From Academia to Government Service: CVT’s Role in Developing Graduate Students

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Introduction

• Two general topics:
  – How CVT enriched my experience as a Ph.D. student
  – How CVT facilitated my transition from academia to government service

• Outline
  – My path into graduate school
  – Writing my dissertation
  – CVT’s role in academic and professional development
  – My experience as an NNSA Graduate Fellow

• Disclaimer:
  – Any and all opinions presented in this talk are fully my own, and do not represent the positions or policy of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, DOE/NNSA, or any other U.S. Government entity.
My background

August 2012: Begins Ph.D. program at Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs, Princeton U.

May 2012: U. Tennessee, B.S. Nuclear Engineering

Summer 2014: Internship, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

September 2014: Princeton U., M.A. in Public Affairs

Fall 2015, CVT Associate

Fall 2014–Spring 2015: Internship, International Atomic Energy Agency Department of Safeguards


Summer 2017: CVT Internship, Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Fall 2017: CVT Fellow

June 2018: Fellow, Nevada Field Office, DOE/NNSA
My dissertation research

• Title: Reinventing International Nuclear Safeguards in the Centrifuge Enrichment Era
• Research question:
  – What can be done to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of international safeguards at GCEPs, both now and in the near- to mid-term future, in the face of the growing political attention to GCEP safeguards, as well as the growth in commercial GCEP capacity over recent decades?
• Extensive archival work on history of gas centrifuge enrichment plant (GCEP) safeguards negotiations
• Opportunity to be the first to study an issue that hadn’t been studied academically before
• My dissertation studied an extremely complex interplay between political and technical dynamics affecting GCEP safeguards discussions
Some Wisdom:

“1+1=1”
CVT’s role in academic and professional development

• Integrating technical and policy research

• Supporting broad and flexible research paths for students

• Promoting professional development for students

From CVT to the NGFP

- Very new environment
- Steep learning curve
- The NNSA Nevada Field Office oversees an exceptionally broad range of missions at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS)

- CVT gave me enough familiarity with the NNSA mission to start my new job with confidence, but also cultivated my desire to pursue new experiences
New Learning Opportunities at the NNSS

Conclusion

“The CVT’s mission is the advancement of the state-of-the-art in technologies and policies related to the verification of nuclear treaties and training the next generation of nuclear professionals”