

MAR10-2009-000929

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the MAR10 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

What can national laboratories contribute to graduate education?¹

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National laboratories are not traditional educational institutions and yet they have the potential to add significant value to the education of graduate students. National laboratories offer access to unique capabilities, for example light sources or neutron sources, enabling experiments that can be done nowhere else. The nature of the work done in a national laboratory may differ significantly from what is typical of university research. Differences range from the size of a collaboration, to the extreme interdisciplinary nature of the work, to the involvement of multiple principal investigators on a single project, to a strong focus on achieving a specific technical outcome. Most national labs host a significant number of graduate students, as short-term visitors, long-term residents which they pursue their thesis research, or in formal programs. I will discuss the value of national laboratory participation in graduate education, both to the students who work with or at national laboratories and to the graduate education enterprise as a whole.

¹Sandia is a multiprogram laboratory operated by Sandia Corporation, a Lockheed Martin Company, for the United States Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration under contract DE-AC04-94AL85000.