



Graduate Training for Alternative Careers at CU Boulder

The realization that less than 20% of graduate students will go on to academic careers (including instructor positions) suggests that preparing our students for careers beyond the university is prudent. We have some resources on campus to support this exploration, primarily through Career Services. What else do we need to do?

Graduate student climate and paths. There are three general prevailing attitudes of graduate students when it comes to looking outside of a traditional academic path:

- “I would lose support or mentorship if I said I was interested in careers outside of academia”
- “Not sure if I would lose support, but fear I would”
- Mentors are supportive of non-academic exploration but have no experience and don’t know how to connect students to those paths

Our Challenges. Campus conversations identified several areas of current challenges we face in connecting students to alternative career pathways, including:

- **Mentality:** In industry, you see your career as your responsibility. In academia, students are in their comfort zone with no clear path to create their own idea of their future. We should be training our graduate students in an entrepreneurial mindset - “You’re in charge of your own career.” Additionally, students are working so hard to position themselves for academic successes that it’s hard to look at other paths - and is seen as a failure when they do.
- **Connecting students to their options (with support of faculty):** Helping students develop networks, faculty developing external relationships and connection to Boulder, alumni are key here, etc.

White Papers submitted to Academic Futures in this area

- *The Case for Career Development Core Coursework (Severy)*
- *Enhancing students' experience in on-campus jobs - improved career-readiness for post-graduation employment (Hermann)*





Academic Futures

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- *Public work at the University of Colorado (Kirschner)*
- *Let the kids play outside: The case for interdepartmental and industry collaborations for graduate students at CU Boulder (Nickerson)*
- *"Cradle-to-Grave" advising and the ACE approach: A model for a School of the School of the Environment, Design and Sustainability (Advising Center for Excellence)*
- *Global Ambassadors (Kamminga-Peck et al.)*
- *The case for increased emphasis on internships at CU Boulder (Mark)*

