Networking Skills for Graduate Students

CRA-W Grad Cohort Workshop

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What This Session is About

- What networking is
- Why networking is important
- How to network

What Networking Is

- Making professional connections and using them wisely
- No substitute for doing quality work
- Different styles of networking
  - Informal
  - Deliberate

Why Networking is Important

- Makes you known
- Makes your work known
- Source of new research ideas
- Different slant on old ideas
- Feedback on your research
- Good letters of recommendation
- Getting internships
- Edge on getting papers accepted

(for later)
- Invitations to give talks
- Job interviews
- Program committees

This has a snowball effect!
Informal Networking

- Follow your personal style
- Serendipity happens
- Talk to people about their lives as well as their work
- Talk to people you meet by chance
- Talk to people in your own organization
  - Not just researchers!
- Offer to help out when you can
- Ask for help when you can use it
  - Most people are glad to help, if the request isn’t large
  - Be clear on what the person can do for you

Deliberate Networking

Who should you meet?
- Established researchers
- Your contemporaries (especially the Cohort)
- People who could hire you (internships now, jobs later)
- People who could give you good technical advice

Where can you meet them?
- At your University
- Local companies and other Universities
- At Conferences

Deliberate Networking at Your University

- Your fellow graduate students
- Two or more faculty other than your Advisor
- Visiting senior researchers
- Faculty candidates

Deliberate Networking at Conferences

Before You Go

- Write down & memorize two descriptions of your work
  - “Elevator talk”—1-minute version
    - Why is it an interesting problem?
    - Why is your solution unique?
  - Longer 3-minute version
- Practice with your advisor, cohort, other graduate students
- Who will be there whom you want to meet?
- What do you want to talk to them about?
  - Read papers, and write down questions
  - Ask why/how they started project, got problem
  - Integrate your work and interests into conversation
- What do they look like?
  - Find picture beforehand
  - Ask someone to point them out
Deliberate Networking at Conferences

The How's:

• Don’t just stand there, speak!
• The dreaded microphone
• Questions & discussion with speakers after their presentation
• Talk to the person sitting next to you
• Make lunch/dinner plans
• Hall talk
• Get your friends to introduce you
• Get your advisor to introduce you
• Talk to people who come up to you
• Get women to introduce you
• Talk to people who come up to you

Some don’ts:

• Don’t hang around with your graduate student friends
• Don’t interrupt heavy or private technical conversations

Deliberate Networking

The Follow-Up

After meeting them
  • Write down the next step
  • Write down technical tips
  • Write down what you owe whom/what they owe you

After getting back home
  • Send them your related papers
  • Ask for theirs
  • Actually read them! Send them comments
  • Share software and workloads
  • Do joint work together

Later in your career
  • Invite them to give a talk
  • Ask to give a talk there

When you are connected

• Connect women who are not

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Other Opportunities

• Go to workshops
• Sign up to talk to seminar speakers in your department
• Get involved in activities for women
  Systers Academia (Nancy Leveson, MIT)
• Cold-mailing
• Use your contacts to get new contacts
• Indirect path to program committees
• The tenure tour
• Visit program directors
Resources

- CRA-W Career Mentoring Workshops, Workshop reports and transcripts: http://cra.org/Activities/craw/projects/mentoring/mentor_workshop
- From a summer internship to a permanent position by Keith Purcell, NSF (1994)
- Finding real-world problems by Dirk Groenwold, U Colorado
- Networking for your students by Ken Kennedy, Rice
- Go outside your department by Tom Casey, U Oregon
- Developing business contacts by Maria Kauth, SRC
- Networking at NSF by Caroline Waddell, NSF
- Populating a start-up by Dave Dillard, Transmeta
- The CNR program director by Susan Eggers, UW

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What To Do Today!

- Meet the person next to you
- Meet other Cohort students
- Meet Cohort faculty in your area and in others
- Talk about...