Handshakes, Eye Contact, Small Talk: How to Network Effectively as a Student at a Professional Mixer
Our Agenda & Learning Outcomes

1. **Conceptualizing:** Have an understanding of why you network as a student

2. **Language & Logistics:** Entering & exiting conversations professionally

3. **Growing your Garden:** Understand how to maintain a professional relationship over time
The Concept: Networking in a Nutshell

Your Professional Community

Your Professional Goals

Feeling a little isolated – want to connect with others.

Learn how to find out about different job options in my field
Networking is just the conversations you have, and relationships you build, with people you meet in your professional community...while you’re pursuing your professional goals.
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Diana Prince: 4th year pharmacy student.

- **Residency.** What questions should I ask residency programs to see if it’s a good fit for me?

- **Clinical Issues:** How could I have provided better care to a recent patient experiencing PTSD?
Peter’s Goals

Peter Parker: 1st year dentistry student.

- Succeeding in school: Feeling overwhelmed with study load. How do I find resources, strategies and support to deal with this?

- Career options: Is endodontics or orthodontics a better fit for me?
Nick Fury: 2nd year nursing student.

- **Job search**: Find what is negotiable in NP compensation package, and figure out how to negotiate it.

- **Lead team**: Figure out how to delegate effectively to my student group leadership committee so I’m not stuck doing all the work.
Lois Lane: 3rd year medical student.

- Clinical presentations: I’m freezing up when I present. How do I improve?
Barbara’s Goals

Barbara Gordon: 3rd year physical therapy student.

- Working with my clinical instructor: I’m not getting helpful performance feedback from my clinical instructor. I’m struggling and concerned about our professional relationship. How can I get better feedback?
Bruce’s Goals

Bruce Banner: Life or Social Sciences Phd or Postdoc

- **Negotiating Authorship:** I have some questions about how authorship should be assigned. It would help to have some information about criteria to determine authorship, and advice about how to discuss this with colleagues.

- **Exploring Careers:** What are career options available for someone with my training and interests, both inside and outside academe?
What are your 1-2 current personal, academic or professional goals? *These will be the basis of your conversations.*
The Concept: Networking in a Nutshell

Your Professional Community

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Your Professional Goals

Learn how to find out about different job options in my field.
1. You know your 1-2 current personal, academic or professional goals. These will be the basis of your conversations.

2. **Language & Logistics:** You how to initiate a conversation or relationship with someone in your professional community.
To start any conversation, Diana uses The “N.O.W.” Approach, which stands for:

- **Name**
- **Organization (school/year)**
- **What do you want to talk about?**
Language:
Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

Name → Organization (school/year) → What do you want to talk about?

Pro Tip: Think ‘conversation’ not ‘counseling appointment’. It’s your goal, but THEIR story.
Dr. Clark Kent? Hi. I’m Diana Prince.

I’m a first year in medical school at UCSF.

Have you attended First Generation Student mixers before?

Why do you attend? What do you enjoy about them?
Dr. Stark? Hi. I’m Diana Prince.

I’m a 4th year in dentistry at UCSF.

One of my goals for the past month has been to ask everyone for one piece of advice about selecting a residency program.

Do you mind if I ask you what two things you think are important to consider when evaluating programs?
Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

Clark Kent? Hi. I’m Diana Prince.
I’m a Physical Therapy student at UCSF
I understand you’re completing residency at UCLA
Do you like it? Why did you select their program to further your training?
Language:
Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

It’s your goal, but their story:

Hello. I’m Diana Prince,

I’m in Tetrad program at UCSF

What do you want to talk about?

What suggestions or advice do you give students about studying effectively, in light of the high volume of information we’re given?

OR

I see you’re in the biochemistry department/at Genentech. What does your work/research entail?

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Hello – I’m Diana Prince

I’m in the NP program in the School of Nursing

I see the keynote will focus on the challenges and strategies of providing care to veterans experiencing PTSD.

Does your work also involve working with PTSD patients?
Dr. Banner?

It’s a pleasure to meet you. My name is Diana Prince.

I attend UCSF’s School of Pharmacy

I appreciated your talk. It was very helpful to hear you walk the audience through the current challenges in drug regulations. Thank you.

I understand from your bio that completed a Rutgers’ industry fellowship a few years ago.

I was wondering if you’d have about 20 minutes to talk about your experience. If so, would it be possible to contact you to find a time to meet?
Language:
Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

It’s your goal, but their story:

Hello. I’m Diana Prince, from UCSF.

What do you want to talk about?

What has been most productive/useful about this conference/meeting/session so far?

OR

Did you attend X meeting? What did you think of it?
Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

It’s your goal, but their story:

- Name
- Organization(school/year)
- What do you want to talk about?
  - Have you heard Naledi speak on this topic before?
  - Why did you decide to attend this networking session?
  - What are you finding useful about this session so far?
  - I see you work at organization/dept. Y. What does your work entail?

Start a conversation!
Engage!

Start a conversation with someone in the group regarding your professional goals.

Remember: It’s your goal, but their story! Focus on asking them a question to start the conversation.
Logistics: Strategies to navigate the event

1. **Case the joint**: Who is here? What is the setup? What’s the vibe? Who’s ‘open/closed’? Who’s ‘in the center, on the edges’?

2. **Take your networking notebook/pen**: So you can write down people’s contact info, how you met them, what you talked about & impressions

3. **Take a wingperson**: Approach people together, tag team conversations with senior individuals, speak well of each other
Logistics: Navigating the Buffet Table

1. While in line, make preliminary eye contact, smile, and talk to people in front and behind you.
2. Always have one hand free (beverage OR plate)
3. Small plate: 4 items – don’t crowd!
4. Go back for seconds / thirds
5. If you’re taking home a plate – cover with a napkin.
6. Eat first and then start networking
Logistics:
Entering a group conversation

1. **Be considerate**: Assess if the conversation is ‘open’ or ‘closed’

2. **Be graceful**: Enter in the line of sight of the speaker or slide in right next your friend

3. **Be the host**: Recognize others and invite them into the conversation with introductions/ getting them up to speed; share the talking stick

4. **Don’t fight/ follow up**: If one person is dominating the conversation, consider following up with the key person later
Engage!

Half of the group – strike up a conversation using the skills we just covered.

The other half: Wait 30 seconds, and when you hear the bell – enter an existing group conversation.
Pro Tip: Don’t suck people dry. Build the relationship over time.

- When first meeting someone, a conversation could be as short at 5 minutes.
- Long enough for Diana to introduce herself, ask and receive advice on a residency program, and end the conversation.
Pro Tip: Don’t suck people dry. Build the relationship over time.

- Don’t try to get all your questions answered at once. (it’s a first date!)
- Instead, employ a graceful exit and plan to connect with them again later. **This is how you build your relationship.**
When winding down the conversation, Diana waits for a pause and says:

Well, thank you for your time. It was very helpful hearing what three criteria you used to evaluate residency programs and what questions you asked during the interview. Thank you.

She then gives the other person a moment to register the end of the conversation and shift gears.
Think, Pair & Share!

A general ending:
1. It was a pleasure speaking with you. I hope have a you have an enjoyable evening.

2. I’m sorry to interrupt (because this is interesting), but I wanted to connect with Dr. Bruce Wayne before he leaves. It was great to speak with you. I hope we will run into each other again.

Ending if the person offered you advice.
1. Well, it was great to meet you. Thanks so much for your advice. I really appreciate it.

2. It was good talking with you – it was very helpful hearing your strategy of asking fellow students about the five most common clinical issues they saw in a rotation before you start. So smart. Thank you.

3. Thank you. I’ll follow up with you by email before next week.
Exiting a conversation gracefully

Diana knows that she is responsible for ending a conversation professionally.

She doesn’t rely on non-verbal cues like:

- fidgeting
- Looking around, rather than making eye contact.
- Looking uncomfortable, while giving one word responses- “oh”, “huh”, etc.
- A tight lipped smile.

…and hope that the other person will get the idea.
Exiting a conversation gracefully

Pro Tip: Give a person to register the conversation is ending. It may take a minute and a cluster of verbal & non verbal clues.

- Winding down a conversation could take between 1-5 minutes
- Smile, hold out your hand to shake theirs, or ask for a business card/how to keep in touch, to signal that the conversation is ending.
- The person who ends the conversation is expected to move from their seat/ walk away.
Rotate, and start a conversation with a new person.

*When you hear the bell – one person should exit the conversation gracefully!*
Our Agenda

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Growing your Professional Garden:
How often do I keep in touch?

Pro Tip: Let people follow your adventure

Your Professional Community

1. Every time something the person said helps you.

2. Every time you see something of interest to the person.

3. 6 months to one year.
Initial conversation at mixer

Thank you follow up email. Reminder about the book you suggested?

Thanks for suggesting resource. It was helpful because of X. Would appreciate keeping in touch.

Hope you’re well. Just wanted you to know I came across another resource, Y. You might find it interesting.

I joined the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists. Thanks for suggesting it.

Hope you’re well. I am finding the strategies from the book you suggested still helpful in these ways. This is a brief summary of what’s going on for me now.

Will you be at the mixer this year? Would be great to see you.
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**Keeping in touch**
Main points!

- **Be curious & collegial!**: Consider how you would want to be approached and treated, and try to discern what the person you are networking with seems to value.

- **Be gracious**: Remember to thank people for their time and efforts, regardless of how helpful their advice immediately appears to be.

- **Keep Track**: Develop some sort of system to keep track of who is in your network, how you met them and when you last spoke.

- **Follow up!**: Send an email and tell them it was a pleasure to meet them, or that you’ve been considering what they said. If you have another question, ask it. Baby steps!
Want more help?: Explore resources, programs and services at career.ucsf.edu

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