

ASA Early Career Researcher Mentoring Workshop – Session summary

Session Topic: **Networking**

Discussion Leader: **Geraint Lewis**

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If you only remember three things from this talk, remember these...

1. The anti-network: always be professional!
2. Take the initiative and approach those you want in your network
3. Once you have established your network it will carry on working for you in the background

Session summary/notes

Networking is...

...the people you know, who are familiar with you and your work. They will comment on you – officially and unofficially. “They will be brutally honest with you about career advice!”

...the action of going out and advertising yourself and your work.

Why network?

Science has become globalized and socialized. At the same time there is a strong tendency in science to focus and work in a silo. It is therefore critical to keep your head up and maintain your network.

Networking makes you recognizable and therefore accessible. It enables you to get the right job because one’s network is where you look to hire a good person. In the ideal case the employer knows about you (and that you are looking for work) before a job becomes available.

It provides a group of people to guide and advise you through your career.

It also keeps giving – people say nice things about you and you get on more publications and more ideas.

“It’s not *only* what you know, it’s *also* who you know!” – GL

“Careers don’t just happen. Cultivate your career.” - GL

How do you expand and maintain a network?

You need to be visible on a global scale.

Papers

- Publish in the right journals
- Write to the authors of papers, especially the high-level person on the project.
- Send your newly published papers to the key people in your field who you know will want to read them.

Talks and Conferences

- Perform talk tours (esp. for ARC grants), volunteer for committees, colloquia organizing.
- *Take advantage of opportunities* for collaboration and expanding your network!
- Don't be shy, plan and know who is going to be at a conference. Prepare.
- Approach those you want to see your poster in the reception and suggest they try and view it.
- Make sure you ask questions and comments during talks.
- Be strategic about conference attendance: attending broader conferences can foster new links and new collaborations

"You can get very incestuous with respect to networking. Try to be diverse and spread your network." – GL

Collaborations

- Take the initiative to start a collaboration – they won't come to you.
- Know your value or skills.
- Meet people through people you already know.

How do you use your network?

Advice and mentoring

"Does this sound right?" "Should I apply for this?"

"Your mentor will be brutally honest with you!" – GL

For references

Ask them if they will write a good one for you... but also give them a way out (e.g., Is it a good time to give me a reference?). On CV, list many people who would be willing to say something good about you, not just the three or so they ask for. Your references are important, but it is more important what they say.

For jobs

Tip-offs! You should notify your network that you're looking for work. And go on talk tours visiting them.

"I think you should put in an application for this position." – GL

For advertising

Colleagues will spread your work, even if you're not there.

The anti-network

It is important to appear professional, especially at conferences and meetings; you are on show!

Have a professional attitude at the reception as well as the conference itself.

Be sure to separate your work and personal web pages and to adjust your Facebook privacy settings (potential employers will look).

"Make sure you are one pint behind... you can't be drunker than those you want to impress!" - GL

Interesting quotes from the discussion

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