Planets are Interdisciplinary - Transcript

Kimberly Cartier (0:07): How does a planet work? If you ask an astronomer, a geologist, a biologist, and a physicist, you’ll get at least four different answers. I’m Kimberly Cartier with Eos. For our August career issue, I spoke with planetary scientist Edgard Rivera-Valentín about how they approach learning about the complicated, interconnected systems that we call planets.

Edgard Rivera-Valentín (0:35): I did my doctoral degree in space and planetary sciences at the University of Arkansas. The reason I ended up choosing that program was because the curriculum was very interdisciplinary. So there aren't many universities that offer a degree in planetary science. Those that do, they typically either offer it from a physics or a geology or an astronomy department. But rarely is there a standalone planetary science department. And as someone who had just finished their physics bachelor's degree, I wanted the opportunity to get involved with all the different types of sciences that are really needed to understand planets as a whole system. And at Arkansas, the cool thing about that program was that you had to pretty much take a class in every department that was part of the core program. So I had to take a class in geology, in physics, astronomy, engineering, biology, and chemistry. That let me see how everything came together into this one cohesive story and to understand planets as a system. Personally, I think more programs should follow this type of model and start working to be more interdisciplinary.

Kimberly Cartier (1:55): You can learn more about Edgard’s career path on Eos.org, and explore how other people pursued their geoscience dreams in our August career issue and online throughout the month.