Behavioral Interviewing for STEM Graduate Students

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Session goals

- **<u>Learn</u>**: Careers aren't linear; random conversations can lead to great opportunities
- **<u>Feel</u>**: Confident that you, too, can interview well
- **<u>Do</u>**: Have answers ready to the 3 most common interview questions

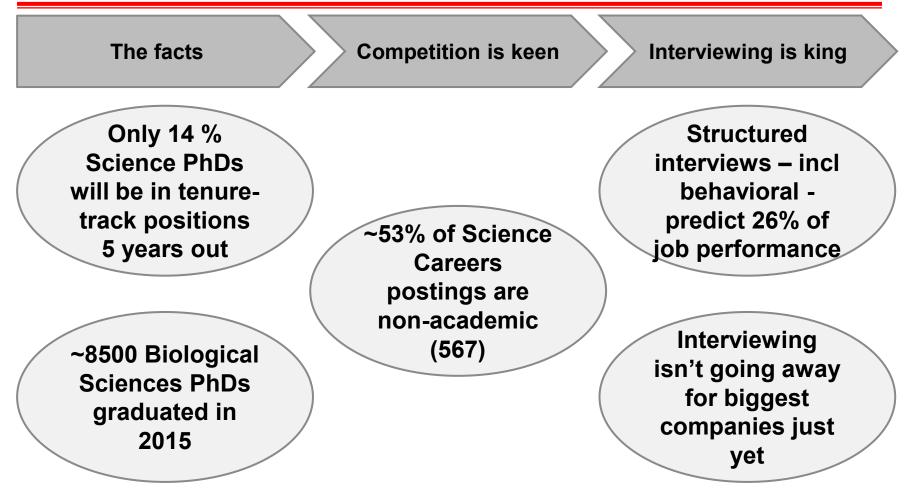# Science is hard…Behavioral Interviewing is easy, right?

> Why are you a good scientist?

> Are you an ethical scientist?

> How do you handle pressure?

> What could you bring to other companies?

> If I gave you XYZ cells and asked you XYZ questions— what experiments would you do?

> What if things don't work?

Can you wing it AND still win it?

Source: https://cheekyscientist.com/top-6-most-difficult-r-and-d-interview-questions-phds-should-know/

Most advanced degree candidates land non-academic jobs: soft-skill interviews are essential

The facts → **Competition is keen** → **Interviewing is king**

Only 14 % Science PhDs will be in tenure-track positions 5 years out

~8500 Biological Sciences PhDs graduated in 2015

~53% of Science Careers postings are non-academic (567)

Structured interviews – incl behavioral - predict 26% of job performance

Interviewing isn't going away for biggest companies just yet

Winging it isn't a good strategy: here's how you can prepare

Start with Why
- Start with Why by Simon Sinek
- 4 Whys: Why this Industry? Why this Company? Why this Role / Position? Why You?

Prepare STAR stories
- Apply Situation / Task / Action / Result Framework to your stories
- Interview Question "Banks"

Practice out loud
- Tell me about yourself - 90 second explanation of your background
- 90 second "pitch" – what are you looking for?
- Tell me about a time when…STAR

At least 3 other parts of Interview Preparation

~3-4 hours of research PER company

Resume & Company Research

- Results-oriented resume
- Company Research: Website, annual report, stock price / revenue, products / services, recent news, competitors, industry reports, trade magazines

Informa-tional interview-ing

- Find contacts in your network
- Develop sample interview questions
- Schedule time to speak via phone / Skype / Facetime / in person

Technical Prepar-ation

- Case interviewing and / or brain teasers
- Functional work test
- Written tests
- Oral presentation on your research or hot topic in science

Thank you notes or emails still matter!

Now, it's your turn - Let's practice!
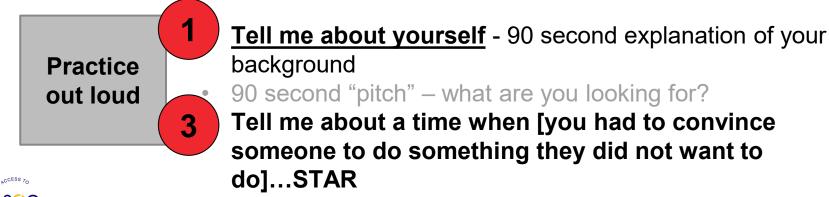
G-RISE & RaMP

Top 3 interview questions

Start with Why **(2)**

- Start with Why by Simon Sinek
- **4 Whys: Why this Industry? Why this Company? Why this Role / Position? Why You?**

Prepare STAR stories

- Apply **Situation / Task / Action / Result (STAR)** Framework to your stories
- Use interview Question "Banks" - see themuse.com

Practice out loud **(1)** **(3)**

- **Tell me about yourself** - 90 second explanation of your background
- 90 second "pitch" – what are you looking for?
- **Tell me about a time when [you had to convince someone to do something they did not want to do]…STAR**

Resources

- **Websites**
  - http://cheekyscientist.com/
  - themuse.com - *search 30 behavioral interview questions*

- **Books**
  - Next Gen PhD: A guide to career paths in science by Melanie V. Sinche
  - Alternative Careers in Science: Leaving the Ivory Tower by Cynthia Roth Robbins
  - A PhD is Not Enough by Peter Feibelman