

# *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

Resources

# Qualifications & Social Capital

Qualifications

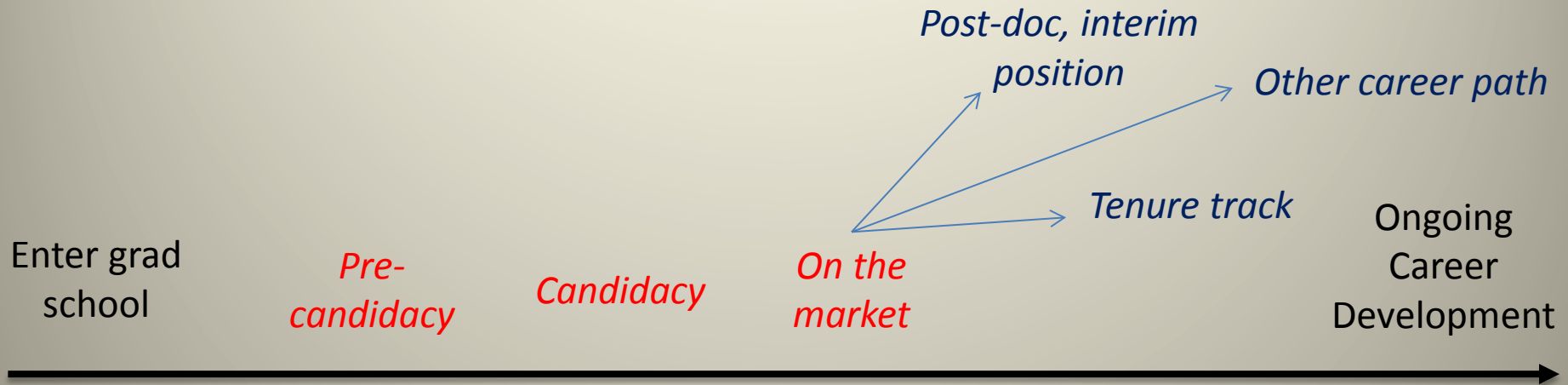
Social Capital



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 cohort

Your department

Related disciplines

Campus events



# The Basics

Show up

Go to meetings and ask questions  
Share your thesis in conversation

Speak up

Ask about the work of others  
Attend multidisciplinary events

Follow up

Follow-up on posters or talks  
Set up individual meetings  
Join journal clubs



# Seek Multiple Advisors

*Don't rely on an N of 1!*

*Don't expect mentors or  
contacts to do your work*

Guiding Mentor

Sponsor

Peer-Mentor

Informational Contact

Experienced Straight-Shooter



# Conferences

Consider professional organizational norms

Strategize for conference size

Consider formal vs. informal

Use existing structures

Develop a plan of attack

Pre-arrange “coffee chats”

Have one  
before you go





# Strategies for Success at a Conference



# 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!*

# The Initial Introduction

*YOU take  
the lead*

Who you are

Why you connected with them

What you want – ***the specific “ask”***

Next steps

*transparent and authentic*  *full disclosure*

# Pre-Conference Emails

“Dear Dr. Who,  
I will be attending the Northwest Summit  
Conference in December. My work is in the area  
of X and I think it complements areas of  
investigation in your department. I will be  
presenting on Wednesday and invite you to  
come to my talk...”

# ***Prepare, prepare, prepare...***

- *Write out what you are going to say*
- *YOU lead the discussion*
- *Stick to agreed time*
- *Have a list of researched questions*
- *Follow-up with a thank you note*



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...”*

# You've Been Invited to Campus

- Administrators of job searches (be kind)
- Search Committee (know who the chair is)
- Chair of Department (reach out, if appropriate)

*Remember to get an itinerary*

# Know Before You Go...

- ✓ Your significant accomplishment(s) as a graduate student
- ✓ Overall goals for your research as you progress in your academic career
- ✓ Experience and qualifications that make you particularly well suited to achieve those goals

# 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...”*

# Post Conference Follow-up

***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

Go online post-conference to download entire handout.

### 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.

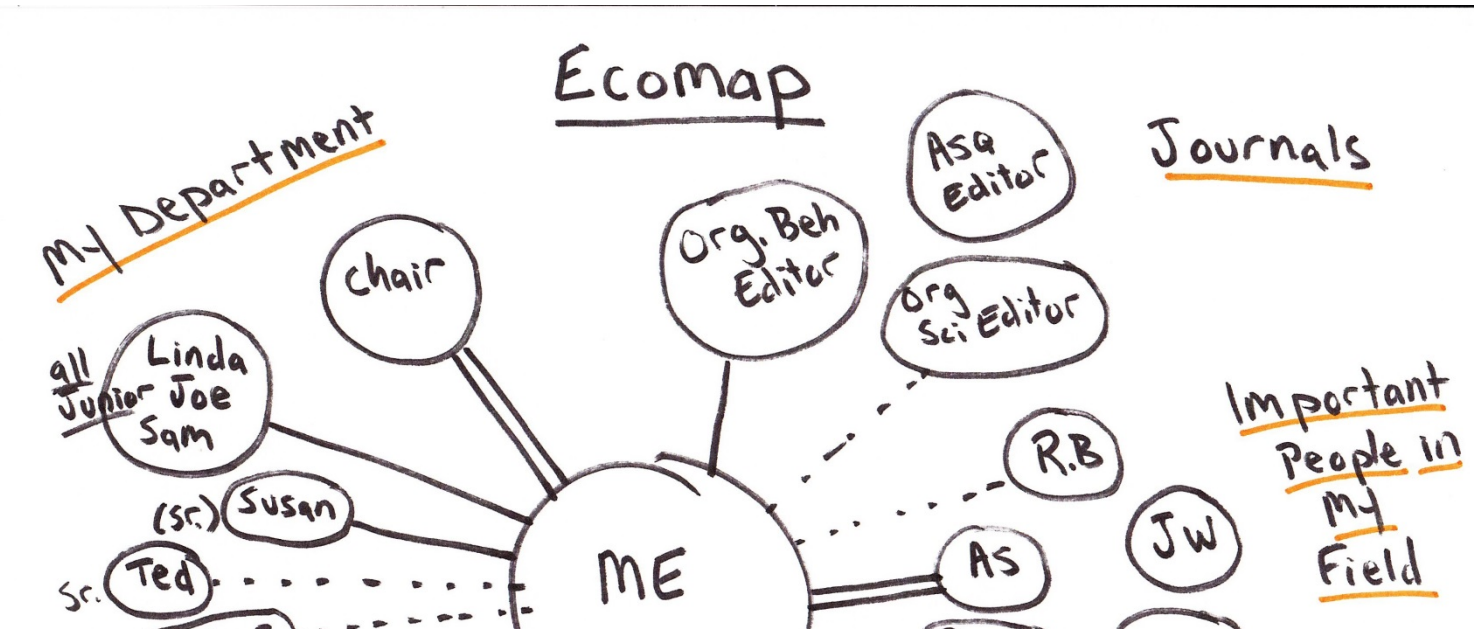
A double solid line ===== indicates an especially strong tie.

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

[Rackham Professional Development Events](#)

[Rackham-CRLT Intercampus Mentorship Program](#)

[U-M Graduate Student Professional Development FB Fanpage](#)

[Center for the Education of Women Program & Events](#)

[Versatilephd.com – Premium Membership](#)

[The Career Center](#)

## **Others to Consider:**

Student Chapters of National Groups *e.g.*, Association of Women in  
Science – Ann Arbor Chapter

Relevant Professional Associations

Your Department/Program