Breakout Session I: Non-Academic Careers

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In this session, participants will:

- Understand skills, knowledge, and habits of mind critical to success of physicists in non-academic careers and how they can best be provided
- Define and discuss preparation of T-shaped physicists
- What are model programs/good-practices that prepare students for non-academic careers

Questions to consider include:

- Over the past five academic years, how many students received a traditional physics graduate degree (MS or Ph.D. in physics) from your department. Think of their first place of employment. How many were (1) not employed for more than one year after graduation, (2) employed in academia (postdoc or permanent), (3) working for a federal/state/local government agency (postdoc or permanent), (4) working in the private sector?
- Now think about students who received a traditional physics graduate degree (MS or Ph.D.) between 5 and 10 years ago. How many of them are (1) not employed, (2) employed in academia (postdoc or permanent), (3) working for a federal/state/local government agency (postdoc or permanent), (4) working in the private sector?
- Who in your department or university keeps track of this information?
- Now think about your graduates who work in non-academic jobs (not at universities or government research laboratories) and who left your department five or more years ago. Which skills learnt in your department do they find valuable? Describe the process you use to find the answer to this question.
- Who in your department has the skills that are considered valuable by your graduates in non-academic positions?
- How are these skills taught to your students? Are they taught to all students, only to those who intend to get non-academic positions, or not at all?
- Do you know of any model programs or practices that prepare students for non-academic careers? What are the strengths and features of these programs?