



Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

Profiles of Geoscientists



Peter Fiske

**Research Scientist
Lawrence-Livermore Laboratory
Lawrence, CA**

Education:

B.S. Geology, Princeton University
Ph.D. Geological and Environmental Sciences, Stanford University

Job Description:

Research Scientist

Advice to Students:

"One of the biggest challenges, I think, for the geosciences community is integrating what we know about the earth and our tools, with these other systems -- biological and anthropological -- to have a more unified understand of how our planet works as a system."

Video Transcript 1:

"Well, I think first and foremost, geologists have a very important niche of expertise. They are the experts on space ship Earth. This is the one planet that we live on. This is the one planet that we inhabit. Presently it does not look very realistic that we will inhabit another planet any time soon. So this is the one that we're stuck with. Up to now geosciences have been focused, to a great extent, on resources -- resource development. Now we face a new challenge, resource management."

Video Transcript 2:

"I think the industries related to environment are here to stay, and here to grow. As we find it more expensive to utilize and do our business on earth, we're going to find things like keeping the ground clean and the air clean and the water clean to be increasing in value. And, we see any number of industries, from geological engineers who actually deal with site remediation to geochemists, who may work on new ways to use mineral surfaces for example to absorb contaminants and keep pollutants in place. So as a profession, I think just basically we have a lot of experience in dealing with the sorts of data that are going to be important in the future. And one of the biggest challenges, I think, for the geosciences community is integrating what we know about the earth and our tools, with these other systems -- biological and anthropological -- to have a more unified understand of how our planet works as a system."

Interview:

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"I think the industries related to environment are here to stay and here to grow. As we find it more expensive to utilize and to do our business on Earth, we're going to find things like keeping the ground clean and the air clean and the water clean, to be increasing in value. And we see any number of industries, from geological engineers who actually deal with site remediation, to geochemists who may work on new ways to use mineral surfaces, for example, to sorb contaminants and to keep pollutants in place. So as a profession, I think just basically, we have a lot of experience in dealing with the sorts of data that are going to be important in the future and one of the biggest challenges that the geoscience community is integrating what we know about the Earth and our tools, with these other systems, biological and anthropological -- to have a more unified understanding of how our planet works as a system."

Biography:

Peter was led to geology early in life: his father is a geoscientist with the Smithsonian Institution. The Fiske family spent many summers in the Sierra Nevada where the elder Fiske carried out field research. While a graduate student at Stanford, Peter studied the physical and chemical properties of molten lava. In the summer of 1990 he and former professors from Princeton University discovered the remains of the Beaverhead Impact Structure, the largest meteorite impact structure in the United States. After graduating from Stanford in 1994 Peter became a post-doctoral research fellow at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory where he continued his research into meteorite impacts and carried out field work in Thailand and Montana. In 1996 Peter was selected to be a White House Fellow in Washington D.C. He subsequently served as an Assistant to the Secretary of Defense. Peter returned to Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in the Fall of 1997 and resumed his life as a research scientist. In addition to his activities as a scientist, Peter is an active writer and lecturer on the subject of Careers, Career Development, and Career Alternatives for Scientists. He is the author of *To Boldly Go: A Practical Career Guide for Scientists* (www.agu.org/careerguide) and the author of *Tooling Up*, a monthly column on the science employment website *NextWave* (www.nextwave.org). He is an active member of the American Geophysical Union, the Geological Society of America, and the American Geological Institute.

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