Building Communities of Support
Toward a Successful Academic Job Search

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Today

Context – Why this matters
Building communities on and off campus
Methods for success
Advice for current job seekers
Follow-up and maintenance of relationships
Qualifications & Social Capital
Process Spans Your Career

- Beginning an ongoing process of building relationships
- Consider what is “stage appropriate” as you build relationships
Campus Communities

Who & Where
Your mentor
Your department
Campus events

Your cohort
Related disciplines
The Basics

Show up
- Go to meetings and ask questions
- Share your thesis in conversation
- Ask about the work of others
- Attend multidisciplinary events
- Follow-up on posters or talks
- Set up individual meetings
- Join journal clubs

Speak up

Follow up
Don’t rely on one mentor

Don’t expect mentors or contacts to do your work

Seek Multiple Advisors

Guiding Mentor
Sponsor
Peer-Mentor
Informational Contact
Experienced Straight-Shooter
Conferences Considerations

Consider professional organizational norms
Strategize for conference size
Consider formal vs. informal
Use existing structures
Develop a plan of attack
Pre-arrange “coffee chats”
Methods for Conferences

Submit a poster/paper
Research beforehand
Become involved in conference planning
  Attend newcomers meetings
Strategically plan who to meet
Invite faculty to visit your poster/session
Ask questions at talks
  *Don’t over-process!*
Building Relationships while you are on the market to be successful in your job search
Reaching Out Before You Apply

Chair of Department
Most Senior Faculty
Most Junior Faculty
Other Graduate Students
Grad Chair
Things You Might Say

“I have always admired your department’s work in X and would like to set up some time to learn more from you...”

“I am planning to apply to your department and would benefit from your perspective as a (junior/senior) faculty...”
Effective Follow-up & Maintenance

You’ve gotta’ give to get
A thank you note is *not* overrated!
Do what the contact suggests
Update contacts on your progress
Don’t overlook the intrinsic give-backs
Plan ahead & schedule follow-up
Post Conference Follow-up

Job candidate follow-up with potential job:

“Dear Professor Who,

It was wonderful to meet you. I appreciate the time you took in discussing your department and how my research might complement your work. Our discussion deepened my interest in your department and I look forward to submitting my materials...”
Grad student building a relationship:

“Dear Dr. Who,
Thank you for visiting my poster and for your thoughts on my work. I gave some consideration to our discussion and think that it would be good for me to investigate further... I am wondering if I can prevail upon you to review a draft copy of the manuscript we are preparing for this work...We plan to submit it by May 1. If you are amenable to this, I will mail it to you next week and would welcome any suggestions or comments...”
3 Steps to Building a Plan with Accountability

1. Map out your plan

2. Set number goals for weekly or monthly contacts

3. Meet bi-weekly with an accountability partner or group → Meet for one hour, share what you have accomplished, make commitment to goals for next two weeks.
Ecomap Exercise
Handout on CRLT Website

Ecomap Networking Exercise

On the figure below, the lines between the scholar in the center and the other bubbles indicate the strength of the connection.

- A solid line indicates a good relationship.
- A double solid line indicates an especially strong tie.
- A single dotted line indicates a weak relationship.
- A line that is broken by horizontal markers shows a former connection that has not been maintained.

The absence of any line indicates that the person or organization is one with whom the scholar would like to make a connection, but that no relationship exists at present.

1. Using this ecomap as a model, make your own map showing your current and desired relationships, and the strength of those relationships. Once your map is completed, highlight the connections that need your attention. This could include past relationships you want to rekindle, existing connections you hope to strengthen, and people you would like to meet.
Resources