

Funai fall report

Kenta Ohtaki

University of California, Irvine Materials Science and Engineering

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As I can see the end of my PhD journey, I started to look for jobs during summer. I have been hearing about job openings here and there ever since I started my PhD program but I did not really pay attention since the graduation was so far away. However, when I went to a winter school for microscopy in winter and met someone from industry, I thought I should start preparing because I did not have any elevator talk ready. Before summer break, Intel had an information session on campus. I knew it was a little bit too early to start applying for jobs, I went to the session just to see what it is like and then I received a phone interview for a process engineer position on the weekend of the same week. Shortly I had a site interview in Portland. Intel was nice enough to pay all the expenses and gave me a day to explore the area. The work environment and the city, compensation were perfect, but I had to decline the offer because the position was too far from materials science field and I knew I would not be happy if I work there and I did not start working knowing I will quit eventually. After this interview, I started making better resume and LinkedIn account for other jobs and attended workshops for making a good resume and CV. During this process, I really constructed the foundation of myself and what I want as my career, which seems to be something that should have already clarified.

Even though I have been working in radiation damage field (nuclear energy related subjects), I am not very interested in working in this field as my career. I am more focused on the techniques and skills used for my projects, which leads me to materials characterization and failure analysis. This field is very wide and sort of vague yet applicable to any kind of industry. Thus I started looking for materials characterization engineer positions and failure analysis engineer positions in various companies namely Apple, Intel, Boeing, GE and other companies. It is difficult to hear back from them and they have electronic system to pick which resume to send to the recruiters and you have to include certain keywords in the application form to be considered as a candidate by this electronic system. I applied for several positions but I rarely hear back from them. As I apply more, I get better at tailoring the resume for each company.

I also had some connection or leads for job position in some companies. As a lab assistant, I talk to a lot of users from industry and sometimes they like my work and get interested in having me. There is one particular example which went well. I was helping a professor from the physics department and it took a long time but he was really impressed my skills and told me that there was a company called EAG that visited the materials characterization facility and he is trying to connect industry and the school. So he send an email to the vice president of the company and cc'd me saying he might be a good candidate. I didn't want to miss this opportunity and at that time I did not know when I am graduating or what field I am interested in, so I decided not to reply to the email. Then after applying to some companies and figured out how to approach them I finally decided to shoot an email to the vice president. Surprisingly, he was interested in seeing me and eventually invited me to an informal meeting since they were not hiring at that time. The meeting was pretty much like regular formal interview. They showed me around the labs and the office and I felt very welcoming vibe from those instruments they have, which I did not feel from the instruments at Intel. Maybe this is something only experimentalists can feel but it was very important feeling to tell if you are going to be a good fit to the team. They told me I have to wait until they open the position to public before we talk about hiring me so I will see what happens.

After EAG, I also had an interview with Apple. I was looking for a failure analysis engineer position but my PI had a student who now works in the reliability team in Apple. So I asked her about her position and I decided to take the onsite interview. Even though the interview went well, they told me that I would be a good fit in the failure analysis team which is not currently hiring. So I also have to wait for them to open the position.

My PI wants me to stay as long as possible and publish papers and help new students and pass all of my techniques but after a long conversation, we decided to wrap around April-May after the spring break. Since once I start a quarter, I have to pay the tuition, we have to think quarterly (three month inclement). So I will try to finish up everything in 2-3 months while TAing for the last class.

Five years passed by so fast but I am excited to get out and be exposed to a new environment.