Virtual Networking for Success

Wayne State University

Who Likes Networking?

+ What's so great about networking?
    + Make new friends and have fun
    + Build research collaborations
    + Share their own ideas to make things better
    + Build a network of supporters who can connect them with ideas, resources
    + Letters for advancement, references for other jobs
    + What else?

Why networking doesn't happen

+ It feels awkward or fake (small talk, etc…)

+ "I have nothing to give to the other person. Why would they want to take time to talk to me?"

+ "I don't know what to say" or "I don't know how to start"

Let's reframe

+ It feels awkward →
    + **Give yourself permission to be nervous**
    + **Think of it as breaking the ice**
+ "I have nothing to give" →
    + **Expressing an interest in someone else's work is flattering even for the most accomplished and seasoned colleagues**
    + **Great ideas often emerge through conversation with others**
    + **You're never not an expert on something**
+ "I don't know what to say" or "I don't know how to start"
    + **Some ideas next**

What does networking look like in person?

+ Introduce yourself at a conference:

  + I'm excited to learn more about xxx at this conference. What brings you to this conference?

  + I work in xxxxx. What do you do?

  + I'm enjoying xxxx at this conference. What has been the most interesting part about it for you?

  + I love the work you're doing. What's next for you?

How can we network virtually?

+ Email has its uses
    + Prior to a conference to set up a virtual coffee or meet at a poster session
    + When you anticipate travel to location
    + When you have a new publication or accomplishment you'd like to share
    + Other ideas?

How can we network virtually?

+ Social media like Twitter, LinkedIn, etc… tips
    + Maintain an active presence on social media
    + Share your work AND promote others – Be a team player
    + Retweet others' posts or comment on them in a complimentary way
    + Ask for advice or resources to show you are open to others connecting with you

+ **Don't just take, give!**

Your networking homework

+ Network online with someone at your own institution. How do you choose?
  + Who do you admire from afar?
  + Who is doing work you find interesting?
  + Who is working on projects you'd like to contribute to?
  + Who is doing something you might want to do in the future?

Your networking homework

+ In your email, let the person know why you want to connect
    + I have enjoyed learning about your work and would like to know more about it
    + I would like to hear more about xxx project because I work with a similar population
    + I'd like to see if there are ways we can collaborate on xxxx

+ Questions you might ask during your virtual meeting:
    + What do you love about your job?
    + What do you love about working at WSU?
    + What is something you'd like to learn more about/contribute to in the next year at work or in your community?
    + How did you decide to create xxx program? Or how were you able to bring all these people together to work on xxxx?
    + How can I support your work or get the word out about what you're doing?

Final thoughts

+ Networking is not a dirty word

+ It's a way to find like-minded people, new directions for your work, new friends and colleagues

+ In this brave new world, think about connecting with others here and elsewhere

+ If there's ever a time to virtually network, now's the most acceptable time!

Additional Resources

+ Follow @WSUFacSuccess on Twitter

+ Listen to EmpowerED to Lead to learn about people you might want to connect with: provost.wayne.edu/empowered

+ Choosing a platform to reach your audience: https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/student-affairs-and-technology/digital-engagement-update

+ Plan your approach: https://www.fastcompany.com/3032287/the-art-of-self-promotion-on-social-media

+ Tips from a WSU prof, Jennifer Hart (@DetroittoAccra)https://clioandthecontemporary.com/2019/10/14/becoming-a-twitterstorian-social-media-scholarly-communication-and-professional-practice/

See you next time!