

# Life as an LLNL postdoc: Or how I learned to stop worrying and love the NNSA missions

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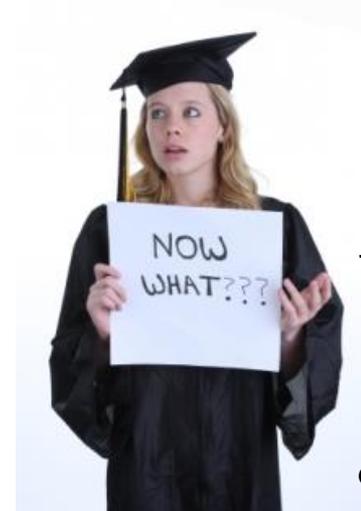


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# This talk is for the graduate students and postdocs in the audience who will be making a career choice

- You worry about your experiment failing and your future.
- You have figured out what research you like, but don't know how that equates to high satisfaction in a job.
- Let me guess: you are trying to decide between academia, industry, and the national labs (DOD and DOE).



There are many options available, but at some point you want to make an active choice



# NNSA postdocs are not the same as university postdocs

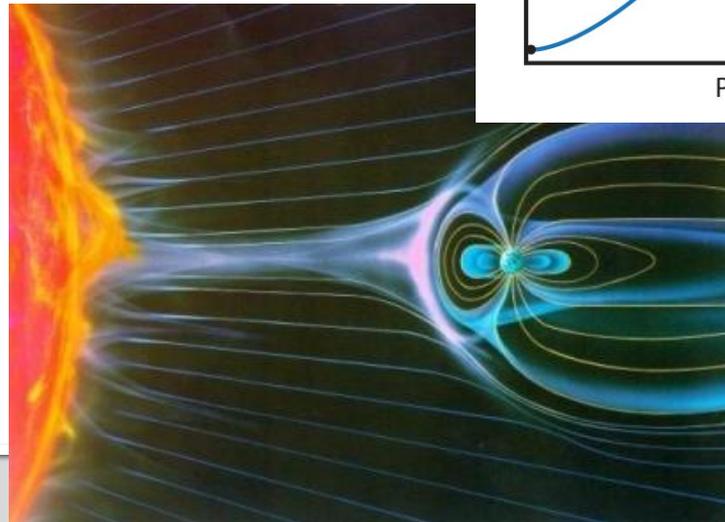
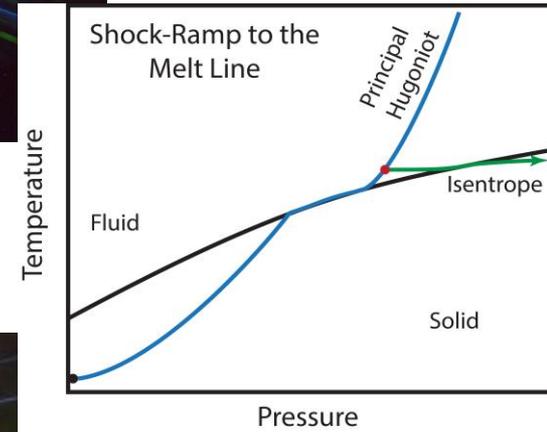
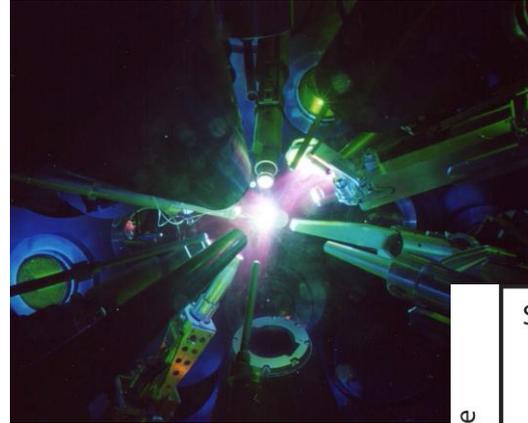
- An NNSA postdoc is **not** a rite of passage
- NNSA postdocs are not glorified lab technicians
- NNSA lab conversion rates are much better than 1 in 7
- NNSA postdocs can afford steak (or expensive vegetables)



The screenshot shows the Science magazine website interface. At the top, the word "Science" is written in a large, white serif font, with the AAAS logo to its right. Below this is a red navigation bar with white text for "Home", "News", "Journals", "Topics", and "Careers". Underneath is a black bar with white text for "Articles", "Find Jobs", "Career Resources", "Forum", "For Employers", "Employer Profiles", and "Graduate Programs". The main content area features a "SHARE" button with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and a generic share icon. To the right of these icons is a photograph of a man in a white lab coat with his head buried in his hands on a desk. Below the photo is the article title "The Postdoc: A Special Kind of Hell" and the byline "By Adam Ruben | Nov. 21, 2013, 11:30 AM". A small credit line "Credit: PhotoAlto sas / Alamy" is visible at the bottom right of the photo.

# Focus of a NNSA laboratory postdoc

- Laboratory postdocs are focused on both *research* and *development*
- Development of platforms for measuring the melting curve at extremely high pressure
- Development set the stage for my current NIF Discovery science research (co-PI with Rus Hemley)



# Postdoc fellowships allow for more freedom

- LANL, SNL, and LLNL offer competitive postdoctoral fellowships (e.g. Oppenheimer, Truman, and Lawrence)
- With 100% of your time covered, you can spend a bit more time thinking more broadly about scientific topics

LLNL LDRD on  
Melting in  
Multicomponent  
Materials



National Geographic / National Geographic

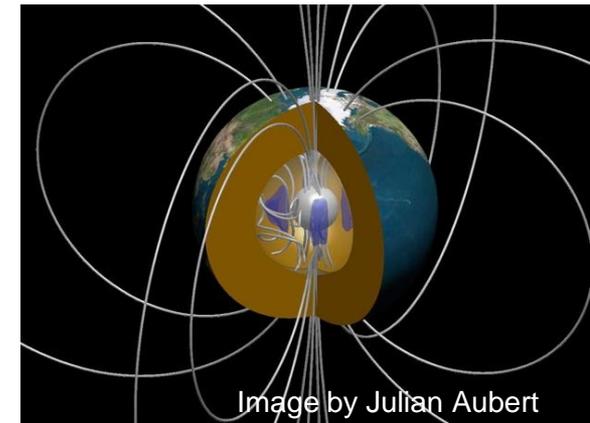
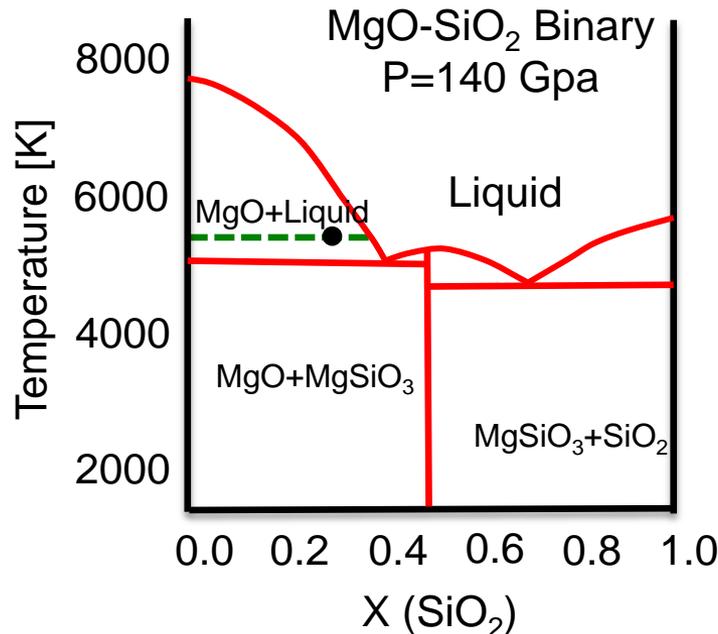
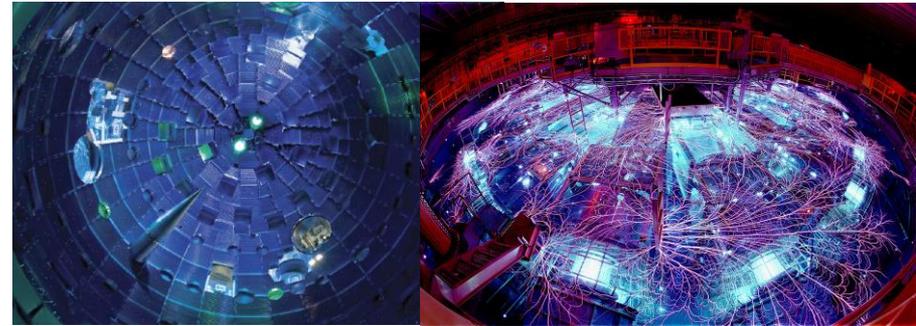


Image by Julian Aubert

# NNSA postdocs are an opportunity

- Get to do great science on some of the best facilities in the world
- Postdocs are your opportunity to interview the lab
  - What are the missions?
  - Process for big science?
- Postdocs are an opportunity to learn about yourself as a scientist
  - Patriotic by nature?



Find me, I would be happy to talk through the process with you