

## 9 The Career Development Organization: year six.

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The Career Development Organization for Physicists and Astronomers (CDO)<sup>1</sup> at the University of Washington is a graduate student organization that helps physics and astronomy students find employment after graduation. Historically, CENPA has been very well-represented in the CDO's membership and leadership. Again, almost all active CDO members are CENPA graduate students. Building on previous years,<sup>2</sup> the CDO has organized the very successful Fifth Annual Networking Day event. In addition, the seminar series has continued and for the first time ever students were able to tour Boeing's industrial research labs.

The Fifth Annual Networking Day was held on November 1st, 2005. The Networking Day provides opportunities for students to make contacts outside academia and to present their research to interested employers. The focus of Networking Day is on allowing the students to present their strengths, which is different from a typical job fair, in which the employers are doing the majority of the presenting. This helps many companies that do not traditionally employ physicists to see the diverse skills that physics and astronomy students possess. Thirty students contributed talks, gave lab tours, and participated in the poster session. Twenty representatives from fourteen employers attended. As a result, at least one student secured a summer internship.

One goal of the CDO this year was to streamline the Networking Day planning process. After hosting this event for five years the format has converged, but each year a new CDO president, usually a CENPA student, has struggled with the responsibility of the planning. After meeting with the University of Washington Learning for Leadership Council (UWLLC), CDO has decided on a new leadership scheme. Networking Day will be planned jointly by the president and vice-president, who will each serve two-year terms. Thus one person will always have one year experience in the planning process. UWLLC also suggested meeting with business school students, which has led to a "business plan" and documentation of the steps to plan a successful Networking Day.

The relationships fostered at Networking Day have led to more than just employment for UW students. Representatives from Systems Biology in Seattle, WA gave a seminar, "Systems Biology for the Physicist," for interested students. Boeing, a Networking Day attendee since inception, invited students to tour their research labs. Twenty graduate and undergraduate students spent the afternoon with the Boeing scientists visiting the flywheel energy storage system and linear accelerator laboratories. Both of these events exposed students to employment and research opportunities outside of academia.

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<sup>1</sup><http://students.washington.edu/cdophys>

<sup>2</sup>CENPA Annual Report, University of Washington (2005) p. 90.