

“Where do I go from here? Paving your path to career success.”

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Dr. Sanders did his undergraduate training at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and his Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge, UK, supported by the Wellcome Trust. Following postdoctoral training at the National Institutes of Health and Georgetown University, Dr. Sanders joined TranXenoGen, a startup biotechnology company in Massachusetts working on avian transgenics. Pursuing his parallel passion for writing and editing, Dr. Sanders joined BioTechniques as an editor, before joining Science/AAAS in 2006. Currently Dr. Sanders is the Senior Editor for Custom Publishing for the journal Science and Program Director for Outreach.

Dr. Sanders started the presentation talking about his own experience, the choices he had to make and how they informed his career path.

As a Senior Editor, his roles are:

- Editing (science-related content)
- Project management
- Sales
- Marketing
- Business development
- And more

He appreciates the fact that he can work with people, and he has enjoyed his current position for 13 years and going.

What is AAAS? It is a non-profit organization for advancing science, engineering and innovation throughout the world. It is membership based. They publish the journal *Science* and other sister journals. Its website includes a broad range of career advice and resources. AAAS supports science in different ways, including supporting young scientists, policies, and education.

We need to ask ourselves the right questions. The big question is: who are we and why are we here? We don't always end up where we thought we would be. When we start out in our career, we often imagine it as a straight line, but it is not. Our career path will make many twists and turns, hit dead ends, and make

diversions. In order to choose the best path, what should we consider? What do we really want? Is our current job what we really want? What do we love to do? What energizes us? What gets us up in the morning? What kind of activities make us lose track of time? We need to find something we enjoy doing. Do we want to work in our current environment? What would we miss if we leave? What won't we miss? Are we introverts or extroverts? We can be the kind of introvert who enjoys interacting with people but needs to recharge by themselves alone. What do we want to wear to work? How often do we want to change projects? In academia we are free to lead our project, but in Industry we might have to change every couple of years. Would we like to work independently or as part of a team? How important is income level and job security for us? What sort of hours do we want to work? Are we willing to travel? How much? Sean shared that one year he attended 14 conferences, two of which were at international locations. He shared a story about someone at GE Healthcare who traveling about 200 days a year. What sort of funding situation do we want to be in? What other interest or skills do we want to use? What sort of stress level do we want to deal with?

Finding some answers. Look into [Science Careers](#). The intention of the website is to include all the information scientists need to make career decisions and to find a job in all areas (academia, industry, government...). It supports AAAS commitment to furthering careers in science and technology as well as diversity in the sciences. Use the [job board](#) to create job alerts across the board (academia, industry, politics, editing, government...). Even if you're not looking for a job, you should have a look to see what kind of jobs are out there and what skills you should develop to get them. On Science Careers, you can also find career articles and career tools. One of the tools is [MyIDP](#). It is a structured tool designed to help you to identify your skills, interest, values and match it with a long-term career goal. It helps you to plan how to get the skills you need, and it provides a structure to discuss with your mentor. It is a self-assessment and takes time, but you can save your work and do small parts at a time. At the end you can set goals, adjust your goals, and set reminders in the system to keep you on track. You can implement a plan and discuss it with your mentor. It also permits you to identify your weaknesses and to work on them. There are plenty of jobs opportunities for PhDs out there. The most difficult part is to figure out which one is the right one for you and how to get there.

