
  - LinkedIn is keyword-searchable
- Put careful thought into what you list in the various sections:
  - About
  - Background
  - Skills
  - Accomplishments
- Look at profiles of other physicists for guidance

See also advice from UCS: https://careers.unc.edu/students/networking-and-social-media/how-build-your-linkedin-presence

Connecting with others

Your connections
- 1st degree connections: people you know
- 2nd degree connections: people known by people you know (many more of these!)
  - Ask your mutual connection for an introduction
- **70-80% of jobs are found through 2nd-degree connections**
- Connections can be through family, friends, acquaintances, your barber, …
- Alums of your institution are particularly likely to respond

On Linked**in**
- Select "My network" to see your connections, and "people you may know" (based on your profile).
- Send "connect" request on LinkedIn to people to be able to message them (and automatically follow them)
- LinkedIn Groups

Connecting on Linked in

Search for targets
- Use appropriate search term (e.g. "data science" or "physics")
- Search for alums of your institution along with keyword (more likely to reply)
- Filter by 1st and 2nd degree connections
- Contact mutual connections of 2nd degree about introduction

Craft your "connect" message
- Always use a personal message, not the generic "I'd like to add you to my network" that LinkedIn supplies (more likely to accept)
- Be direct (but succinct)
- Helps them understand what they can do to help you

Informational interviews

- Talking with someone who has a job that might interest you
- Typically ~ 30 minutes
- Most likely virtual/by phone (though could be in person)
- Find out what the job entails
- Is it a match to your goals/interests/strengths and skill set?
- Who could you talk to if you want to learn more?
- NOT an opportunity to ask for a job! (Though an opening might be mentioned)
- The person is now part of your network!
- Contact the person again after a few months and say what you did in the interim

Possible questions for informational interviews

Generic

- What is the focus of your work? What do you do for the company (or lab)?
- What is your typical day like?
- What is the most difficult aspect of your job? The most enjoyable?
- What trends do you see in your industry in the next five years?
- What kind of experience or knowledge do employers look for in an applicant?

Specific

- More detailed questions based on their profile (or that of others in the field), or what you have found out about the company they work for

See also the more detailed handout on informational interviewing from UCS:
https://careers.unc.edu/sites/careers.unc.edu/files/documents/Informational%20Interviewing_0.pdf

Work in groups to assemble lists of possible questions for an interview

Networking

Networking does not mean engaging in meaningless banter at social events.

Networking is developing relationships with people who share your professional and personal interests and alerting them to your abilities and goals.

- Who you are
- What you want

Based on your self-evaluation and self-assessment (*see workshop #1*), **develop a few-sentence "pitch"** that describes your background and the career path you are interested in.

Networking opportunities

- Campus career fairs (Some in-person, some virtual via [Handshake])
  - ➢ Master's and Doctoral Career Fair 7 Nov. 2024 (Thursday!)
  - ➢ DoD Civilian Careers Fair 7 Nov. 2024 (Thursday!)
  - ➢ National Center for Computational Science Career Fair 8 Nov. 2024 (Friday!)
  - ➢ Carolina Innovators Connect (local start-ups) 12 Nov. 2024 (next week!)
  - ➢ Spring 2025 Job and Internship Fair 28 Jan. 2025
  - ➢ US EPA Career Fair 20 Mar. 2025
- Employer info sessions (usually virtual via [Handshake])
  - ➢ Find in Handshake ("events), or see [Career Events webpage]
- Physics conferences
  - ➢ Exhibit hall
  - ➢ Career panels and events
  - ➢ Poster sessions
- Science outreach events

Homework

Foundational

- Informational interviews
  - **Do some informational interviews**
  - Make notes in your career journal
  - Adjust question list for next interview
- Continue reflections
  - Self-knowledge
  - Self-assessment

Focused

Find (at least) one job ad for a position that could interest you

- APS job board:
  https://careers.aps.org/jobseekers/
- AAS job board:
  https://jobregister.aas.org/
- AAAS Science Careers
  https://jobs.sciencecareers.org/
- LinkedIn: "Jobs" tab, search by keywords (get from profiles)
- Websites of specific companies (see "who's hiring" links on Career Info page)

You will use this in workshop #3 in the spring