

BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL PERSONA

Andrea Danyluk, Williams College

Ayanna Howard, Georgia Institute of Technology

Thanks to presenters from previous years!



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Andrea Danyluk

- Mary A and William Wirt Warren Professor of Computer Science, Williams College
- Previous:
 - Acting Dean of Faculty
 - CS Department Chair
 - Cognitive Science Program Chair



- Research:
 - Machine Learning (Applications, Feature Selection, Systematic Error)
- Previous: NYNEX ML & AI Researcher
- ICML 2001 co-Chair
- ICML 2009 General Chair

- CRA-WP co-Chair
- ACM Education Board & Ed. Advisory Committee
- ACM Data Science Task Force co-Chair
- Previous:
 - Inaugural Global Director of Align, Northeastern University
 - ACM/IEEE-CS CS2013



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Ayanna Howard

- Chair, School of Interactive Computing (IC)
- Linda J. and Mark C. Smith Endowed Professor
- CTO/Founder, Zyrobotics
- Previous: NASA Robotics Researcher
- Research: Human-Robot Interaction and AI



No. 19: Zyrobotics' Ayanna Howard

Ayanna Howard, Founder & Chief Technology Officer, Zyrobotics.

Howard is a professor at Georgia Tech specializing in the intersection of machine learning and robotics.



College of Computing Selects Ayanna Howard to Lead School of Interactive Computing

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Following a national search, the Georgia Tech College of Computing has selected **Ayanna Howard**, professor and Linda J. and Mark C. Smith Chair in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) to chair its School of Interactive Computing.

Howard, who is also associate chair for faculty development in ECE, will succeed Professor **Annie Anton**, who served in the role from 2012-17. Anton finished her five-year term in June 2017 and remains a professor within the school. Professor **Amy Bruckman**



@robotsmarts



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What is CRA-WP?

Individual & Group Research Mentoring

Undergrads: Undergraduate Research Experiences (CREU & DREU), Research-Focused Scholarship opportunities at GHC (GHC Research Scholars)

Grad Cohort: Group Mentoring of Graduate Students (Grad Cohort for URMD & Grad Cohort for Women)

Grad Students & Academics/PhD Researchers: Mentoring Tracks @ GHC, Returning Scholars @ GHC, Group Mentoring for Early & Mid Career @ CMW



*Stay in touch: cra.org/cra-wp, Twitter: @CRA_WP,
Facebook: CRA-WP, Linked-in: CRA-Widening Participation*



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What is a Professional Persona?

“Persona”

- Role that one assumes or displays in public or society

“Professional”

- Exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike and technical manner

“Professional Persona”

- A presence that is effective in giving others a positive perception of you & your abilities



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Perceptions

How might others describe you?

- based on your web page
- based on your interactions, one-on-one or in a group



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Perceptions

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How would you like others to describe you?

- What qualities would you like to project



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Share with your neighbor

How might others describe you?

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Perceptions

How might others describe you?

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Qualities I want to project:

Qualities that were most important when I was finishing grad school

- Intelligent, competent, organized, have potential

Qualities I'm concerned about

- Too abrupt/direct, fitting in (imposter syndrome, small talk)

Qualities I now understand are very important

- Supportive, collaborative



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**FOCUS:
DEVELOPING YOUR PROFESSIONAL
PERSONA**

Why is a Professional Persona Important?

Instrumental in achieving your goals:

- Job opportunities
- Invitations to speak, participate, lead
- Award nominations
- Media opportunities
- Visibility of your work within your org and communities



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How?

Develop your personal brand

Four components:

- ***Appearance:***
Your body language, clothing attire and overall posture
- ***Personality:***
Your behavior, communication skills and attitudes toward people
- ***Competencies:***
Your special skills fulfilling task requirements
- ***Differentiation:***
What separates you from others and leaves a lasting memory in minds of others

Use your personal brand to differentiate yourself and make a positive impression

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Developing a Personal Brand?

- The way you present yourself and act around others shapes your personal brand
- To build a strong brand requires a strong understanding of your true authentic self
 - What are your values and priorities?
 - What are your passions and expertise?
 - Are you consistent in what you say and do?
 - What is the value you provide?
 - What do you stand (or kneel) for?



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Developing Your Professional Persona

First Impressions Are Important

Make your best effort:

- In person
- Within a group
- Online - professional and social media



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In Person

In just a few seconds, with a brief glance, a person unfamiliar with you will evaluate who you are based upon your appearance and personality

Strengthen your appearance and personality



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Within Group

Public image critical when addressing a large group, class, audience

People retain ~ 4% of content of any presentation, speech/talk, but
always remember 100% of how they felt about it

Integrate elements to build your unique personal message



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Online/Networking

- Online → your public image
- Outlets: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Wikipedia page, Google Scholar, Web page
- Line between professional and personal
- Remember you are not there to interpret what others view/read
- Remember your presence on Internet is archived and will always be available to anyone, employer or social group, who search for it

Clean up your E-persona



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Professional Presence

- Up-to-date CV or bio or LinkedIn or...
- Research interests
- Work Products
 - Publications
 - Software
 - Patents
 - ...
- Teaching materials
- Media coverage, photos, awards



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Professional Reputation

- The computing / tech community is smaller than you might imagine → Your reputation will follow you
- Behave ethically and responsibly ([acm.org/code-of-ethics](https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics))
- Grow your technical and soft skills
- Advocate your ideas in strong terms while respecting others' ideas
- Show willingness to contribute (reasonably and responsibly)
- Show gratitude for others' work

Be the colleague you want to have



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Five Tips



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Tip #1: Assess your Professional Persona

Does your perception of yourself match how others perceive you?

Does your professional persona serve you well?

Does your professional persona match your specific goals?

Are you seeing a return on your investments?

- Recognition: Credibility, expertise, knowledge, visibility
- Influencing others
- New opportunity



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Tip #2: Don't forget to showcase your soft skills

- Technical depth and breadth is important, but it may not win you the job or help you advance
- How do you demonstrate that you are:
 - an effective communicator?
 - collaborative and responsive?
 - a strong leader?



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Tip #3: Be clear in your communications

- Pre-think through important conversations and posts
- Use clear language
 - Avoid misinterpretation
 - Pat yourself on the back, but don't overreach
 - Consider how others may interpret what you say
- Follow through on things you say you will do



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Tip #4: Practice makes perfect

If you don't get it right, try again

Solicit actionable feedback

Allow yourself to grow and change over time



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Tip #5: When to develop a Professional Persona?

The right time to get to this is...

NOW!

Start a checklist and put recurring appointment on your calendar to revisit every quarter (reward yourself for doing it)



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Conclusion

- Your persona can serve you professionally
- Make **intentional** choices about how to build and nurture your persona

GO FOR IT NOW !



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THANKS

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