



Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

Profiles of Electrical Engineers and Computer Scientists



Lori-Ellen Rohlev

**Team Leader
Los Alamos National Laboratory
Los Alamos, NM**

Education:

B.S. - University of New Mexico

M.S. - Electrical Engineering, University of Southern California

Ph.D. - Electrical Engineering/Integrated Optics, University of Colorado at Boulder

Job Description:

Electrical Engineer and a team leader, working to develop specialized electronics and optical applications.

Advice to Students:

"Develop strong writing and speaking skills."

Video Transcript:

"I took time off and worked. When I was in undergraduate school, I went and worked at Jet Propulsion Laboratory. And that really opened a lot of doors for me. In fact, that's why I ended up getting a job at Los Alamos because they had seen a presentation I gave there and somebody remembered me. And eventually I got hired here."

Interview:

One of the most significant differences Lori Ellen Rohlev found between school and work was the number of people she had to deal with. "It's a much more individual effort when you're in school. And you don't realize that when you come out and take a job. There's a lot of people you have to interact with." Another difference is the sheer number of projects on which she finds herself working at Los Alamos National Laboratory. "You go through school and you think, 'I'm following this nice, normal path, and everything is going according to schedule. And, once I came to work, I just started working on such a variety of projects."

As a result, Rohlev advises students to develop strong writing and speaking skills, "especially giving presentations and speaking in front of large groups" to help them communicate effectively. She also believes that it is a mistake for students to become too specialized too soon. A solid foundation helps the engineer stay flexible and rise to the demands of new projects. "My advice would be to really concentrate on the basics getting a basic

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understanding of all the electronics and optics and not go off into too novel a field too early because your basics will just carry you through forever."

Rohlev also urges students to take part in internships and coops. "When I was in undergraduate school, I went and worked at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and that really opened a lot of doors for me. In fact, that's why I ended up getting a job at Los Alamos. They had seen a presentation I gave there, and somebody remembered me." Another benefit of coops is that it enables young engineers to get to know experienced ones and for the experienced ones to get to know the young ones and thus mentors are found. How important are mentors? Rohlev explains, "They can offer a lot of valuable information for you that will get you up to speed a lot quicker than if you're trying to do everything by yourself."

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