

PREFACE

I am an international scientist striving to improve PhD and postdoc training in the United States. My and my peers' lived experiences motivated my transition from scientific research to improving training experiences for budding scientists through access to professional development that did not exist during our time. Career and professional development support for early-career scientists in universities has surged in the past decade due to the initiatives and recommendations of national scientific agencies such as the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), among others. Many higher education institutions are taking steps to improve training and better support an increasingly diverse population of graduate students and postdocs.

Yet there is a notable dearth of specific advocacy, guidance, and support for international scientists (foreign born, temporary visa holding) in the United States at all career stages. The challenges they face deserve special attention as they make up about 41% of PhD students and about 58% of postdocs in science and engineering (S&E) (NCSES 2025). We internationals also face additional barriers to professional well-being and success due to many factors, including a convoluted and

dated immigration system, the hidden curriculum of higher education, the lack of socioeconomic support, and disparities for non-native English speakers and those from the Global South. Another drawback is the lack of representation of international professionals in academic administration, likely as a result of structural (read: immigration) barriers. For example, international professionals are vastly underrepresented in the field of graduate- and postdoc-level career and professional development (CPD). I clawed my way into CPD and broadly academic administration—a field in which typically less than 2% of staff is international. Now, as an educator and administrator, I continue to bring attention to needed support for international scientists while helping other international professionals enter graduate-level CPD. Toward that goal, I mentor international trainees to enter this field and cofounded the International Community of Practice for international professionals within the Graduate Career Consortium (GCC), an organization providing a leading voice in graduate and postdoc career and professional development.

There has been growing acknowledgment of the diverse careers of scientists: research and teaching, business of science, science communication, publishing, science policy, and entrepreneurship, among others. Given the immigration-related challenges, international scientists typically move into research careers in academia or industry and are underrepresented in many other science-related careers. This book provides actionable guidance to international scientists for professional success and well-being during doctoral education and beyond. I discuss lifelong learning, a growth mindset, and creative approaches to success amid systemic barriers; strategic planning and communicating technical and foundational skills; the unique strengths that international scientists' lived experiences render; and the power of the international community for collective learning and empowerment. I also give tactical advice on uncovering the hidden curriculum in professional advancement, conducting job searches in the United States, and parallel planning for global careers. While this book caters primarily to

international scientists, section 6, on how to support international employees and trainees and enable systemic changes, is addressed to faculty advisers, career educators, managers, and advocates.

Like many international scientists, I navigated challenging circumstances and personal sacrifices because of the restrictive and xenophobic immigration climate. I weave into the bigger data-informed picture my lived experience and anecdotes from international scientists who ventured into a variety of careers, in and beyond research, to exemplify concepts outlined in each chapter. Specifically, the chapters include examples of actionable ways in which international scientists have applied the highlighted concepts and approaches to navigate barriers and achieve their goals, reimagine professional possibilities, and expand definitions of career success.

This book centers and amplifies the voices and rich experiences of international scientists to best serve fellow international scientists. In academic and other professional circles, international scientists are mostly invoked as either a model minority in the workforce and statistics on research productivity or a monolithic community when citing challenges. In chapters 10 and 11, I highlight the humanity of international scientists, going beyond those narratives to illuminate the sacrifices and human cost of surviving the current immigration system, maintaining legal status, and succeeding in unsupportive systems. But that is only one aspect of our multifaceted lives. This book celebrates international scientists—our strengths, determination, remarkable resilience, and resolute optimism—as we brave unfavorable environments to bring talent and humanity to science. We international scientists represent the global diversity of ethnicity, race, country of origin, socioeconomic status, languages, and, most of all, lived experiences. Our worldview, ingenuity, diverse perspectives, and leadership styles enrich the scientific landscape in academia, industry, and other sectors. Through good and bad times, international scientists rely on community to share knowledge, empower, mentor, and solve problems. Through stories of these international communities, I highlight the

power of collective action and communal championship in a predominantly individualistic US society. This book is in equal parts a celebration of the international scientific community—of our adventures and brave journeys—an invitation to fearlessly chart creative futures equipped with tools and strategies, and a call to create an inclusive and equitable society for global citizens of science.