

David Vosburg

Job title: Associate Professor of Chemistry, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, Calif.

Job description

Teaching students and researchers how to make molecules

Can you tell us a little bit about your job? What does an average day like for you?

I get to share with college students the joy of making molecules, in the classroom, in the laboratory and in my office. We talk about how chemicals are made in nature, how to make them ourselves, and how to minimize the amount of waste that's produced along the way.



What sparked your interest in Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM)? How did you start on your path to a career in STEM and what did that path look like?

I really enjoyed my science classes in high school, and in college I found that I really liked the puzzle of making molecules. There is logic to it, as well as art—and lots of new things to discover! The first times making a molecule that no one else has ever made before are thrilling!

What would you say to young folks who are thinking about a career in STEM?

If you have an interest and good ability in STEM subjects, keep going with it as far as you can. And don't be discouraged if you don't see many scientists/mathematicians/engineers that look like or think like you. We need all kinds of people in STEM, with all kinds of different ideas. That's how we make dynamic teams of researchers and discover really new things.

Do you have any STEM heroes?

Francis Collins. He discovered genetic markers for cystic fibrosis and several other diseases. He successfully directed the Human Genome Project that resulted in a map of our human DNA. He is a science rock star, and he has found a way for science to complement (rather than conflict with) his religious beliefs. He writes about this, and his journey from atheism, in his book *The Language of God*. He's now the head of the National Institutes of Health, the largest biomedical research institution in the world.