Factors Influencing Post Ph.D. Career Pathways

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*The thoughts expressed here represent my own and not those of the NSF
“PhDs are beginnings, not endings.”
Nina Federoff, Former President of AAAS

Career decisions are made in contexts...

Personal

Training Experiences

Societal

Other?

...sparse literature on factors impacting career decision making processes in recent STEM PhDs
Research Question

What factors and forces influence recent Ph.D. completers’ interest in pursuing various career tracks?

• Faculty (research intensive)
• Faculty (teaching intensive)
• Research, non-academic (industry, government, pharma, biotech, etc.)
• Non-research career (consulting, policy, science writing, law, business, etc.)

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*Work is supported by the AAAS Education & Human Resources Directorate; NOT AN OFFICIAL NSF STUDY*
Timeline

• Spring 2012: Focus Groups
• Summer 2012: Data Analysis & Survey Design
• Fall 2012: Survey Launch & Follow-up interviews
• Spring 2013: AAAS Symposium on Graduate & Postdoctoral Training

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Discussion Questions for Postdocs

1. Why did you decide to pursue a Ph.D. in your discipline? When you began, was there a career path you intended to pursue?

2. Describe your graduate and postdoctoral training experiences (unexpected opportunities, benefits & challenges)?

3. What are your current career interests & how have they evolved since you began your training?