Event Recap — Power Your Clean Energy Job Search

Panelists:

- Terra Weeks M.S. ‘17, Advisor to Commissioner David Hochschild, California Energy Commission
- Esteban Guerrero M. S. ‘16, Data Infrastructure Operations Process & Technology Innovation Executive, Facebook
- Hillary Hull M.S. ‘12, Manager, Research and Analytics, Environmental Defense Fund

Do you all have any advice for finding the first job in clean energy?

Terra

- I encourage you to foster your passions, to find your north star that can guide you. The clean energy landscape is ever-evolving so it’s hard to map a path. Clean energy is still an uphill battle, but if you find what drives you and you harness that passion, the better off you’ll be finding a job.
- I would also say, don’t be afraid to reach out to people for informational interviews. Stanford on your resume goes a long way. Even now, I’m still doing a lot of networking and setting up informational interviews to pick other’s brains in Sacramento. So, if there’s someone you see on campus with a career you’re interested in, reach out.

Hillary

- For me, I knew what I wanted to do, and I found my way to it, it just was packaged in a way I wasn’t expecting.
- If there’s a space you want to be in, it’s steps to get there. You don’t make a huge leap into your dream role, it’s steps to get there. If you want to be
in a certain place take that step and move there. If there’s an industry you want to work in, take whatever step to get your foot in that door.

*Esteban*

- What had helped me in my job search is making a list of the things I care about and prioritizing them. Things like location, field work vs office work, hands-on work vs analytical work, even large team or small team. These priorities then help me filter through positions.
- Whatever positions come your way try to quantitatively rate them according to your priorities.

**In clean energy, where is there’s potential for the biggest impact?**

*Esteban*

- Something I’ve grown to learn working in clean energy is the importance of skill training and oversight so that a policy has an actual impact.
- Without the proper training and oversight, the policy is worthless.
- So think, “Am I a better policy designer or am I better at helping people make the policy and its impact happen?”

*Terra*

- For me, it’s less about where there’s the potential for the biggest impact and more about finding the right fit for you in the industry. Ultimately, you can have an impact across so many parts of the industry.
- What type of environment and team you want to be in is important. For me, the team and environment are more important than where I am because the team and environment will amplify the work I’m doing.

*Hillary*

- What I learned having worked in natural gas is it’s just as important to know how to fix leaks and telling people they aren’t allowed to have leaks.
- Tech is great for identifying and fixing issues, but ultimately personal motivation is huge. Like Terra said, you’ll be most effective if you care about what you’re doing.

**What the general grab-bag of positions look like?**

*Esteban*
• Each company or entity will have their own names for positions, but being an analyst is an entry position that exists at many places.
• There are multiple career fairs throughout the year at Stanford so I would suggest going to them, especially Stanford Energy Club’s fair.

Hillary
• There aren’t standardized entry points for clean energy so try things out, reach out to set up interviews, and get to know what’s out there.
• By the time companies post a job on their website, it’s filled. So get in early and make those connections.
• Internships are great to see what the industry is like and it lets companies in the industry see me and my passion. They also help to weed out what you’re not interested in.

Do you have any reflections on the industry? How to identify your strengths in the industry?

Esteban
• For me in my career, I didn’t care about the sector/type of industry I was in. I was focused on the problem I’m solving, the impact I’m having, and using all my experiences.
• Think of the next thing you do as a stepping stone, as one more step towards something else.

Hillary
• I like the confluence in clean energy of the technical foundation and social aspects of policy and social change.
• I don’t want to choose between both sides, I want to be in the middle. So now I get to sit at the table with regulator and legislators and also work with the science team.
• I’m getting to define a space for me in a world full of lawyers. And that’s how I knew that’s where I wanted to be.

Terra
• While in grad school, I learned I had to realize that I couldn’t compare myself to the people around me. I had to find my own metric of success, which is hard to do here because of who you are surrounded by. You work
a lot and you don’t want to work doing something that makes you miserable.

- Own and lean into your own strengths and interests even if they are different from the people you’re around.
- Listen to your gut and seek out mentorship that will reflect yourself back onto you.