Peggi Angel, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Cell and Molecular Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics with expertise in analytical chemistry. Dr. Angel joined the MUSC faculty in 2015. However, she did not follow the typical path to her current academic position. After supporting herself through undergraduate school and earning a B.S degree in Chemistry from Georgia Southern University, Dr. Angel took a position as an Assistant Research Scientist at BASF and then as an Associate Research Scientist at Cirrus Pharmaceuticals. During her time in industry, she decided to pursue an advanced degree and earned her Ph.D. in analytical chemistry from the University of Georgia in 2007. She then held postdoctoral positions at Emory and Vanderbilt before taking a position as Senior Scientist of Imaging Mass Spectrometry at Protea Biosciences in 2014. Craving more academic interactions, Dr. Angel joined the MUSC faculty as a Research Assistant Professor and was recently promoted to Assistant Professor after receiving an American Heart Association award.

Dr. Angel’s research is focused on understanding the systems biology of human health; how molecular interactions change due to external, endogenous environment and mechanical forces in normal development and in disease. She utilizes metabolomic, lipidomic and proteomic approaches using both imaging mass spectrometry and LC-MC/MS approaches. Imaging and LC data is combined with metabolomics, lipidomic and proteomic data using bioinformatics approaches to yield information on in situ biology. Although Dr. Angel has specific interests in aortic valve disease, her expertise lends itself to support many different areas of research. Indeed, she has contributed to a number of widely different and interdisciplinary research studies and has established several collaborations in the short time she has been at MUSC.

When asked to compare her industry and academic experiences, Dr. Angel highlighted the pros and cons. Although she really enjoyed the faster-paced challenges that being in industry provided, she was frustrated by the high project turnover and lack of freedom to select projects that exists in academics. “Industry has scientific deadlines that need to be met due to financial concerns. In industry, if deadlines are not met, projects can be halted and you need to be able to switch gears to something entirely new.” The big draw for Dr. Angel to return to academics included the ability to be more creative and to follow through on (longer-term) projects and especially the collaborative interactions that are naturally fostered within an academic environment. In particular, she highlights the ease of identifying colleagues who share similar interests to discuss research ideas and the interdisciplinary environment that she has enjoyed since arriving at MUSC.

It is often difficult to navigate your career path and for those considering the pros and cons of an academic versus an industry path, Dr. Angel views her experience in both realms as beneficial. If you enjoy aspects of both environments, Dr. Angel said it is possible to create opportunities to interact and collaborate with individuals in academics while working in industry. Similarly, while working in academics there are often opportunities to interact with companies in the biotech/pharmaceutical industry. Her advice is “don’t be afraid to change and make a move if you are not happy where you are”.