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VIRTUAL



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V I R T U A L

# Sponsors & Mentors: Building Your Academic Professional Network

A.J. Brush, Microsoft & CRA-WP Board

Melanie Wu, Pomona College & CRA-WP Board

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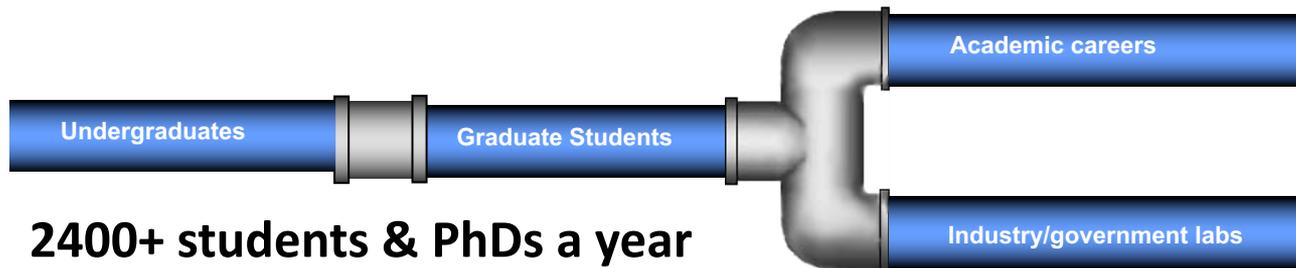
# What is CRA-WP?

## *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



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# A.J. Brush

## Education

- Ph.D, University of Washington 2002, Williams College B.A. 1996

## Career

- Microsoft, Microsoft Research for 12 years, 3 years in Cortana product
- Year of leave working in Industry as programmer for personal reasons
- Research Areas: HCI, Tech for the Home (Speech Interaction, Ubicomp, IoT)

## Family and Fun:

- Kids: Colin(17) and Ryan (14).
- Hobbies: Exercise, Reading, Travel



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# Yuqing Melanie Wu

- Education
  - Ph.D. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2004
- Career
  - Pomona College, 2015-present
    - Professor of Computer Science
    - Chaired the department 2017-2020
  - Indiana University, Bloomington, 2004-2015
  - Research area: database management
- Hobbies:
  - Travel, exercises, cooking, gardening



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# The Path to Success

- It takes a community to help you succeed and reach your full potential
  - It is both **WHAT** you do and know and **WHO** you know.
- Networking – enhance the **WHAT** and expand the **WHO**
  - Building and publicizing your brand/reputation
  - Becoming aware of new opportunities
  - Identifying collaborators
  - Learning about new ideas and approaches
  - Getting invited to program committees, review panels, keynotes, journal editorship, etc.
- Before you start
  - Know **why and who** you want to add to your network (e.g., before an event).
  - Know **what** you want from your network! → not just people from your own discipline!



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# Networking -- the setup

## Where

- Places around you: school, work, ...
- Professional gatherings: conferences and workshops, technical talks/seminars, industry meet-ups, ...
- Planned visits: summer internships, sabbaticals, ...
- Services: program committee meetings, NSF panel and other review meetings, ...
- Social settings: around the water cooler, department picnic, ...

## Who

- Established Researchers in diverse disciplines
- Contemporaries/peers – both junior and senior
- People who have open job positions Industry technologists and leaders
- Technical advisors and experts
- Alumni
- NSF Program managers
- Venture capitalists
- Friends and neighbors



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# Networking -- Make it happen

## Getting started

- Your 15 second introduction
  - ”Hi, my name is X, I am from Y and I work on Z.”
- Your 1 minute elevator talk
  - ”Hi, my name is X, I am from Y. I work on Z, it is about A. And I am really interested in B and C.”
- Spend a minute introducing yourself in front of the camera
- Write down and revise your introduction. Revise often. Practice you till you are comfortable with it.

## Have a plan

- Set a goal
- Find opportunities
- Prepare
- Some tips
  - Read papers and prepare questions
  - Join a group and introduce yourself
  - Meet new people when possible.
  - Follow up later by email
  - Ask others to introduce you
  - Volunteer



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# Networking -- Do's and Don't

## DO

- Be professional: Be yourself, Be active, Be confident, Look people in the eyes
- Be visible: Wear your badge visibly. Speak! (don't just stand there), Get your friends/advisor to introduce you
- Connect: Talk to speakers after their presentations. Talk to the person next to you. Make lunch/dinner plans. Attend social activities
- Follow up: Make plans for follow up (write it down!). Re-connect with people you've met before

## DO NOT

- Hang around with your friends
- Interrupt private conversations
- Be overly negative/critical
- Hang on to a conversation too long
- Put too much stock in a single, short conversation
- Get discouraged
- Hide in your room



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# What is the difference between a mentor and sponsor?

Mentors *advise* you.

Sponsors *advocate for you*.



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# Mentor vs. Sponsor

- Mentors have mentees. **Sponsors have protégés.**
- Mentors participate in formal/informal discussions on building skills, knowledge, and confidence for career advancements. **Sponsors promote protégés directly, connecting them to high-profile assignments, people, pay increase, or promotions**
- Mentors helps mentee craft a career vision. **Sponsors help drive protégé's career vision**



# Mentor vs Sponsor, cont.

- Mentors suggest how to expand mentee's network. Sponsors give protégés their active network connections and makes new connections for them
- Mentors offer insight into increasing visibility through finding projects/people. Sponsors champion their protégé's visibility, using their own platforms and reputation as a medium of exposure
- Mentors shares passively "unwritten rules" for advancement in their organization. Sponsors actively involve protégés in experiences that enable advancement



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# Mentors are good. Sponsors are different sorts of people

- Mentors may be very well intentioned, like you a lot, respect your work and be deeply invested in your success.
- But mentors may not speak up on your behalf. It's not from any ill intention
- Sponsorship requires proactive energy.
- Some mentors will act as sponsors, but **you cannot bank on mentors to sponsor you.**



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# Why seek a sponsor?

“Women are over-mentored and under-sponsored relative to their male peers (Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010).”



Men are **45% more likely** to have a sponsor than women across industry sectors (CTI, 2015).



## BETTER PAY

**38% of sponsored women** vs. **30% of unsponsored women** will ask for a raise — sponsored women are likely to get it.



## IMPROVE ADVANCEMENT

**68% of sponsored women** vs. **57% of unsponsored women** report satisfactory pace in promotions.



## MORE HIGH PROFILE ASSIGNMENTS

**44% of sponsored women** vs. **36% of unsponsored women** will ask for high-visibility work.



## INCREASE RETENTION

**85% of mothers** who are sponsored stay employed vs. only **58% without sponsors**.



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# Choose your potential sponsors wisely

## Observe personalities of people in your network

- who speaks up (carefully)
- who has the ability to change the direction of a conversation
- whose opinion matters
- who won't hesitate to interject when need be (and are highly effective when doing so)

Avoid sponsorship from someone whose endorsement creates negative interactions



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# Questions to ask yourself

## What can they offer you?

- Who makes pay, promotion or project/committee assignments that may affect you?
- Which senior leader has a network or platform most equipped to help you advance in your career?

## What can you offer them?

- Which senior leader would benefit from you/your career advancement?



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# Building sponsor-protégé relationship

Rinse and repeat:

1. Create opportunities for research/education/business-focused conversations
2. Seek advice and take it
3. Follow up

Do not ask directly for a sponsorship. It just does not work that way



# Homework

- Think of your mentors and sponsors. How are they different? Do your current mentors act as sponsors?
- What evidence do you have that someone is sponsoring you?
- Who are potential sponsors for you?



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# Takeaway

Developing powerful relationships through networking and finding mentors and sponsors is too important to leave it up to chance

It all starts with you taking steps to build your network and to find your sponsors



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# Thank You!



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