

# Brief Session on Networking

Jeanine Cook  
Associate Professor  
Klipsch School of Electrical and Computer  
Engineering  
New Mexico State University

# Importance of Networking

- Validates your work
  - Know who your colleagues are and what they're doing
- Identify potential collaborators
  - Technical communities are actually very small
- Creates opportunities
  - If people don't know who you are and what you do, when opportunities arise, they won't know to call you!
- Provides support network
  - Advocates
  - Friends

# Networking I've Done

- Invited talks
  - Doesn't mean that you have to be invited – invite yourself!
  - Departmental colloquiums (not your department!)
  - Campus research events, student organizations/ programs (e.g., YWiC, AMP)
  - National Labs (in your area or when you're in the area)
- NSF Panels
  - Say “yes” to as many of these as you can in the beginning
- Workshop panels
- Conference committees

# How I Created a Network

- Mostly by accident!
  - Had no plan
  - Just said “yes” to a lot of different things that I was asked to do
    - Said “yes” even if it wasn’t very convenient
- Kept in touch with people I met at conferences
  - Became familiar with their work
  - Invited myself to give departmental talks when in the area
  - Called when I needed partners on proposals
- Had a solid elevator speech and was always pleasant
  - Even if I was really feeling tired and grumpy!

# How Many People Do You Need in Your Network?

- Enough but not too many
  - Number that allows you to build relationships with these people
    - That takes time!
  - Remember that not everyone you meet will remember you. Need to meet enough people that enough remember who you are!

# Finding Advocates

- Advocates typically very successful people
  - who faced similar obstacles
    - Women
    - Persons of color
    - Persons with disabilities
    - People from similar institutions
  - who your work matters to
- My best advocates were found
  - Serving on NSF panels/committees together
    - People who face similar obstacles and in similar research areas
  - Doing research with National Laboratories
    - My work mattered to them
  - Being on panels at events like this!
    - People who face similar obstacles

# How I Assist Others in Building Network

- Invite young faculty to be on conference committees
  - Ask them to attend meetings instead of me!
- Introduce young faculty to my contacts
- Advocate for them and their work
  - When I see/hear of opportunities, I pass on their name or pass directly to them
- Give advice on building network

# Summary Advice

- Say “yes” to as many quality opportunities for networking that you can
  - NSF panels, workshop panels, invited talks...
- Don’t be a pest
  - Know when to ask and when not to
  - Know who likes you and who doesn’t
    - Don’t try to force a relationship
- Be assertive and introduce yourself even if you feel like running the other direction!
- Always do a good job at everything you do
  - Don’t drop the ball on important things