

Interview Assessment #5

Name: Dr. Laurie Barge

Profession: Astrobiology

Location: NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Date: October 11, 2016--- 10:00 AM

Dr. Barge is currently an astrobiologist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. She has done much work on geochemical disequilibria that arise on wet rocky planets, which indicates that the region could be habitable. Her studies are also comprised of chemical gardens, hydrothermal vent systems, iron mineral chemistry, and development of fuel cells and electrochemical technologies. She is currently working on the Mars Renaissance Orbiter, which looks for evidence of water on Mars' surface.

Prior to the interview, I knew that Dr. Laurie Barge was in a prominent leadership position. Therefore, she is the one that would be conducting interviews for those who are interested to be part of her team. As a result, I wanted to get insight into the interview process that takes place. Fortunately, Dr. Barge explained to me the key things she looks for when hiring. The first thing she discussed about was professional attire. In addition to that, she told me that she looks for passion in the individual. According to her, this is extremely important because it tells her how dedicated that person will be with their research/ task. Lastly, she stated that she always asks the individuals about the books they read. She can learn a lot about that person's personality. All the information that I got from her was extremely helpful for me. This

is because I really want to work at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and there is good chance that Dr. Barge might interview me for the job. After this we discussed about the Cassini Spacecraft and how important it is to science. I mentioned to her that I did one of my research assessments on the mission and she was very pleased. We then talked about the obstacles that female can face during college, especially in this field. She told me that in her last year of astrophysics, she and two other girls were the only females that were in the class at the time of graduation. This provided me a glimpse of what college might be in a couple of years. In addition to this, she stated that there may be a few professors that might be very biased towards one gender because they are used to the old fashioned way of teaching. I just need to look past this and focus on successfully completing my educational requirements. Lastly, we talked about activities I can do now to be well prepared for the field. She emphasized on how I should observe professional scientists presenting their research to a large group of other scientists. I then asked her what conferences I could go to for observation. She informed me that every year in March, NASA conducts the Lunar Planetary Science Conference in Houston, TX. Dr. Barge explained to me that if I have a contact at the Johnson Space Center then I should reach out to them and ask if they are ok with taking me along to the conference. Fortunately, I did know someone and I am actually going to the LPSC Conference in March.

This particular research interview was extremely beneficial for me because my long term goal is to work at NASA's JPL. Dr. Barge's personality and worth ethic really inspired me to keep working hard to reach all my goals. I was also amazed by how she

overcame all her obstacles in college, such as gender bias, and became the head of her research team. After hearing her journey, I strive to be a successful scientist like her.