CRA-W Career Mentoring Workshop

Networking Strategies

Adapted from "Networking Strategies"   by Jan Cuny

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Making professional connections and using them wisely

With whom should you network?

- Established teachers/researchers in your field
- People who can give you good teaching/career/technical advice
- Funding program directors
- People who could hire you
- Your contemporaries

What to do at conferences

Know whom you want to meet and what you want to talk to them about

- Know beforehand who you want to talk to
- Write their names down
- Know what you want to talk to them about
- Read their papers and check out their webpages

Know what the people you want to meet look like

- Look on their webpages or in technical journals
- Ask others to point them out
- You should know what all the people in your field look like

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What to do at conferences

What to do at conferences

Prepare a brief description of your work
- What your work is about
- Why it is important, why your solution separates you from the rest of the pack
- Need 3-sentence, 5-minute and 15 minute versions
  - Practice

Ask a question during a talk

- No matter if you think it is stupid!

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What to do at conferences

Introduce yourself to the speaker after the talk

- "I liked your talk"
- "I have a question"
- Explain a different slant you may have
- Describe a related work

Engage in hall talk

- Everyone is in the hall talking about their work

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What to do at conferences

Follow your personal style

- Be sociable and friendly to the people you meet
- Talk to them in a way that is natural and comfortable for you

Use your contacts to get new contacts

- Get friends, your advisor, colleagues to introduce you
- Do the same for others

What to do at conferences

Make lunch and dinner plans

- Pick a table where people are talking socially – not deep in a technical conversation
- Ask if someone standing alone has dinner/lunch plans

Talk to people you meet by chance

- Talk to someone who happens to sit next to/in front of/behind you
  - Make a comment on the last talk
  - Ask about something you didn't understand
  - Talk about what you liked or didn't like about the talk

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What to do at conferences

Talk to people who happen to come up to you

- Don't always be on the lookout to not see others who want to talk to you

Talk to people about their lives as well as their work

- Be interested if someone mentions family or travel or hobbies
- Don't pry

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What to do at conferences

Offer to help out when you can

- Bring people together who could help each other
- Suggest papers or colleagues they should know

Volunteer

- Introduce yourself to an editor of a journal in your field
- Offer to help with an upcoming conference
- Be responsible!

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What to do at conferences

Don't hang around with your friends

- You already know them – meet other people

Don't just stand there – speak!

- Ask someone about their research
- Have a specific question ready if you know their research
  - "I just read your paper and I was wondering if you could tell me more about…"
  - "Have you done anything further on it?"
  - "Who else is working on this topic?"

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What to do at conferences

Write it down

- After you've talked to someone
- Don't assume you'll remember what you talked about or what you are supposed to do
- Note their name on the conference attendee list and what you talked about – Connect!
- Give people your business card and write on the back what they told you they were going to do
- Write down technical ideas from a talk
- If someone asks you a question you can't answer, write it down and email them later with "That was an interesting question; it's made me think. Here's a possible answer." or "Here's a step in the right direction. Do you want to work on it together?"
- Send someone a paper or idea you saw that was related to a talk they gave

What to do at conferences

Make connections to:

Do joint work together
- Particularly good with people on your own level

Invite them to give a talk at your university
- They might return the opportunity

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What to do at conferences

See the same people again

- Build long-term, stronger relationships

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What to do when not at conferences

Talk to people at your own organization

- Within your department
- Outside your area
- Administrators

Send preprints

- Connect to people working on a related problem

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What to do when not at conferences

Meet with visitors to your department

Meet with program directors

What to do when not at conferences

Ask for help when you can use it

- Be clear about what the person can do for you

When it doesn't go as planned

- If people ignore you – move on
    - Their bad social skills
- Be professional
    - Avoid mistaken intentions

Welcome to the Old Girls Network!