MESSAGE FROM
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Flexible. Experiential. Empowering. BEST experiences help PhDs and postdocs make informed choices about their future careers. Through individual consultations with career mentors, participation in seminars, hands-on workshops, involvement in clubs, taking courses, site visits, and/or trainee initiated projects, participants gain confidence to leverage their unique skills and strengths that will set them apart from other applicants as they embark on their next step beyond Cornell. Read on to join us in celebrating our first five years.

WHAT WE DO:
Engage PhD students and postdocs in their exploration of careers in and beyond:

· Policy
· Governance, Risk, and Compliance
· Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Management
· Communication

WHY WE DO IT:
Most PhDs will work outside of academia.
A successful career involves more than just research preparation.

HOW WE DO IT:
Flexible, experiential, and empowering opportunities.
Enabling real-world experiences on campus and remotely.
Collaborating to create experiences for skill development.

Panel discussion on exploring careers in consulting and industry at the joint 5th annual BEST Symposium and Pathways to Success Symposium
Our Endeavor to Do the Best

Best Vision
To help prepare you for your future career.

Our Mission
Our Mission is to give PhD students and postdocs the chance to test-drive specific aspects of various careers through flexible, experiential, engaging opportunities.

Vital Statistics

Steady Growth...
More than 500 trainees have joined since the program's inception, with more than 140 joining in academic year 2017-2018. Overall, more than 2,100 grad students and postdocs have participated in BEST-sponsored activities.

Wide Representation...
Trainees have come from more than 50 Departments across 10 Colleges and related academic units. Currently, most are from Life Science and Physical Science disciplines.

Broad and Deep Experiences...
Hundreds of opportunities have been facilitated for increasing awareness, deepening understanding, and developing skills. More than 90 events have been sponsored just this year. BESTies themselves have taken the initiative to co-create dozens of experiences.
PROGRAM IMPACTS
Program impacts emerge from 3 objectives.

1 CAREER AWARENESS
Awareness of career opportunities in addition to academia

2 TEST-DRIVE CAREERS
Test-driving a career to rule it in or out

3 SKILL DEVELOPMENT
Developing the skills needed for a successful career

CAREER AWARENESS:
Increase awareness and familiarity with career paths in addition to academia.

Far more graduate students earn PhDs each year in the U.S. than there are tenure-track faculty positions available. Most of those PhDs will find careers outside of academia. BEST raises awareness of the broad range of career paths available to PhDs.

BEST increases awareness of career possibilities through:

• seminar speakers
• career panels
• sympoia
• intensive workshops
• interactive sessions
• informational interviews

Familiarity with 20 career paths

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At start of PhD</th>
<th>During PhD</th>
<th>At end of PhD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allmost</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>A few/none</td>
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Change in career aspirations

- Tenure-track faculty
- Industrial Research
- Government Research
- Academic Research
- Entrepreneurship
- Academic Teaching
- Consulting
- Policy
- Communication
- Non-profit
- Law
- Other
- Not sure

Percent 0 10 20 30 40 50 60

“BEST has really changed my perspective. I came here with a very limited idea of what a career might look like. What is academia really? What might it mean to have a career in patent law? Now, I want to draw on skills, knowledge, and principals from the various possible careers I have been exposed to.”

PhD student in Biomedical Engineering
TEST-DRIVE CAREERS
BESTies successfully take careers for a test-drive, to help rule them in or out.

Whether it’s taking a course on Business and Management Fundamentals or Science Policy Bootcamp: From Concept to Conclusion, trainees often interact with recent alumni to apply the knowledge in a live setting. Through developing an entrepreneurial mindset, advocating for research, pitching a case in a consulting competition, or communicating with broad audiences, these skills will help fuel future careers. Many BEST activities are aimed at helping trainees engage with professionals in various careers to deepen their understanding about what it would be like to have a career in that field. Trainees work with staff to identify both careers of interest and engaging, experiential opportunities through which they can test-drive a career.

Many of these activities take the form of individualized experiences aimed at meeting the specific needs of trainees. A key element of these specific experiences is that trainees take on substantial responsibility. In this way, the experiences become empowering for the trainees.

“Through the BEST program, I had the opportunity to learn about science communication and entrepreneurship to explore different options and to make an informed decision.”
BEST Advisory Board member

“My whole life I wanted to learn about management and entrepreneurship, but I never had the chance to learn about those before. BEST has provided that opportunity.”
PhD student in Biomedical Engineering

“BEST gave me the chance to get exposed to lots of different career options. No longer am I trying to find out what the possibilities are. Now I am exploring whether this is really the specific thing I want to do.”
PhD student in Human Development

“The BEST program is like having a fairy god-mother floating over you and providing the support you need. A professor may not understand what it means to want to go into a non-academic career. To have someone not only say that is ‘ok’, but to also provide support to make it happen is so awesome.”
PhD student in Molecular and Cell Biology

“Even if you are going into academia, BEST can help broaden your experiences in a useful way. Many people don’t even realize the varied skill set they will need in academia.”
BEST Advisory Board member
SKILL DEVELOPMENT
Success in developing career skills is as varied as BESTies themselves.

Successful careers require a range of both technical and professional skills. Two of the most important skills developed through the BEST program are confidence and empowerment.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE
“As I have figured out my own career path, BEST has improved my confidence. Now others come to me and ask me questions, and I can be a mentor for others.”
Postdoc in the School of Integrated Plant Science

EMPOWERMENT
“Through BEST and ASAP, I got many people interested in going to Washington DC in 2017 for the March for Science. It was a long, difficult organizational process. We chartered two busses. More than 200 people ended up going from Cornell. We had Cornell-labeled signs that read, “My research will...” We made posters, obtained snacks and metro passes for participants. We organized a networking dinner. I got interviewed by the Huffington Post. I felt like I accomplished something big, I, as an individual supported by BEST, took this little idea and helped it grow up. We turned this into a productive outcome.”
PhD student in Biomedical and Biological Sciences

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE
The future continues to be bright for BEST. We will be expanding from focusing largely on Life and Physical Sciences, to campus-wide, including the Social Sciences and Humanities at Cornell. To facilitate this expansion and to enhance collaboration across campus, BEST will be integrating with the Graduate School by the end of 2018 thanks to funding from the Provost. BEST remains dedicated to working with PhD students and postdocs to explore career options regardless of the career path to which they aspire. If you are a grad student or postdoc, please consider joining us. If you are faculty, alumni, or a potential career mentor, consider collaborating with us. Together we can achieve the BEST Pathways to Success!
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