

# CAMB Student Newsletter

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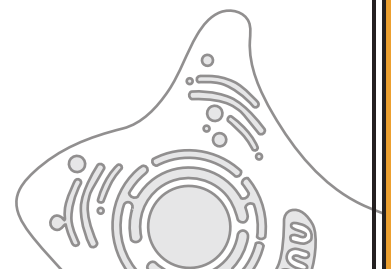
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Dear CAMB Students, Faculty, and Alumni,

Hello to all returning readers, and a warm welcome to those CAMB students who have so recently joined us! We're delighted to bring you the August 2022 edition of the CAMB Student Newsletter. In this Welcome to Campus edition, we polled current CAMB students to find out their favorite **Exciting Eateries** in the Philly area (with a handy map to help you find each one)! We also dive into the most recommended tips and tricks for **Keeping your Projects Organized**, whether you're starting your first rotation or deep into writing your dissertation. Finally, we interviewed recent CAMB alumni **Drs. DJ Moran and Alex Rohacek** on thriving after their theses, and how to balance the asks of academia and industry jobs with their needs as a couple of awesome scientists as they went through the job search process!

For additional articles, past publications, and to learn more about the CAMB Student Newsletter team, visit our blog at [cambnewsletter.wix.com/blog](http://cambnewsletter.wix.com/blog) or follow us on Twitter at [@CambNewsletter](https://twitter.com/CambNewsletter). **The CAMB Newsletter team is always in search of new writers and editors to join our team!** Current students interested in contributing to the CAMB Student Newsletter can reach out to us via this [form](#) to join our email list. We hope you enjoy the August 2022 issue!

Sincerely,  
Kay Labella and James Gesualdi  
Editors-in-Chief



# Special Interest

## Exciting Eateries!

Kay Labella

As a new graduate student, finding delicious dining destinations can end up being a bit of an overwhelming chore, especially in a city as big and full of good grub as Philly. But never fear, foodies, the CAMB Newsletter has your back! We reached out to the CAMB student body to get recommendations for their favorite local eateries around campus. Next time you're in a pickle (or hungry for one), check out these neat, sweet places to eat!

### University City:

#### 1. *Dottie's Donuts*

Laid-back bakery & cafe known for its many vegan donut flavors & bagels along with coffee & tea drinks.

**Location:** 4529 Springfield Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143 and 509 S 6th St, Philadelphia, PA 19147

**Price Point:** \$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** Boston creme, Dunkaroos, espresso buttercream, caramel delight

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** "The donuts are some of the best I've ever had. Their menu changes daily, so there's always something new and fun to try, and it all turns out amazing."

#### 2. *Food Trucks*

Scattered all around campus, these easy-to-find eateries provide all manner of cuisine for a quick-and-easy meal on the go.

**Location:** Locust Street, Civic Center Boulevard, 38th Street, etc.



*Dottie's Donuts, A Forkful Life*

**Price Point:** \$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** "Too many to pick, but probably any of the Halal dishes from the cart on Locust."

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** "Food carts around campus are the best option for a quick lunch mid-work day! Not a single truck disappoints around campus – plus, they are very cheap. Highly recommend exploring them!"

#### 3. *Lil Pop Shop*

Store supplying inventive, small-batch ice pops made with seasonal, locally-sourced ingredients.

**Location:** 265 S 44th St, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Price Point:** \$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** Strawberry elderflower or raspberry lime pops

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** "They also have great ice cream in amazing flavors like honey lavender shortbread."

#### 4. *Black Pearl's BBQ*

BBQ food truck with a hearty & delicious menu

**Location:** 4138 Market St, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** Bacon Burger

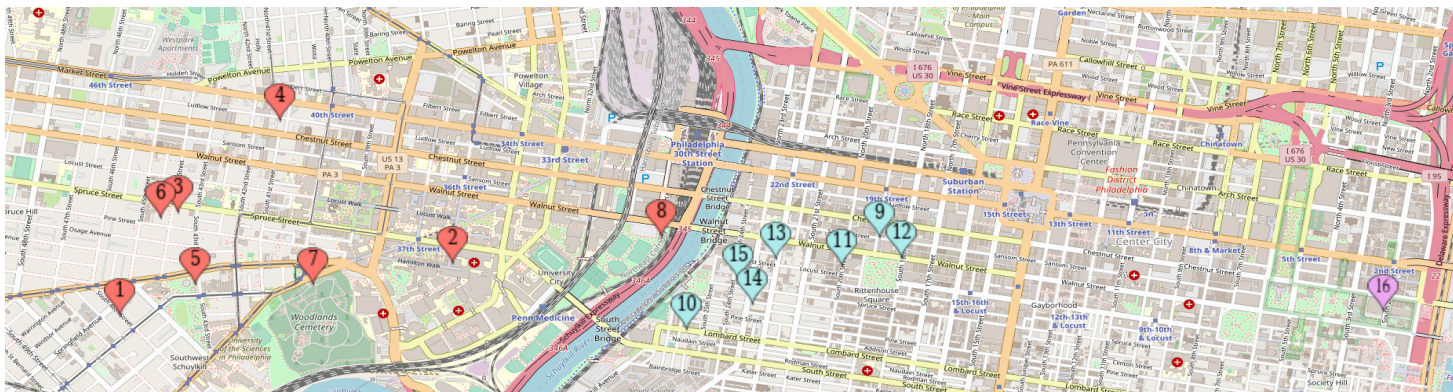


Figure 1. Map of recommended restaurants within Philadelphia. Red location points are restaurants within the University City neighborhood, blue location points are restaurants within the Graduate Hospital area, and the pink location point is located within the Old City neighborhood. Image credit: MapCustomizer.

### 5. Clarkville Pizza

This corner bar serves delicious and innovative pizza with wines & beers on tap.

**Location:** 4301 Baltimore Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator’s favorite dish:** Honey Pie

### 6. Don Barriga

Mexican grill with a casual and friendly vibe.

**Location:** 4443 Spruce St, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator’s favorite dish:** Chicken enchiladas in green sauce, horchata, and tres leches cake

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** “You absolutely can’t go wrong with anything on their menu, and their portion sizes are extremely generous.”

### 7. Renata’s Kitchen

Buzzy spot serving a Mediterranean menu of light fare alongside homemade desserts & gourmet coffees.

**Location:** 3940 Baltimore Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator’s favorite dish:** Shakshuka or lemon-poppysed pancakes

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** “Great for brunch! This West Philly classic recently moved to the current location with a nice patio. Renata’s draws some crowds during the school year, but it’s worth checking out!”

### 8. Walnut Street Café

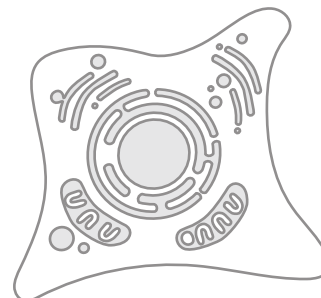
All-day New American fare, cafe with pastry counter & cocktail bar in Cira Centre South.

**Location:** 2929 Walnut St, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator’s favorite dish:** “For brunch -- steak and eggs and fig cake! Dinner -- the brussel sprouts”

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** “The restaurant is so cozy indoors, and there’s often music playing. The patio outside is also super lovely on a cool night. And the menu changes seasonally, so there’s always something new to try!”



## Graduate Hospital:

### 9. *Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream*

Scooping creative flavors of ice cream & frozen yogurt made from local ingredients

**Location:** 1901 Chestnut St, Philadelphia, PA 19103

**Price Point:** \$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** Honey vanilla bean in a waffle cone

#### **What CAMB students love about this restaurant:**

"Jeni's offers a wide variety of unique ice cream flavors to choose from, all of which are awesome. They are conveniently located near Rittenhouse Square, so it's very easy to pick up ice cream and enjoy it in the park with some friends!"

### 10. *Rowhome Coffee*

Celebrating the unique local comfort food of Philadelphia and serving it with some of the best coffee from around the world.

**Location:** 2536 Pine St, Philadelphia, PA 19103 and 2152 N Front St, Philadelphia, PA 19122

**Price Point:** \$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** Deli Pretzel Sandwich

#### **What CAMB students love about this restaurant:**

"Rowhome Coffee is a quaint coffee shop within the Graduate Hospital area! They offer a variety of great breakfast and coffee options, as well as fun morning conversations with friends in a cute area. It's also located near two parks (Schuylkill River Park and Fidler Square Park), which is great for pre- or post-breakfast activities!"

### 11. *Bar Poulet*

Stylish joint for fried chicken & French wine, also offering classic sides, cocktails & beer.

**Location:** 2005 Walnut St, Philadelphia, PA 19103



*Lesley W, Yelp.com*

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** Half chicken and a chouquette spritz

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** "So much fried chicken at a great price point for the fancy ambiance you get. Plus, the draft cocktails are all killer and super speedy because they're on draft."

### 12. *The Dandelion*

This spot serves craft beers & modern takes on British cuisine in a pubby setting.

**Location:** 124 S 18th St, Philadelphia, PA 19103

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** The Dandy Burger

#### **What CAMB students love about this restaurant:**

"The Dandelion is a British-themed pub in downtown Center City! This restaurant offers amazing food for a reasonable price, as well as offering a fun night out in a great location. If you look upwards from the front entrance of The Dandelion, you'll get a spectacular viewpoint of One Liberty Plaza!"

### 13. *Rosy's Taco Bar:*

Casual, contemporary venue for tacos, quesadillas & Mexican spirits, plus a happy hour.

**Location:** 2220 Walnut St, Philadelphia, PA 19103

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** Chicken burrito with a passion fruit margarita

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** "Rosy's is great because they offer an awesome happy hour special: reasonably priced drinks and appetizers from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. The food is delicious and considered a staple within the Graduate Hospital area. The restaurant is also a short walk to downtown Center City!"



*SALLY, Bronwyn Lepore (Spotted By Locals)*

#### 14. SALLY

Casual, snug eatery specializing in pizzas, small plates & desserts, plus a large wine list.

**Location:** 2229 Spruce St, Philadelphia, PA 19103

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** "Their menu rotates, but I loved their sausage and onion pizza!"

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** "Delicious food, great outdoor dining, and friendly neighborhood vibe!"

#### 15. Ambrosia BYOB

Casual option providing homemade pasta & classic Italian dishes in a convivial atmosphere.

**Location:** 231 S 24th St, Philadelphia, PA 19103

**Price Point:** \$\$\$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** Crispy gnocchi

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** "Everything is so delicious. They have specials, which are dishes that the chef seems to be trying out, that are really good. I've been there three times with my boyfriend (and I usually don't go to the same restaurant more than once unless I love it). It's tucked away in a residential part of the city, right by the Schuylkill, so there isn't much traffic and bustle nearby. The outdoor space is delightful!"

**Elsewhere:**

#### 16. Lucha Cartel

Offbeat cantina with beer & tequila.

**Location:** 207 Chestnut St, Philadelphia, PA 19106

**Price Point:** \$\$

**Nominator's favorite dish:** Ceviche, crispy fish tacos, elotes

**What CAMB students love about this restaurant:** "Great vibe, delicious food, and fancy margaritas! And the dance floor is open after 10pm!"



*Ambrosia BYOB, byoblikeaboss.com*

# Keeping your Projects Organized: Advice for incoming CAMB students

James Gesualdi

Getting started in a PhD program is challenging; new students must become accustomed to a new workplace, peers, coursework, and training all at once. Needless to say, it can be overwhelming at times. For many of us, dissertation research is our first time independently managing a large project. This means that we often find ourselves challenged in unfamiliar ways throughout our training. In order to maintain momentum, graduate students need to develop strategies for organization and time management that work for their specific projects and that are compatible with the broader norms of their lab groups.

The CAMB Student Newsletter team surveyed the CAMB community in order to learn more about our graduate group's go-to strategies for organization and time management. All of our respondents indicated that both of these skill sets have posed challenges for them throughout their graduate training, and a majority have developed strategies to try to stay ahead. If you are just joining our community as a new graduate student this year, read on to learn more about the steps senior students have taken to help manage their projects and use their time wisely.

For time management, digital calendars like **Outlook** or **Google Calendar** are good places to start. You can easily input classes, lab meetings, and other regularly scheduled appointments into one centralized app. These programs also allow you to synchronize reminder notifications across your phone, personal computer, and any other devices so that you can stay up to date when away from lab. Some students still prefer to use an analog calendar or planner to keep track of tasks, but the value of automated reminders for important appointments is difficult to

overstate. Therefore, if you mostly use a paper planner, you should still at least program your most critical events into a digital calendar to help prevent any slip ups. Either way, sitting down at a recurring time each week and planning out your tasks for the next 5 to 7 days on your calendar of choice is a healthy habit to build in graduate school that will minimize scheduling conflicts. Getting accustomed to planning your days will help you settle into routine working hours and avoid disruptions. As a general tip, remember to block off dedicated time for reading literature, brainstorming experiments, and updating records so that you become accustomed to including these tasks in your daily routine and prioritize them appropriately.

Taking the digital calendar strategy a step further, some of our respondents and their lab groups use professional project management software. **Asana** is a popular management software among scientists, but there are many other similar products available. These applications allow lab groups to keep track of multiple overlapping projects/timelines and the associated personnel. Products like these can be extremely useful, but they are more of a collective strategy than a digital calendar or analog to-do list. In other words, unless your lab group is already accustomed to using software like Asana, it will likely be challenging to get people on board with signing up for it as a trainee. Therefore, it makes sense to use your first year in graduate school to investigate which strategies work best for you personally, as you could end up joining a lab group that does not make use of any team-oriented management software.

As tough as keeping your calendar in order can be, it is usually an even bigger challenge to keep all of your data, samples, protocols, literature references, drafts, and presentations that accumulate throughout your graduate career organized. As your project develops, files can pile up on you if you don't actively make an effort to keep them in order. Appropriate organizational strategies will vary widely between different labs and often even between different projects but sticking to a few basic conventions can go a long way.

For managing literature, a reference manager like **OneNote**, **EndNote**, **Zotero**, **PaperPile**, or **Mendeley** is a must. Over the course of your PhD you will read hundreds of publications, and it is important to keep these references organized so that you can easily cite them when putting together a publication or pro-



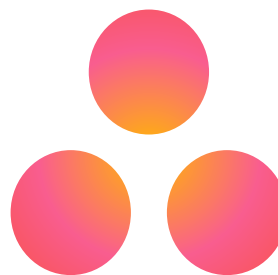
Image Credit: Mapio.net

posal. These apps allow you to organize your library of literature into different sub-divisions and add notes or annotations to individual publications for quick reference in the future. Similarly, an electronic lab notebook is great for maintaining an easily searchable record of your procedures and experiments in lab. Applications like **LabArchive** or **Confluence** are often free through Penn Libraries and can drastically simplify your record keeping practices.

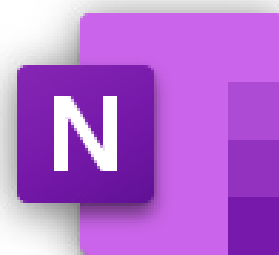
File management can also become challenging as your collection of data grows over the years. Again, ideal strategies will be different for every project, but organizing your data by time of collection – eg by labeling files with the date in a standardized format – can be a good place to start. Dated files will be organized automatically by your computer and easily searchable. Depending on your project, it may also make sense to further sub-divide data by experiment type, experiment number, or some other metric.

In general, these strategies will only go as far as you are willing to push them. A calendar or electronic lab notebook that is not regularly updated is not much use to you or anyone else. The effectiveness of these strategies is determined by the amount of effort invested. That said, it is important to figure out which strategies are best suited to your particular needs. Therefore, in the early stages of your PhD, it is worthwhile to experiment with a handful of different organizational and time management strategies in order to see which ones work best for you. Once you find something that feels comfortable and sustainable, settle into it and stay committed, as changing paradigms years down the line can be a major headache.

If you find yourself struggling to keep your project organized and make appointments, don't suffer in silence! Reach out to senior students or post-docs in your lab for advice. The best way to overcome organizational challenges is to get help from scientists that have done so before.



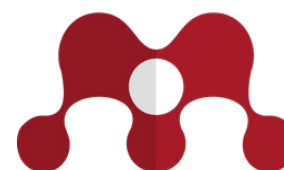
Asana



OneNote



Confluence



Mendeley

# Alumni Spotlight

## DJ Moran and Alex Rohacek

Kay Labella

The pending-or-post-graduation job search brings with it a myriad of questions and contemplations. CAMB students find themselves deliberating on the respective merits of postdoctoral training versus looking into industry or other nontraditional but increasingly popular career fields, searching for what might be the most suitable match. There are also the smaller but no less important questions to consider, such as if a soon-to-be graduate is willing to relocate for a job, and if so, where to. As such, the prospect of diving in and finding the right place of work can be intimidating, especially with the concurrent crunch of thesis-writing.

We had the pleasure of speaking to two CAMB alumni about their respective and recent experiences finding a job after defending their theses and graduating. Dr. DJ Moran, a 2020 Cancer Biology graduate, joined the CHOP-based lab of Dr. Thomas De Raedt as a postdoctoral fellow after completing her doctoral research in the lab of Dr. Sarah Millar. Dr. Alex Rohacek, a 2018 Developmental, Stem Cell, and Regenerative Biology graduate from the Epstein lab, recently joined Spark Therapeutics as a research scientist on the Liver Team after a postdoctoral fellowship in the Raizen lab at Penn. A couple who met through CAMB and were recently married to one another (congrats!), the pair shared some valuable insight on how their relationship impacted their job-hunting considerations.

### What is your day to day like at your respective jobs?

**Dr. DJ Moran (DM):** Honestly, it's really similar to grad school, but without the dissertation and defense looming! I think it will be very PI-dependent. My day-to-day involves mostly wet bench work, with some bioinformatics analyses (I'm trying to improve in that arena) and presentations in between.

**Dr. Alex Rohacek (AR):** Day to day can be highly variable. Right now it's 80% project management and 20%



**Dr. DJ Moran**

bench, but that has been the opposite when lab work is needed. Mainly, I manage our outside vendors who are running or working on our studies, interface across our departments, and run wet lab experiments as needed.

### What was your experience job searching while preparing to defend?

**DM:** I was very fortunate to have a fantastic PI who encouraged me to explore options before I was truly preparing to defend, so I at least felt confident that I was pursuing the "right" path. Sandra Ryeom, the former chair of CB, actually advised me to look into Thomas' lab. Thanks to her advice, I was able to meet Thomas in person before COVID shutdowns, and then write my dissertation and prepare to defend from home.

**AR:** My current job was obtained as a postdoc, and my previous postdoc search was mainly done on the side while working on my defense. When searching for my postdoc lab, I was still a grad student working towards my defense. I spent probably one to two hours a week looking at lab webpages and contacting the PIs via email. As I was intent on staying in Philly, I was pretty limited in my search. I also was thinking I would go into teaching for



a career so I was using that to filter labs I was interested in. As a postdoc, I began searching for industry positions with three to four hours a week reading job postings and working pmmy resume and cover letter. That was a 6+ month search that eventually got me to Spark.

### **What was the job search process like for you?**

**DM:** When I first started exploring options, I took some informational interviews by just messaging (relatively) random people on LinkedIn and across Penn's campus whose career paths seemed interesting, including those in MSL, industry R&D, clinical cytogenetics positions; people were very nice and willing to talk! So that's definitely a great resource to utilize before you are actively seeking employment. Once I understood that completing a traditional, academic postdoc would help me get to the next stage of things, I contacted PIs in the Philadelphia area who did interesting research to get some experience interviewing before I was ready to defend.

**AR:** The process was a lot of work, probably five or more hours a week outside of the lab to sift through all the postings and tailor my CV and cover letter as needed for each application. Waiting on responses was stressful to be sure. Interviewing was actually kind of a fun experience getting to sell yourself.

### **What were your considerations in the job search process?**

**DM:** I wanted to ensure that my future career goals would benefit from postdoctoral training before jumping right into it. Those informational interviews with people in less traditional paths really helped with that question. I also wanted to change things up a little bit by working on a translational project and gaining experience in a new field.

**AR:** I was looking to stay in the Philly area and to get into an industry position.

### **Our field often asks us to move when starting a new job. Did this come into play while you were job searching, and how did you balance it?**

**DM:** Yes! This was actually a huge factor for me as I have family in the area. When I started job hunting, I was dating CAMB alum Alex Rohacek (now husband!). He was completing his postdoctoral training and neither of us wanted to try long distance. With so many options in the Philadel-

**"Informational interviews** are one-on-one conversations that you have with professionals to gather information about their career path, the jobs they've had, the industries they've been in, employers they're familiar with, emerging and future trends in their fields, the skills they've developed and used, and more. Think of them as just having a chat with someone to learn about their professional experiences. Remember, the goal of informational interviews is not to ask for a job, but rather, to seek information that can help you chart your own career path more effectively. Once you conduct an informational interview, you can then use the information you've gleaned to make yourself a stronger applicant when you're ready to apply for the type of jobs you have been learning about. You might even learn that some career paths are not going to be a great match for your skills, interests, or values – this is helpful, too"

-Penn Career Services

phia area (academic AND industry) plus friends and family who are local, it made sense for us to try to stay here. I was up front in interviews about not wanting to move around even though I was interviewing locally. If someone seemed like they thought less of that decision then, frankly, I wasn't going to work with that person. I was pleasantly surprised when no one I interviewed with seemed to care.

**AR:** I was dating fellow CAMB alum DJ Moran (now wife) and we wanted to stay in the area together since she was finishing her Ph.D. and starting her postdoc in the area.

### **Do you have any tips for unwinding during the job search process?**

**DM:** I am a grandma at heart so knitting, baking, and curling up with a book are my go-tos to unwind. Turning off phone notifications or only checking in on messages also helped me manage the inevitable anxiousness that comes with a job search.

**AR:** Just make sure to take time for yourself and keep to a maximum amount of hours/times you're going to search in a week. Looking at jobs every day while in a Ph.D. or postdoc is daunting and, honestly, new postings don't cycle that fast; they won't be gone in a day. It's fine to take some time off the search.

### **Did you have any previous connections or networking opportunities with the group you ended up working for?**

**DM:** Yes, I was put in touch with my postdoc PI by the former chair of CB, Sandra Ryeom. Networking and being open to reaching out definitely helped.

**AR:** Definitely, a fellow CAMB alum at Spark put in a recommendation for me and we now work in the same division.

### **What are some things you find helpful now that you learned during your PhD?**

**DM:** Generally speaking, I think PhD training teaches you to be fairly resilient and self-reliant. Experiments will not work, things will feel like they take forever, and questions sometimes feel like they will never be answered. You learn to bounce back from mistakes and setbacks and not fall down the rabbit hole of self-doubt or blind panic (well, at least with less frequency ;)).

**AR:** Time management is a big one. Not every experiment needs to be a priority and figuring out what needs to be done now and what can wait a day or two is huge. That, and it's okay not to know everything. We're always going to need to learn new things but we have learned, as Ph.D.s, how to do that extremely well.

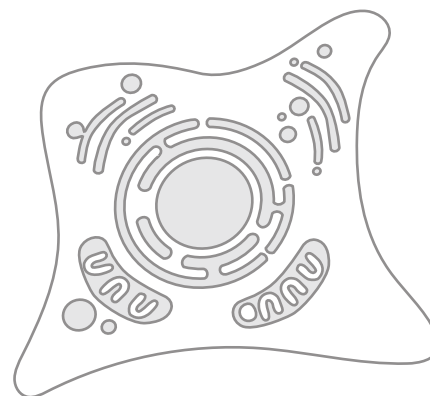
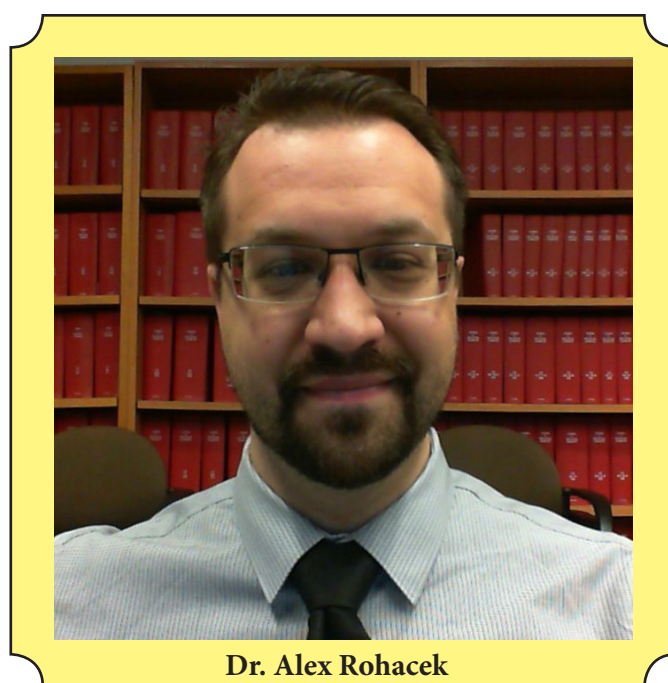
### **What advice do you have for anyone going through the job search process now?**

**DM:** I often tell others who are willing to listen that "you have to be a person before you can be a scientist." Everyone has different boundaries and things they are looking for (not moving to a new city, preferred work/life balance, etc.) – these things matter more than they are discussed. Deciding what those are for yourself (and not judging yourself for anything) can really help ensure your next step aligns with your values and what you want out of life. If you can be upfront and somewhat blunt about those boundaries during interviews, you are more likely to find a good match in your next job.

**AR:** You'll hear it a lot, but network! Find people on LinkedIn that were in CAMB or that you know and find out what they're doing. Even if you didn't know them, most will respond to a message and are eager to help. Who you know and knowing someone who can put in a good word for you can make a huge difference in getting a foot in the door. That, and be confident. Going through grad school is difficult and can be rough on your confidence, but you know what you're talking

about. Just having the Ph.D. puts you in a special place that is going to take you somewhere. It's hard, but be confident that you know your stuff and you're the right fit. That said, also apply to jobs that you might not seem 100% a fit for. Employers ask way too much and if you fit 50% of what they're looking for, odds are you are exactly what they want. We can learn techniques and pick up new fields. Don't let the job ads scare you.

Though the job search can be daunting, fellow CAMB students past and present have your back! If you'd like to get in touch with these awesome alumni, you can reach out to Dr. Moran at [dmoran2010@gmail.com](mailto:dmoran2010@gmail.com) and Dr. Rohacek at [alexmrroh@gmail.com](mailto:alexmrroh@gmail.com), or find either of them on **LinkedIn!**



# Thank you for reading.

For any questions, comments, concerns, or if you're interested in joining our team, please feel free to contact us at:

**[camb.studentnews@gmail.com](mailto:camb.studentnews@gmail.com)**

Check out our [blog](#) and [t page](#)!

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