They Won’t All Grow Up to Be You: Preparing Students for Diverse Careers
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The Joint Task Force on Undergraduate Physics Programs (J-TUPP) was formed in response to a growing awareness in the physics community that undergraduate physics majors pursue a wide range of careers after graduation, with very few ending up employed as physics professors. The task force was charged to identify the skills and knowledge that undergraduate physics degree holders should possess to be well prepared for a diverse set of careers, and to provide guidance on how physicists could revise the undergraduate curriculum to improve the education of a diverse student population. Our report (issued in October 2016) is the result of the task force’s reviews of employment data, surveys of employers, and reports generated by other disciplines, as well as meetings with physicists in selected industries and interviews with recent physics graduates employed in the private sector. As part of our study we also identified exemplary programs that provide models of how physics departments can ensure that all of their students are well prepared to pursue a wide range of career paths. I will summarize and illustrate the findings and recommendations contained in the task force’s report.