The Osterbrock Leadership Fellowships: A unique PhD training experience

Do you aspire to be both scientist and leader? Do you feel prepared for the challenges of leading a big project, launching a new business, or even just leading your own research group? Do you know effective ways to influence both people and institutions to promote your goals?

Your PhD in astronomy could take you in a thousand different directions. Academia is peppered with astronomers serving as deans, directors, provosts, and even university presidents. Astronomers are businesspersons, educators, government leaders, and politicians. Even if you start out in research, you could wind up in a totally different sphere. Wherever you go, you will want to be as effective and productive as possible.

Studying astronomy will teach you how to think clearly – you’d be surprised how rare that is! But thinking is not enough. As a researcher, you may be called on to lead big projects with multimillion-dollar budgets. As an academician, you may be department chair. Moving up or out of the field will require an even broader perspective. For all these things, you’ll need to understand people and organizations, how to motivate and inspire, and how to manage complex endeavors. This constellation of skills and understanding is rarely featured in normal PhD training.

Unique opportunities for Osterbrock Leadership Fellows

The Osterbrock Leadership Fellowships program offers membership in a unique leadership training program at UCSC. Each Fellow will be teamed with one or more outstanding senior mentors from science, business, industry, and other walks of life. These relationships form the core of an enriched training experience that includes special programs, internships, and activities outside the Astronomy department, planned with the advice and support of your mentor. Ten to twelve Fellows will be in residence at UCSC at any one time, large enough to provide a mutual support group of like-minded students who can learn and work together. Each fellowship carries a one-time cash premium of $5,000 in addition to regular graduate support.

A tribute to Don and Irene Osterbrock

The Osterbrock Fellowships are established in honor of eminent American astronomer Donald E. Osterbrock and his wife Irene. Don Osterbrock pioneered the study of gaseous nebulae and originated the classification scheme for active galactic nuclei. He was one of Lick Observatory’s most influential directors. Don was a gifted teacher, and the doctoral students he advised comprise a significant portion of America’s astronomical leadership. His wife, Irene, worked tirelessly to help establish the UCSC Library’s Mary Lea Shane Archives of the Lick Observatory as a world-renowned repository of U.S. astronomical history.