Making New Contacts: Networking and Career Fairs

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Science Careers/UCSF Career Fair
Making New Contacts: Networking and Career Fairs

AAAS

- International nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing science, engineering, and innovation throughout the world
- Membership-based organization
- Publisher of *Science*
- Source for broad range of career advice and resources through ScienceCareers.org
Making New Contacts: Networking and Career Fairs

ScienceCareers.org

- Job listings
- Career advice articles
- Graduate program information
- Meetings and event information
- GrantsNet
- Career Forum
Science Careers/AAAS Outreach Program

- Info for Ph.D., postdocs, and beyond on...
  - Career options
  - Professional development skills
  - Job search
- In a variety of settings...
  - Trade shows and conferences
  - Universities and colleges
Career fairs are all about networking, but a successful job search requires other networking, too!
Who’s in **YOUR** network?

How do you increase the size of your network?

Why do you care about your network?
Introduction

- Perceptions of networking
  - Negative connotations
  - People avoid networking

- Reality
  - Networking can be fun
  - Networking impacts your career
Introduction (cont’d)

- Define networking
- Conferences
  - Elevator pitches and handshakes
  - Meeting people and exchanging business cards
  - Following up with contacts
- Professional societies
- Informational interviews
- Social networking sites
- Career fairs
Networking as a Broad Term

- Different contexts
- Different strategies
- Different reasons
- Networking isn’t just about your professional contacts
“Connecting with others really just involves having a predetermined plan and carrying it out, whether you want to be a ninth-grade history teacher or start your own business.”

- Keith Ferrazzi, *Never Eat Alone*
Prepare to Network

- Reflect on how you can benefit from networking
- Research events and people
- Brainstorm questions
- Set goals
Networking and Manners

- People like to help
- Don’t directly ask for a job, admission to graduate school, etc.
- Be mindful of people’s time
- Be friendly and collegial
- Observe how other people interact
- Don’t take things personally
- “What’s in it for me?”
Networking at Conferences

- Plenty of networking opportunities
  - Breaks
  - Poster sessions
  - Other activities
- Think of reasons to talk to people
- Ask questions
- Name badges
- If you feel shy, use the buddy system
- Prepare your opening line
Meeting People

- Entering and exiting conversations
- Always have a free hand at receptions
- Practice:
  - Your handshake
  - Meeting people
  - Speaking
- Who else should I talk to?
Elevator Pitches

- Be prepared to introduce yourself to people
- What to include
- Having different versions
Business Cards

- Make sure you have some
- Carry them with you
- Don’t be shy about passing them out
- Make sure your cards are accessible
- Resumes
Following Up With Contacts

- Make notes about new contacts
- Follow up with new contacts soon after you’ve met
- Keep up with people in your network
- “Will you look at my resume? Where can I build skills?”
Professional Societies

- As a place for networking
- Annual meetings
- Local chapters, regional meetings
- Membership directories
- Volunteer opportunities
Informational Interviews

- Learn about career options and expand your network
- Ask for a few minutes of the person’s time
- Prepare ahead of time
- Briefly introducing yourself and explain your interest
- Ask open-ended questions
- Mind your manners
- Ask for referrals
- Afterwards, write a thank you note
Social Networking Websites

- Various websites – LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, science specific sites, also online forums
- A way to control your online presence
- Help with various aspects of networking
  - Meet people
  - Stay connected
  - Organize contacts
- AAAS’ and Science Careers Facebook pages, Science Careers Forum
- Blogging
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LinkedIn Bianna Blaser - Mozilla Firefox

Profile

Edit My Profile | View My Profile

Bianna Blaser
Project Director, Outreach at Science Careers/AAAS
Washington D.C. Metro Area | Professional Training & Coaching

Current
• Project Director, Outreach at AAAS

Past
• Center for Workforce Development Research Assistant at University of Washington
• Women Studies TA at University of Washington
• Intern at Association for Women in Science

Education
• University of Washington
• Carnegie Mellon University

Connections
13 connections
Public Profile http://www.linkedin.com/profile/bla8a85

Summary
Bianna Blaser is Project Director of Outreach for AAAS & Science Careers where she promotes Science Careers resources through career and professional development workshops to undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and early career scientists.

Bianna earned her PhD in Women's Studies at the University of Washington in 2008. Her dissertation, More than Just Lab Partners: Women Scientists and Engineers Married to and Partnered with Other Scientists and Engineers, examined how women scientists' relationships with other scientists affect both their professional and personal lives. While at the University of Washington, Bla7ana was a research assistant at the Center for Workforce Development where she organized professional development activities, including a newsletter, a mentoring program, and workshops for graduate students in science and engineering.

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Business & Management

YES, I want Financial Aid for my degree

Bianna's Connections (13)

Deborah Bassett
Researcher at University of Washington

Linda Blaser
Assistant Manager of Media Assets at National Park Service

Nick Carter
Software Engineer at Google
But…

- Be mindful about what you post and your privacy settings
- Don’t post anything you wouldn’t want an employer to read
Career Fairs

- What to expect
- Why do employers go?
- Why should you go?
Before the career fair

- Do your research
- Make a plan
- Prepare your elevator pitch and questions
- Bring resumes/business cards
- Dress appropriately
During the Career Fair

- Practice with lower priority employers
- Be mindful of recruiters time
- Handshakes and eye contact
- Follow up!
Questions to ask at a career fair

- Do you have openings right now that are appropriate for someone with my skill set?
- What would be the day-to-day activities required of someone in this position?
- What does a typical career path look like at your company?
- What training do you provide to new employees?
- What sets your organization apart from others in the industry?
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More questions

- What is it like to work for your company?
- How do you decide to choose one candidate over another?
- How can I make myself a stronger candidate?
- What does your hiring process typically look like?
- What sorts of changes do you expect to occur in the company in the next year or so? What changes have occurred over the last year?
So… We’ve talked about:

- Places to build our professional networks
- Skills to use
- Techniques to use
Remember…

- Networking doesn’t have to be hard or scary
- Practice makes it easier
- It’s okay to make mistakes
- Over time your network with grow and you’ll become better connected … and find a job!