

# ALDW 'instant hire' job fair nets top-tier talent from TAMU

Weapons Engineering leaders take LANL straight to the source

Over the course of just two days in late March, the Associate Laboratory Directorate for Weapons Engineering's (ALDW) Pipeline Committee conducted an impressive 43 job interviews, offering 31 positions on the spot to prospective hires at a special Texas A&M University (TAMU)-sponsored "instant hire" job fair in College Station, Texas.

Right: Khi Greathouse (left) and ALDW's Melissa Metcalf (center) visit with prospective TAMU hires.



The event was developed between ALDW Staff Operations Manager **Melissa Metcalf** and TAMU Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for National Laboratories and National Security Strategic Initiatives **Diane Hurtado** specifically to identify engineering students whose interests and fields of study align with ALDW's mission.

So far, of the 31 job offers made, ALDW has officially hired eight regular employees and is awaiting formal acceptance and start dates for another five. The associate directorate also completed nine student packages. Another eight resumes were passed directly to other Laboratory organizations for consideration.

"The TAMU event was a special effort to reach out to a specific, applicant-rich resource, Texas A&M University, utilizing our parent company ties," said **Jay Carnes**, division leader for Engineering, Technology and Design (E). "The TAMU connection allowed LANL to more intimately involve TAMU faculty and resources to meet with top tier talent; TAMU understands our engineering needs, and LANL understands the quality of candidates that we have the potential to add to our workforce. I also believe it's worth mentioning we provided offers across five separate areas within ALDW, which allowed us to not compete for the same candidates and instead support each area and their needs."

## Taking the Lab to the talent



ALDW's Austin Brown (left) and Derrick Montoya (center) meet with a TAMU engineering student.

Created in-house in August 2021 and chaired and staffed by representatives from across all ALDW divisions, the ALDW Pipeline Committee has deployed resources to 35 recruiting events so far in 2022 to help synthesize the associate directorate's aggressive staffing plan, which seeks to address loss of staff from attrition and meet increasing demands for a highly-skilled employee base that can tackle challenges presented by the Laboratory's ever-accelerating Weapons mission.

To supplement those efforts, the Pipeline Committee engaged TAMU leadership, proposing a rapid-fire career fair that could quickly fill vacancies and supply brainpower virtually overnight. From Hurtado's perspective, it was a natural fit.

"This event was important to Texas A&M first and foremost because we support the national security mission of LANL broadly and Weapons Engineering specifically," Hurtado said. "In addition, as part of Triad National Security, LLC, we see it as a responsibility to help LANL meet its hiring goals so that we can all achieve that national security mission. Our engagement with LANL in these priority areas makes us both stronger and allows us to leverage our expertise and grow capabilities."

Indeed, there aren't many institutions better to recruit from than TAMU. With two NNSA Stewardship Alliance Programs and a nuclear engineering program active since 1957 (which is the largest in the country and ranked second among public graduate programs), it has one of the strongest talent pools around.



Brown meets with a member of TAMU's Corps Of Cadets.

"Given that Texas A&M has an engineering program with almost 23,000 students that consistently ranks in the top 10 public engineering programs, it is fundamentally a good place for LANL to recruit," Hurtado added. "Furthermore, our history and on-going role as a Senior Military School makes our students more likely to be aligned with LANL's national security mission, and our geographical nearness makes our students more likely to find New Mexico a nice place to settle."

## A personal touch, a simple formula for success

Prior to the instant hire event, the Pipeline Committee created flyers which were distributed to TAMU engineering students and faculty. The flyers outlined the ALDW mission and the types of skills the associate directorate is seeking in prospective employees. The strategy worked: the committee received 80 resumes before the event even started.

Once in hand, resumes were vetted and a cohort of applicants was selected for in-person interviews. At TAMU, the Pipeline Committee set up a welcome booth and three interview tables to facilitate discussions.

Right: Associate Laboratory Director for Weapons Engineering James Owen consults with a TAMU recruit.



"The feedback received from some of the students were very positive as they stated LANL added a personal touch by meeting them where they were, which made them more interested in learning about the work we do here," said **Khi Greathouse**, former ALDW human resources generalist.

Future events like this one are now being considered at places like Montana State University, Brigham Young and other top-tier engineering schools in the country.

Special thanks to ALDW's **James Owen**, **Derrick Montoya**, **Jennifer Gallegos**, **Crystal Rodarte Romero**, **Hans Herrmann**, **Austin Brown**, **Melissa Metcalf** and **Khi Greathouse** for organizing and participating in this innovative event.