

How to Network, Even through a Pandemic!

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With thanks to prior speakers:

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About Siobahn

- **Education**
 - B.S. Computer Science, Winston-Salem State University (2005)
 - M.S. Information Science, North Carolina Central University (2009)
 - M.S. Computer Science, North Carolina A&T State University (2018)
 - Ph.D. Computer Science, North Carolina A&T State University (2018)
- **Research – Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning**
- **Professional**
 - Industry – Information Technology Departments in Higher Ed.
 - Academia
 - Elon University, Adjunct Professor
 - University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Lecturer
 - Assistant Professor at North Carolina Central University
- **Personal**
 - Love traveling, cooking, and reading!



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Points of Pride

- 2020 NSF Awardee ([Autonomous Vehicles- Fault Detection](#))
- AAAS IF/THEN Mini Grant Awardee ([STEM-It-Yourself](#))
- SPARK Grant Awardee ([SOH Time](#))
- 2021 Caroline L. Lattimore Excellence in Education Awardee
- 2019 AAAS IF/THEN Ambassador
- 2019 BlackComputerHER Fellow and Awardee
- Black Girls Code RDU Core Member

- Advocate
- Entrepreneur
- Researcher
- Teacher
- Daughter
- Friend
- Sorority Sister
- Volunteer

1st woman to earn a PhD in
Computer Science from
North Carolina A&T State
University

DR.SIOBAHN DAY GRADY



#2021isGlorious



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About Rita

ME, American University of Beirut

- Computer & Communications Engineering.
Thesis Neural Networks & Signal Processing

Worked for a start-up (1996-2001)

- Different engineering and management positions

PhD, Columbia University

- Electrical Engineering.
Thesis work in Distributed Networking

Research Scientist, Intel Corporation, Intel Labs

Senior AI Principal Engineer, Intel Corporation, Internet of Things Group



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What Does Rita Do?



*most prolific woman inventor at Intel
(over 300 patents)*

Transforming factories with AI



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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!



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Networking

IS

Interacting with other people to exchange information and develop contacts especially to further your career.

IS NOT

- A substitute for quality work
- Just socializing or idle chit-chat
- Using people, name-dropping



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Why Network?

- 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.



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Networking: How, Where, Who?



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Where to Network?

(Answer: Everywhere!)

- School
- Work
- Conferences and workshops
- Technical talks/seminars
- Industry Meet-ups
- Summer internships
- Sabbaticals
- Program Committee Meetings
- NSF Panel and other review meetings
- Social settings
- ...



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Who: Make a targeted list

Know **why** and **who** you want to add to your network (e.g., before an event).

And know **what** you want from your network!

And not just people from your own discipline!

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



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Networking Opportunities

- **Conferences/Workshops**
 - Volunteer
 - Find someone alone and start a conversation
 - Keep a short introduction/pitch ready – practice!!
- **Talks/Seminars**
 - Ask a question
 - Read the paper beforehand
- **School/work**
 - Informal and formal meetings with your colleagues, students
 - Meet with visitors coming to campus
 - Participate in committees
- **Industry internships/sabbaticals**
 - Get to know interns from other schools/disciplines
 - Get to know folks other than your mentors.
- **Non-professional venues**



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Networking: build a plan

Give yourself a goal for an event

- Example: meet 2 new people, talk with 1 research leader, etc.

Find group networking opportunities

- Example: meals, conference outing, reception, student dinners
- Join a group that is casually talking and introduce yourself.
(Don't barge into private conversations)
- Sit down with people you don't know at tables.

Prepare:

- Example: Read papers ahead and write down questions you want to ask.

Some Tips:

- Ask for help – introductions from your advisor, senior colleagues and mentors
- Volunteer: PCs, Panels, Conference organization jobs
- Follow up by email. Send your latest paper.
- Call the NSF/DARPA/other funding program managers.
- Don't be discouraged if people don't remember you. Reintroduce yourself.



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At conferences: DO's

Be yourself, Be active, Be confident

Wear your badge visibly

Speak! (don't just stand there)

Use the dreaded microphone

Talk to speakers after their presentations

Talk to the person next to you

Look people in the eyes

Make lunch/dinner plans

Attend social activities

Get your friends/advisor to introduce you

Make plans for follow up (write it down!)

Re-connect with people you've met before



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At Conferences, DON'T

DON'T hang around with your friends

DON'T interrupt private conversations

DON'T be overly negative/critical

DON'T hang on to a conversation too long

DON'T put too much stock in a single, short conversation

DON'T get discouraged

DON'T hide in your room



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Pandemic Style Networking



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Networking Pandemic Style

- Consider dropping into the DMs
- Always add a personalized message when connecting via social media
- Be specific with your request/ask
- Have a website or reference material available



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Finding Sponsors

Advocates are sometimes called sponsors, so will use that term



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Mentors vs. Sponsors

Mentors talk to you about you

Sponsors talk to others about you
even when you are not in the room



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Mentors vs. Sponsors

Mentor

- Mentors participate in formal/informal discussions on building skills, knowledge, and confidence for career advancements.
- Mentors helps mentee craft a career vision.
- Mentors suggest how to expand mentee's network.

Sponsor

- Sponsors promote protégés directly, connecting them to high-profile assignments, people, pay increase, or promotions.
- Sponsors help drive protégé's career vision.
- Sponsors give protégés their active network connections and makes new connections for them.



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Mentors vs. Sponsors

Mentor

- Mentors offer insight into increasing visibility through finding projects/people.
- Mentors share passively “unwritten rules” for advancement in their organization.

Sponsor

- Sponsors champion their protégé’s visibility, using their own platforms and reputation as a medium of exposure.
- 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.

Choose your Sponsor Wisely

Observe personalities of people in your network

- Who speaks up (carefully)
- Who has the ability to change the direction of a conversation
- Who is well respected
- 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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When Considering a Sponsor

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 or building a relationship with you?



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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. Sponsors happen organically when a senior person decides to take that role or active retention efforts from an organization.



Takeaway

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

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



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Thank you!



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