

Fall 2011 Mentoring Panel

# Career Choices: Industry vs. Academia

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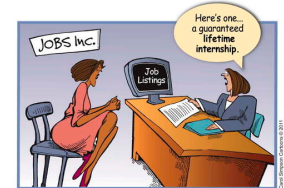
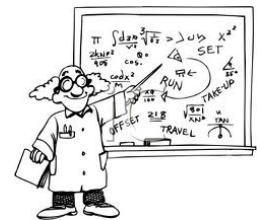
# My Own Path



- 2001, B.S. Peking University
- 2006, PhD. Carnegie Mellon University
  - 2004, M.S. CMU
- 2010, IBM TJ Watson Research Center
- Now, USC



# 1) What career path did you consider most during your Ph.D., and what influenced any changes to this over time?

- Stage 1: Clueless
- Stage 2: Some idea
- Stage 3: Yes, I want it
- Stage 4: No, I cannot do it



| MARRIAGE vs. The Ph.D.   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <br>Marriage | <br>Ph.D. |
| Typical Length:  | 7.5 years   | 7 years  |
| Begins with:   | A proposal  | A thesis proposal  |
| Culminates in a ceremony where you walk down an aisle dressed in a gown: | ✓   | ✓  |
| Usually entered into by:   | Foolish young people in love  | Foolish young people without a job   |
| 50% end in:  | Bitter divorce  | Bitter remorse   |
| Involves exchange of:  | Vows  | Know-how   |
| Until death do you part?   | If you're lucky   | If you're lazy   |

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## 2) What does it take to succeed in academia versus industry, and where can one make the most impact?

- Best virtues in all jobs

- Hardworking
- Good attitude
- Communication skills
- (and some luck)



- Different impact

- Academia: your own research achievement and many many students
- Industry: you are on board of a big ship that makes a lot of impact

3) What compels you to pursue a career in academia now given your past experiences in industry? Can you share a personal in industry versus academia?

- Life is full of changes ..



#### 4) What are lessons learned and tips (advantages and/or disadvantages) from working in industry prior to pursuing a career in academia?

- Advantages: Yes, you're ready!!
  - More mature
  - Research better motivated by real applications
  - Better academic networks
  - Better management skills
- Disadvantage
  - You are not one person any more ☺



## 5) What key things should one do during Ph.D. studies to determine whether a career in industry or academia is best for achieving one's career goals?

- Doing an internship
- Talking to senior students in your group
- Visiting a top research lab in your area from other top universities
- Most important: know what you're good at and what you want to be.

