



Bruce Alberts is Editor-in-Chief of *Science*.

Science for Science

ATTITUDES ABOUT CAREER PATHS HAVE CHANGED FOR THE CURRENT GENERATION OF SCIENCE graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. A recent survey of more than 1000 of these young scientists at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), reveals an unusually broad range of career aspirations. Less than half select becoming academic researchers like their mentors as their first choice. One senses that we are reaching a tipping point, where students who prefer to work in the world of public policy, government, precollege education, industry, or law will no longer be viewed as deserting science. Faculty and students can then begin to talk honestly about a whole range of respected, science-related career possibilities. This is crucial, because we must promote the movement of scientists into many occupations and environments if our end goal is to effectively apply science and its values to solving global problems.*

The problem is not confined to the interactions between professors and young scientists. Many potential employers who would benefit from having a talented scientist work for them have an overly narrow view of what scientists do, and some may even feel intimidated by the idea of working with a scientist. The best way to change such attitudes is by increasing the contacts between scientists and the rest of society. The American Association for the Advancement of Science has a long-standing tradition of internships and fellowships that intersect the worlds of science and policy, technology, law, and the media. And UCSF will experiment with a new program that would provide all graduate students with the opportunity to spend 3 months of a 5-year Ph.D. degree experience working as an apprentice in a setting outside the usual academic laboratory.

There are new efforts at bringing scientists together with policymakers at all levels of government. For example, the California Council on Science and Technology (CCST) has just announced a program, funded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation in collaboration with others, to provide 1-year Policy Fellowships to the California State Legislature.† Many other governments around the world would certainly benefit from a similar infusion of scientific expertise. All of these programs will require that we provide our students with the additional skills they will need to be successful as they interface with other professions. And the international scientific community must serve as an important resource that remains connected with, and supports, scientists in other careers.

As Editor-in-Chief, I want to encourage and support not only research scientists, but everyone who would use their science in productive ways for society. In 1995, *Science* launched its *Science Careers* Web site (then called *Science's Next Wave*), which promotes a wide range of successful careers for scientists while also advertising worldwide job opportunities. We now want to build on this tradition by providing new avenues for connecting scientists with each other, whatever their career paths. To this end, in the News and Commentary sections we will continue coverage of the evolving ways in which science is being applied to societal issues—ranging from education to law to public policy. In this way, we can connect our readership to the many opportunities for scientists to contribute to our world, while helping potential employers appreciate the advantages of having someone on their team who can connect them to the valuable resources and strengths of the scientific community.

In addition, *Science* is currently working on new ways to connect subcommunities of scientists with similar aims in order to increase their success. An initial version of a new connection Web site, the Clinical and Translational Science Network, will be launched soon. We also want to reach out to the young scientists entering the many career paths now opening. What are your needs for networking and community support? Readers with examples of highly effective communities that have been established electronically are likewise urged to post those ideas at *Science*, using the links below.

— Bruce Alberts

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