

Dear Dr. Aristotle (Part 3)

Dr. Socrates P. Aristotle
Provost
Stellar University

Dear Dr. Aristotle,

Is it possible that we are training too many scientists?

In the biology department where I work, every position we have open, is greeted with 200 resumes. What is disheartening is that some of these people are in their second or third post-doc. As you know these positions pay very little, have very little responsibility and are dead end.

I checked around and found out that the number of Ph.D. applicants in biology rose from 16,827 in 2000 to 21,745 last year. Also the number of graduates that get academic positions are about 22% of the graduating doctorates.

Also, I understand that 61% of our graduates in 1964 found tenure track positions within 10 years, while the 38% of the 1986 graduates were able to do the same. Now it looks like only 22% of the 1996 graduates made it. Are you concerned?

Is it possible that we might be misleading these students? With the reduction in research funding and open positions, should we be training them for other types of jobs.

Do you remember Dante Locke? He was our best student several years back. I heard today that he is testing water samples on the effluent of a sewer plant in East St. Louis. What a waste. (no pun intended)

My colleagues tell me to keep my mouth shut. They say that without the post-docs we might have to teach three classes instead of two. Some how that doesn't seem right to me.

Regards,

Barney Drosophilia Ph.D.

Professor of Biology