Postdoctoral research: Lawrence Livermore National Lab

My commentary on getting a job, working at, and then leaving a national lab.

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Overview

Timeline
• 9/2012 - Applied to usual fellowships
• 11/2012 - Interviewed
• 12/2013 - Graduated UIUC
• 1/2013 - Started at LLNL
• 12 months: work, work, work
• 1/2014 - Resigned from LLNL
Getting a job at LLNL

Getting the position

• Collaborator is staff there. NETWORK!
• Online application
• On site interview
• Funding cycles usually start in Q1, graduating in Dec is a plus!
Job details

• "Regular" postdoc. standard terms.
• Advisor has a funding source
• $6K/month, 5% raises yearly (9% CA tax)
• 2 years + extendable up to 4 years

“Named Fellowship”
• Livermore Fellow
• Competitive
• More freedom
• $9K/month
Lab structure

- Hierarchical
- Lab mission
- Paperwork!!!
Lab structure

- Collaboration is encouraged
- Some interesting groups
- Can "moonlight" with permission
- Funding: LDRD, ERD, NSF and all that
Daily Working Life

• Focus on your work
• No strong pub pressure, results driven
• Post doc association is fun
• Not so much theory as applied work
• Some time to work on your own stuff
Career Possibilities

- Conversion to staff
  - Through LDRD, or ERD, funding
  - Somewhat fickle (congress funding)
  - ~120K/year. Hard to buy housing in Livermore
  - "Behind the fence" US citizenship
- Another postdoc, faculty, staff at another lab
- Silicon valley - next talk
Questions?