TIBBS Career Blitz Career Profile Questionnaire

**Career Profile:** Kathy Matera

**What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job?**
Associate Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry; 6.5 years at Elon University (10 years prior experience at an undergraduate institute in Cleveland).

**Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in?**
University of California at Davis, Organic Chemistry

**Did you do a postdoc?**
Yes, in Biophysical Chemistry/Biochemistry at Case Western Reserve University

**What are your main daily responsibilities?**
Teaching, research with undergraduates, committee meetings, meeting with students

**What are the keys to success in your career field?**
Patience, a sense of humor, dedication, being adaptable as every day is different

**What were the most important factors in choosing your career path?**
First and foremost, a desire to teach college aged students; flexibility for family life also factored into the decision; being able to stay in research without the huge demands of acquiring RO1 grants to survive.

**What activities (if any) did you participate in that helped you be successful in obtaining your job?**
Post doctoral work to broaden my area of expertise; teaching experience (both as an adjunct and a one year visiting professor position)

**What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours?**
Teaching at a primarily undergraduate institute (PUI) is not “Plan B” to getting an academic position at a RO1 research institute; faculty reviewing your application (and there are typically 100+ for each tenure track position advertised) can easily tell if you have an interest in teaching and working with undergraduates based on your previous experience.

Being a graduate student TA is no longer enough to qualify as “teaching experience.” Look for adjunct positions and/or visiting professor positions. Post doctoral work is a huge plus.